

MUSLIM EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE CIVIL STATE IN KUWAIT: CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

This study investigated the perceptions of Islamic educators as to the incorporation of civic, moral and human rights values in the Islamic education curriculum in Kuwaiti pre-tertiary education. The study has, at the theoretical level, determined some of the most important and controversial questions facing Islamic education when incorporating the principles of civic and human rights education in its curriculum; namely, (1) What should Muslim students be taught about Islam's role in civic and human rights education? (2) How should the core beliefs, values and practices of Islam be integrated in Islamic education so as to contribute to civic and human rights education? (3) Is Islam compatible with civic training and human rights education? (4) What attitudes/perceptions do Muslim educators and Islamic education supervisors have regarding civic and human rights education? (5) What are the implications of citizenship education for Islamic education curriculum in Kuwait? The theoretical background as well as the findings from the survey has provided key answers to these research questions. Survey findings also indicated that Islamic education is an effective medium and forum for disseminating civic education and learning about human rights. Findings from the survey also noted the significance of civic education for Islamic education curriculum, recognised how it should be integrated in the curriculum, what is worth learning in Islamic education about civic and human rights education, and determining how much civic education matters in Islamic education courses.

Introduction

Kuwait is a religiously diverse state; its people enjoy religious tolerance compared with other Gulf countries, as evidenced by the fact that churches coexist freely with mosques. Islam, in theory and practice, has guaranteed freedom of religion and democratic appointments to positions of power and authority. The incident at Saeefa Bani Saaidah is clearly a proof of how the Islamic system of government started solidly on these foundations (Ar. *shūrā*) and with the democratic elections of the Muslim rulers after Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) (Madelung, 1997; Haykal, 1933). Such recurrent themes have been enshrined in the Qur'ān as well as in the Sunnah (traditions and life teachings of Prophet Muhammad), as principally stated in the fact that God

abhors tyranny and oppression and promotes human rights. In the Qur'ān, God describes the characteristics of true, faithful Muslims, in a chapter (*sūrah*) of this book which he titles *Al-Shūrā* (Consultation) thus: "Those who obey their Lord and establish Prayer; who conduct their affairs by consultation"¹ (42:38). According to Mohammed (2004),

The example most often used to graphically underline this message is that of Pharaoh and the Israelites. Pharaoh was the ultimate oppressor, and the Qur'ān never seems to tire of telling us how God rescued the oppressed Children of Israel from his yoke, and restored their human rights. (p. 29)

One of the most crucial and important human rights, that of religious liberty and right to self-determination, is granted by the Qur'ānic statement that freedom of faith is open to all mankind, and there should be no coercion to force one to embrace any faith, be it Islam or any other. According to the Qur'ān:

Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks. And God heareth and knoweth all things. (Qur'ān, tr. Yusuf Ali, Chapter II, The Heifer, verse 256)

Islam has demonstrated immense respect for the preservation of human life, including those of disbelievers. According to the Qur'ān:

We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone slew a person — unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land — it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if anyone saved a life it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. (Chapter V, The Table, verse 32)

This respect for human life has been emphatically stressed in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah elsewhere, so much so that it is clear that the undue, unnecessary finishing of a life is the grossest violation of human rights, which is why God deems it as if the murderer has killed all humankind. This is picked up in the Farewell Sermon by Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) in which he established the foundations of Muslim rights in his final words:

O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that He will indeed reckon your deeds. Allah has forbidden you to take usury (interest), therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. (Haykal, 1933)

The Qur'ān also exhorts:

Nor can goodness and evil be equal. Repel (evil) with what is better: then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate! (Chapter 41, Expressed in Detail, verse 34)

Pertinent to the modern ideology of human rights is the Qur'ānic statement that human beings are equal on everything, and they were created that they may get acquainted with one another in peace, echoing the Hebrew Bible that Prophet Muhammad said he came to reiterate:

O humankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Truly the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (Chapter 49, The Rooms, verse 13)

According to some authors (Mohammed, 2004, p. 32), the Qur'ān represents an ideal "document containing the best of guidance for sources of human rights". Therefore, Islamic education can best be a carrier for presenting civic values, morals and human rights values to students of Islam. In fact, there is a huge corpus of values pertaining to human rights in Islam, moral education and civic education, so clearly stated in the Qur'ān that they form a sort of *ius gentium* (Mohammed, 2004).

The description of Islam (the Muslim nations) as a carrier of these values is rhetorically summed in a tacit Qur'ānic statement of who the believers are:

You are the best of peoples evolved for humankind, enjoining what is right (*al-ma'rūf*) and forbidding that which is wrong (*al-munkar*). (Chapter III, *Al 'Imrān*, verse 110)

The parliamentary system of the State of Kuwait and the developing democratic condition helped present Muslim educators in Kuwait with the opportunity to take part in shaping the future of democracy in the country and features of the civil state in ways that are consistent with Muslim social, political, and educational aspirations. In fact, the whole range of modern interpretations of Islam draws a link between democracy and Islam, and considers civic education and the incorporation of individual rights and human rights in Islamic education compatible with Islamic beliefs and practices (Ghabra, 1997; Wheeler, 2001; Yousef, Meyer, and Rizzo, 2002). One of the key vehicles for democratisation in Islam is civic education and the incorporation of human rights education in the national curriculum of the state in ways commensurate with the Islamic traditions drawn from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.).

For Muslim educators in Islamic education in Kuwait, it has been necessary to develop a civic education curriculum which can educate the young generation about democratic citizenship and introduce human rights, whilst also incorporating the values and perspectives of Islam on civil society, democracy, and human rights.

This paper aims to explore and highlight potentially appropriate civic education and human rights education initiatives in the Islamic education curriculum;

in doing so, it will suggest that the development of the new curriculum should mend any misconceptions about civil society. The paper also seeks to alert educators and Islamic education supervisors to the utility and appropriateness of introducing this civic and human rights education component into an Islamic education curriculum.

Pertinent to these objectives of the present study are some of the most important and controversial questions facing Islamic education when incorporating the principles of civic and human rights education in its curriculum:

- What should Muslim students be taught about Islam's role in civic and human rights education?
- How should the core beliefs, values, and practices of Islam be integrated in Islamic education so as to contribute to civic and human rights education?
- Is Islam compatible with civic training and human rights education?
- What attitudes/perceptions do Muslim educators and Islamic education supervisors have regarding civic and human rights education?
- What are the implications of citizenship education for Islamic education curriculum in Kuwait?

Some of these questions are motivated by the need to discuss and determine the extent to which Islamic concepts of the state and citizenship can be integrated with Western thoughts and practices about civil society, which, in an Islamic education curriculum, would need to be presented in ways compatible with the spirit of Islamic faith, the instructions of the Qur'ān and the legacy of prophetic traditions.

Islam, Islamic education and civic education

Despite the small population of Kuwait,² religious diversity and the concomitant need for tolerance in this country make Islamic education an important school subject for disseminating citizenship concepts that promote civics, morals, and an appreciation of human rights. One of the most important and difficult challenges facing educators and curriculum developers, particularly in Islamic education, today concerns the role of Islam—one of the world's fastest growing and most dynamic religions—in historical and contemporary domestic and international affairs, especially in terms of the civic education and peace and human rights education of Muslim nations (Velloso, 1998; Douglass and Dunn, 2003; Esposito, 1999; Gollnick and Chinn, 2006; Huntington, 2004; Moore, 2006). In such a curriculum, the spirit of Islam must be highlighted more emphatically than its letter. For example, Islamic *hudūd* law (restrictive penal laws for a serious offence), the most abhorrent in the eyes of liberal minds and secularist advocates, can be made compatible with human rights if the traditions and instructions of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) were to be followed.³

Usually, in any Muslim country around the globe, Muslim children receive an Islamic education in their early years, starting with the memorization of the Qur'ān, at home and in nearby mosques or in small, parochial schools (Ar. sing. *kuttāb*; pl. *katātīb*, often written in English as *kuttābs*) or Islamic religious schools which teach the Qur'ān along with the basics of reading and writing and some arithmetic. These parochial schools, or *kuttābs*, are often constructed by Muslim philanthropists to provide Islamic education for Muslim children. In formal

educational institutions, pupils start to receive Islamic education in the primary school,⁴ intermediate school, and secondary school. They are often associated with and taught by Arabic language teachers, or are taught by teachers who are appointed by the Ministry of Education (MOE). Formal Islamic education courses include memorizing the Qur'ān, material on some Hadiths and teachings of the Sunnah, and basic history of the Prophet's military adventures, Islamic ethics and morals, etc. The informal parochial schools⁵ provide such material with basic literacy skills and arithmetic together with systematic rote-learning of the entire Qur'ān by part-time basic Islamic teachers who might not have formal teaching qualifications.

Islamic education entails a systemic instruction in theological matters to help young Muslim children practise the five pillars of Islam (Ashraf and Hussain, 1979), and it is also a process of achieving self-discipline in these children so that they may grow spiritually and intellectually (Mohammed, 1980). Some thinkers consider Islamic education to be a system of education that inculcates Islamic ideology in individuals in order that they may grasp the nature and purpose of life on earth and in the afterlife. This includes instruction in the pragmatic set-up of Islam, its ethics and aesthetics, its ideological framework, its politics and the role of the Muslim individual in the social, economic and political development of society (Qutb, 1977).

Islamic education has as its ultimate goal the inculcation of a complete and integral code of life, combining human activities in this world and activities that help man meet a favourable lot in the hereafter; thus, it encourages humans to acquire knowledge that may benefit human society in both worlds (Rahman, 1994). With this ultimate goal in mind, Islamic education comprises a host of hierarchically related and interacting institutions that have a far-reaching influence on the life of the Muslim individual so that he or she may become an influential member of society.

In addition, Islamic education is well supported by both the country and some Islamicist movements that find in Islamic education a forum to disseminate their reformist ideologies, which are largely concentrated on social, educational, and charitable activities (Brown, 2007), while the formal educational establishment has also emphasised the teaching of moderate Islamic education grounded in tolerance and peaceful coexistence with the others. No doubt, then, that there is a significant correlation between the rise of these Islamicist organisations in a country and higher educational achievement, including Western education/training (Paez, 2006).

In Kuwait as in many other Gulf countries, the rise in academic and non-academic writings, discourses and so on, dedicated to discussing the politics of Islam, has potentially led to a similar rise in formal and informal opportunities for Islamic acculturation—that is, knowing about what Islam is, who Muslims are and what Muslims feel about doubts to the authenticity of its holy scriptures and whether it is a divine, heavenly religion or not. Islamic acculturation could also be incorporated into the civic education curriculum in the same way that Islamic education could be a forum for disseminating civic and human rights education. This is very important, as Islam has often been the subject of various stereotypes, distortions and informative inaccuracies which have raised socio-politically frenetic controversy in the West (Douglass and Dunn, 2003; Findley, 2001; Hermansen, 2003; Kassam, 2003; Reinhart, 2003; Wheeler, 2003; Moore, 2006). The need for Islamic acculturation to be a part of civic education has been vociferously voiced by many scholars (Douglass and Dunn, 2003; Findley, 2001; Haddad, 1999; Kassam, 2003; Reinhart, 2003) whose

views have been clearly stated by Moore (2006, p. 140) who contended that Westerners ...

are profoundly ignorant about Islam and often conflate it with terrorism and political regimes that unjustly conscript Islamic Law to justify their oppressive policies and practices.

Islamic education is thus a crucial part of the civic education curriculum, for without proper teaching about proper Islam, it will remain a mysterious religion, and Muslims will continue to be stereotyped as religious fanatics or terrorists, or at least mystic and esoteric "others", who are mistakenly perceived as posing a threat to Western culture (Findley, 2001; Pipes, 2003; Lewis, 2003; Burgat, 2003; Moore, 2006). By the same token, Islamic education is a strong forum for disseminating human rights and civic education.

Civic education and citizenship in Kuwait

The political system of Kuwait is a civic constitutional emirate, democratically ruled by a Constitutional Parliament (Nasser, 2002). This system emphasises the duties associated with the practice of citizenship (Al-Ma'amari, 2006). This form of citizenship education in Kuwait belongs more to that associated with the traditional view of citizenship education, in which knowledge of the country's history is taught to the individual, who is also encouraged to develop patriotism and loyalty towards the country (Haviz, 1995; Al-Kandari, et al., 2011; Nasser, 2002).

This tradition of citizenship, with its consequent implicit and explicit reflections in civic education in Kuwait, permeates the entire national curriculum and emphasises the collective entity, be it the family, the tribe, the community or the country of Kuwait, which functions as a patriarchal favour state, in which individuals are subject to a greater good. Kuwaiti citizens look towards the responsibilities they have towards family and the community rather than the rights and privileges they enjoy. This model of citizenship and the ensuing tradition of civic education emphasises the support of and appreciation for national heritage, national identity, and family values within the framework of Islam.

In contrast to this oriental tradition and view of citizenship, the Western model of civic education emphasizes individual rights which stem from the ideology of individualism (Lee, 2004), whereas the Oriental model constitutes the fraternal association as a rule equipped with a corresponding religious symbol for the associational cult of the citizens, borrowing the expression of Weber (1978, p. 1241).⁶ In my view the Oriental Islamic civic education strongly emphasises society in addition to individuals.

Religion and tribalism play a significant role in citizenship education in Kuwait. Therefore, policies are made and put forward primarily to be consistent with Islamic traditions and tribal values in fashions consistent with the modern model of the constitutional parliamentary system of the state.

These policies of the state are expected to promote civic values deemed to be important for achieving social cohesion and moral education (Technical Office, 2009; Educational Research Sector, 2009). The State of Kuwait adopts a tolerantly Islamic

standpoint, with an equally tolerantly neutral stance towards religious institutions, with occasional patronage of certain religious institutions or occasional action to control religious fanaticism where necessary.

As noted earlier, Islam is both explicitly and implicitly the main and essential part of the 'cultural curriculum' used to enhance social cohesion, political identity and loyalty to the state. The Kuwaiti government system, represented by the Ministry of Education and other ministries associated with culture and youth, deploys the Muslim religion as a maintainer of shared social and tribal values. Followers of other religions, such as Christians, are also provided their own faith curriculum in compatibility with the general principles of the Muslim State of Kuwait: their religious curriculum is devoted to spreading good and fraternity among all citizens with no differences based on race, ethnicity or religion.

Islamic education, provided formally in the national curriculum and informally in mosques and *kuttābs* or other religious forums, plays an important part in developing and nurturing social and political awareness by providing the example of the Prophet's state in Medina (Ar. *Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarrah*) where the nascent Islamic state blossomed into an empire in the Rightly Guided Caliphs' eras.

Therefore, the national Islamic education curriculum seeks to promote a greater understanding of how tolerant Islam is, through the formal curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Islamic education courses in pre-university education serve as the main governmental instrument of this mission, and are also used to integrate civic, moral and human rights education into the classroom. The focus of Islamic education in terms of civic, ethics and human rights education is to provide citizenship training in which Islamic values are integrated with national values for socio-politico-economic solidarity.

The pedagogical approach to civic, morals and human rights education as integrated into the Islamic education curriculum entails the teaching of Islamic concepts of the state, democracy, morality and human rights in the Qur'ān and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and his companions. In this model, the Ministry of Education has chosen to emphasize only those elements of religion—the common moral teachings—which are directly relevant to the inculcation of national values deeply rooted in an Islamic ethical code, and the principles of human rights and civic education (Haviz, 1995; Nasser, 2002; Al-Bosairy and Mundani, 2009; MOE Technical Office, 2009).

Despite current controversy and competing narratives about the nature of Islam, moderate Islamic education is indispensable in the search for truth and mutual understanding. Curriculum authors generally agree that when designing an appropriate curriculum for Islamic education, there are some core values, beliefs, historical events and practices that characterize Islam, and should be part of the national curriculum of Islamic education (Wheeler, 2033; Moore, 2006).

Therefore, teaching students about Islam's core beliefs and its contributions to human civilization, and the Islamic world's relationship with other civilizations and countries as it rose as a world power, would serve as a basal acquaintance to the study of human rights and global civic view of Islam. According to some curriculum critics,

This basic curriculum will provide students with a knowledge base while simultaneously developing their critical thinking skills and enabling them to discard stereotypical images of Muslims. Through

this process, students will develop a sense of the complexities and contradictions common to all religious and political worldviews, and will be able to make informed and rational decisions that will hopefully lead to greater intercultural understanding, improved social justice, and advanced international security. (Moore, 2006, p. 141)

Given the large number of Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic Hadiths which touch closely on contemporary issues in civic and human rights education, teaching about these issues within the curriculum of Islamic education must be a central focus in the pedagogy and curriculum of Islamic education in the national curriculum of Kuwait.

Knowledge of civics, morals and human rights in the realm of Islamic education curriculum will enable young Muslim students to embrace the tenets and principles of human rights movements as integral and complimentary to their faith in order to help them make rational decisions, improve relations with non-Muslim countries, understand global issues of civics and morals pertinent to Islam. This knowledge can help transmit accurate information, abolish harmful stereotypes, reduce prejudice and discrimination, and improve intercultural understanding.

Islamic education: educators' perspectives on civic and human rights education

A study was conducted to investigate the perceptions and perspectives of a sample of stakeholders in the arena of Islamic education, including teachers and supervisors of Islamic education across the different educational levels from the elementary school to the secondary school in the city of Kuwait's educational directorate.

Descriptive research was deemed useful for assessing the quality of some aspects of Islamic education: for example, which aspects of civic education and human rights should be given most prominence when teaching Islamic education, how civic and human rights are integrated into the curriculum and how they are taught in the Islamic education curriculum in pre-university education in Kuwait.

The survey instrument consisted of three sections. Section A: How should civic education be taught? Section B: What is worth learning in Islamic education about civic and human rights education? Section C: How much does civic education matter?

The survey tool comprised 24 opinion items on a three choice Likert scale. Inter-rater validation indicated the tool was valid enough to collect the data they were meant to gather. The reliability of the Islamic educators' responses to the survey on civic education was determined using the Kuder-Richardson formula (KR21) (Brown, 1997, p. 202). The reliability co-efficient computed for the 24 items was 0.76, which is fairly high and indicates good reliability.

The survey was administered to 9 faculty members in the department of Islamic education to determine its reliability, using a test-retest method. The reliability of the survey was determined using the Kuder-Richardson formula (KR21). The reliability co-efficient computed for the survey items was 0.87, which is high enough to make the survey suitable for use.

The survey was administered to teachers and supervisors of Islamic education as well as to some teachers of Arabic who have been involved in teaching Islamic education at some juncture in their professional life. Selecting the sample of informants was done with the help of the Educational Directorate in Kuwait and the specialised

departments in this directorate. In all, 334 informants responded to this survey. The original 24-item questionnaire on Islamic education is shown in the Appendix.

Educators' perspectives on civic and human rights education have been reported to be highly reliable. For a sample of stakeholders in the arena of Islamic education, including teachers and supervisors of Islamic education across the different educational levels from the elementary school to the secondary school in the city of Kuwait's educational directorate, the internal consistency reliability coefficients (alpha) for the three sections are as follows:

Section A: How should civic education be taught? 0.9386

Section B: What is worth learning in Islamic education about civic and human rights education? 0.9796

Section C: How much does civic education matter? 0.9287

The total score reported an internal consistency total scale alpha of 0.99.

Results

Research question: Is there a relationship between the teachers and supervisors of Islamic education across the different educational levels, (i.e., from the elementary school to the secondary school) in the city of Kuwait's educational directorate? Below are the mean scores, standard deviations, percentages, and χ^2 values for identifying the perceptions of the sample as to how civic and human rights education should be taught within the Islamic education curriculum.

Table 1: The mean, standard deviation, percentage, and χ^2 value of informants' responses regarding how to teach civic education

Items	Mean Section A	Std. Dev. Section A	Percentage			χ^2 p<0.05	Sig.
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree		
Should be taught as a specific subject	2.29	0.679	12.7	45.5	41.8	67.337	0.000
Should be taught integrated into subjects related to human and social sciences, like history, geography, languages, religion, as well as being a specific course.	2.34	0.713	14.1	37.8	48.1	62.239	0.000
Should be integrated into all subjects taught in all pre-university schooling.	2.53	0.642	8.1	31.1	60.8	145.527	0.000
Should be an extra-curricular activity.	2.70	0.513	2.6	25.1	72.3	263.816	0.000

Table 1 above shows the χ^2 values for the items from 1 to 4 (see Appendix) all being significant at the 1% level. This indicates that most participants agree that civic training and human rights education should be taught as a course in its own right, as well as an integrated course incorporated in intra-curricular, as well as in other extra-curricular activities in all pre-university education levels.

Table 2: The mean, standard deviation, percentage, and χ^2 value of participants' responses regarding what is worth learning in Islamic education about civic and human rights

Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Percentage			χ^2 p<0.05	Sig.
	Section B	Section B	Disagree	Neutral	Agree		
There is broad consensus in our society as to what is worth learning in civic education.	2.26	0.697	14.7	45	40.3	55.337	0.000
Teachers should negotiate with students what is to be studied in civic education.	2.24	0.833	25.4	24.8	49.9	42.646	0.000
Teachers should teach according to curriculum standards/requirements in the area of civic education.	2.32	0.842	24.5	19	56.5	85.251	0.000
What is important in civic education cannot be taught in school.	1.36	0.618	71.5	21	7.5	236.651	0.000
Because of conflicts and different opinions in society there cannot be agreement on what should be taught in civic education.	1.71	0.729	45.5	38.3	16.1	48.87	0.000
Changes have been so rapid in recent years that teachers often do not know what to teach in civic education, but this can be well integrated within Islamic education topics.	1.97	0.715	26.8	49	24.2	38.634	0.000
Religion and religious education are important for knowing about civic and human rights education.	2.18	0.871	30.3	21	48.7	41.314	0.000
Islamic education can be an interdisciplinary subject for learning general concepts in religion, science, and social science to serve the humanization of man.	1.9	0.799	37.2	35.4	27.4	5.695	0.000
Controversial issues such as sex change or nationally significant political decisions should be commensurate with Islamic Shari'ah.	2.37	0.781	18.7	25.1	56.2	83.712	0.000
Islamic education provides Muslim learners with basic knowledge of human rights as conceived by modern man.	2.05	0.73	24.2	46.7	29.1	29.089	0.000
Islamic education helps enable young men to participate in the social, political and economic life arenas.	2.51	0.715	13	23.3	63.7	149.487	0.000
Islamic education, in its present curriculum, contributes to building a socially and politically caring and sharing Muslim individual.	2.43	0.703	12.4	32	55.6	97.545	0.000

Table 2 above shows the χ^2 values for the items from 5 to 16 (see Appendix), all being significant at the 1% level. This indicates that informants generally agreed with the items in this section and approved of them as guidelines for selecting civic and human rights education topics within the Islamic education curriculum.

This indicates that informants generally agreed with the items in this section and approved of them as guidelines for selecting civic and human rights education topics within the Islamic education curriculum. The items in this section can be ranked in the order of most agreed upon to the least by using their means of consensus. The yields are in the following order:

- Islamic education helps enable young men to participate in the social, political and economic life arenas.
- Islamic education, in its present curriculum, contributes to building a socially and politically caring and sharing Muslim individual.
- Controversial issues such as sex change or nationally significant political decisions should be commensurate with Islamic Sharī'ah.
- Teachers should teach according to curriculum standards/requirements in the area of civic education.
- There is broad consensus in our society as to what is worth learning in civic education.
- Teachers should negotiate with students what is to be studied in civic education.
- Religion and religious education are important for knowing about civic and human rights education.
- Islamic education provides Muslim learners with basic knowledge on human rights as conceived by modern man.
- Changes have been so rapid in recent years that teachers often do not know what to teach in civic education, but this can be well integrated within Islamic education topics.
- Islamic education can be an interdisciplinary subject for learning general concepts in religion, science, and social science to serve the humanization of man.
- Because of conflicts and different opinions in society there cannot be agreement on what should be taught in civic education.
- What is important in civic education cannot be taught in school.

Table 3 (p. 31) shows the χ^2 values for the items from 17 to 20 (see Appendix), all being significant at the 1% level. This indicates that informants generally agreed with the items in this section and approved of them as guidelines for delivering civic and human rights lessons within the Islamic education curriculum in pre-university education.

According to χ^2 analysis the groups are statistically different on the basis of their responses to the item, "Are important for enlarging the scope and application of Islamic education." 51.6% of respondents agree, 29.7% neutral and 18.7% disagree ($\chi^2 = 58.259$; $p < 0.05$).

Table 4 (p. 31) shows the χ^2 values for the items from 21 to 24 (see Appendix), all being significant at the 1% level. This indicates that informants generally agreed with the items in this section and approved of them as guidelines for the importance of civic and human rights education incorporated in Islamic education (domains of teaching).

Table 3: The mean, standard deviation, percentage, and χ^2 value of the sample's perceptions of the importance of civic and human rights education incorporated in Islamic education (significance for teaching)

Items	Mean Section C	Std. Dev. Section C	Percentage			χ^2 p<0.05	Sig.
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree		
Are important for enlarging the scope and application of Islamic education.	2.33	0.773	18.7	29.7	51.6	58.259	0.000
Are entailed in the Qur'an and Sunnah implications and explicit teachings in enough material so adequately organized and presented that they support civic and human rights teaching within Islamic education curriculum.	2.39	0.672	10.7	39.8	49.6	85.251	0.000
Should seek religious background in Kuwaiti education.	2.64	0.603	6.6	22.5	70.9	233.366	0.000
Should be significantly provided within the scope and continuum of Islamic education with regard to topics discussed in the Parliament.	2.32	0.736	16.1	35.7	48.1	54.161	0.000

Table 4: The mean, standard deviation, percentages, and χ^2 value of the sample's perceptions of the importance of civic and human rights education incorporated in Islamic education (domains of teaching)

Items	Mean Section C	Std. Dev. Section C	Percentage			χ^2 p<0.05	Sig.
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree		
Engaging in political discussion.	2.65	0.615	7.5	19.9	72.6	249.032	0.000
Taking part in activities to protect the environment and other species rights.	2.35	0.788	19.6	25.6	54.8	73.562	0.000
Being patriotic and loyal [devoted] to the country.	2.56	0.649	8.6	27.1	64.3	167.107	0.000
Ignoring [disregarding] human-imposed laws that violate human rights and are not consistent with the principles of Islamic Shari'ah.	2.29	0.803	21.9	27.4	50.7	48.767	0.000

Discussion

The results of the survey suggest that Islamic education is an effective medium for disseminating civic education and learning about human rights; such tenets and principles in civic and human rights movements are commensurate with the spirit of Islam inasmuch as they have been promulgated in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. In spite of the fact that some of these principles are global in reach, there is nevertheless a need for educators to present this material in a context that encourages an ongoing process of Islamic acculturation. A moderate and tolerant Islamic education can wipe out any tensions arising from the potentially conflicting national and religious identities in citizens living in Islamic countries, given the fact that Islam is a global religion, open to all cultures and all races. Tolerant Islamic education grounded in civic training and human rights can be conducive to inculcating in school children defence mechanisms that counter the threats of religious fundamentalism. One mechanism of incorporating civic education into the mainstream curriculum is to integrate it with the history curriculum, moral education, and religious education. The values and ethics of citizenship education can be merged with these disciplines to encourage individual and collective loyalty to the state as well as to foster sentiments of patriotism into individual students. This integrative model, which is also strongly propagated in the Islamic education curriculum in Kuwait, is based on providing models and examples of upright behaviour in daily life, fostering an appreciation for heritage and fostering family/tribe values of belonging and consequently, fostering the values of national identity.

In addition, since religion plays an essential part in citizenship education in Kuwait, the national curriculum of Islamic education has been, implicitly or explicitly, consciously or unconsciously, designed to inculcate the tenets of civic training and the modern ideology of fostering human rights. Citizenship education and teaching about morals and human rights within the curriculum of Islamic education reflect the country's goal of achieving national cohesion, social and cultural awareness, and political and religious awareness. The intention is that this awareness is of benefit to the state, and is not merely a theoretical commitment to values built on autonomous moral considerations, disregarding national interests. Islamic education can ably contribute to the building of the upright citizen, given the fact that in oriental Muslim countries, religion is an essential part of the 'cultural curriculum' used to enhance social cohesion, political identity and loyalty to the state.

The approach used in the teaching of civic, moral and human rights education within the curriculum of Islamic education is the "teaching about religion" approach, contrasted with the "teaching of religion". In other words, instead of teaching the core elements of Sharī'ah, Islamic jurisprudence, Hadith and Sunnah, Islamic history, etc., the focus must be redirected to emphasize only those elements of religion—the common moral teachings—which are directly relevant to the inculcation of national values. Other aspects of the belief systems are either omitted (the exclusive claims and rituals) or mentioned in passing (the metaphysical concepts) because the core aspects of rituals and pure religious knowledge is promulgated in the mosque and in parochial Qur'ānic schools. In this way, civic and human rights education should be taught both as specific courses and should also be integrated in other subjects, including Islamic education in all the phases of formal schooling, and in the national curriculum as well as in the extracurricular subjects.

Based on the findings of the survey, there appear to be some implications for citizenship education in view of the current trend in Islamic acculturation and education programmes in the Kuwaiti pre-university educational system. First, there is a need for a formal citizenship education which takes into consideration the separate teaching of civic and moral values. There is also a need to inculcate these values into citizens through informal educational institutions, such as mosques, social clubs, sporting clubs, etc., which should also be considered as an alternative extra curriculum. Such an emphasis is commensurate with the theory and practice in many Islamic countries to move from a formal and passive to a more active and participative approach to citizenship education (Cogan and Derricott, 1998; Kymlicka, 1999; Thomas, 2002). The difference between these approaches may be summed up as “education about” versus “education through”.

Second, the incorporation of civic, moral and human rights education into the Islamic education curriculum can help develop a concept of global citizenship. By the same token, lessons on active citizenship, democratic involvement, and the balance between civic and religious duties could be included in citizenship education to strike a necessary balance between the interests of civic and human rights training and the national educational interests of the state. It is pertinent for the State of Kuwait to develop a global model of citizenship education, to be incorporated into the Islamic education curriculum, implicitly and explicitly.

Further and above all, the perceptions of Islamic educators provide further evidence that educational and curriculum leaders have taken steps to engage the Muslims actively in understanding the Islamic teachings, and in reconciling this with their concurrent identity as Kuwaitis. They also agreed that informal institutions such as mosques and civic groups and organisations should also contribute to citizenship education; this can be done through organising seminars and dialogues to promote understanding of global issues in human rights, civics and morals to educate young Kuwaiti students during the course of extracurricular activities. They also seemed to agree that Islamic education programmes have been revamped with the aim of making lessons relevant and interesting to young Muslims in Kuwait in order to help them understand their roles as Muslims and as citizens and to excel in both as globally-adaptive citizens. Such implications suggest a move away from focusing on pure core Islamic knowledge towards practical and pragmatic Islamic knowledge designed to help Muslims to shoulder their duties and responsibilities as upright global citizens. Last, but far from least, there is a need to go beyond the ‘teaching about religion’ approach and move towards more active and effective modes of instruction, in order for the teaching of religious knowledge to be truly meaningful and morally beneficial. Therefore, more curriculum content and time should be devoted to a study of Islam as a world religion, and to avoid and suppress Jihadist ideology by pointing out the errors of extremist teachings.

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Endnotes

1. This characteristic has been considered by Muslim scholars as the best quality of the believers and has been enjoined in (Surah 3: 159). On this basis, consultation is an important pillar of the Islamic way of life, and to conduct the affairs of collective life without consultation is not only the way of ignorance but also an express violation of the law prescribed by Allah. When we consider why consultation has been given such importance in Islam, three things become obvious. First, that it is injustice that a person should decide a matter by his personal opinion and ignore others when it involves the interests of two or more persons. No one has a right to do as he likes in matters of common interest. Justice demands that all those whose interests are involved in a matter be consulted, and if it concerns a large number of the people, their reliable representatives should be made a party in consultation. Secondly, that a man tries to do what he likes in matters of common interest either because he wants to usurp the rights of others for selfish

ends, or because he looks down upon others and regards himself as a superior person. Morally both these qualities are equally detestable, and a believer cannot have even a tinge of either of these in himself. Thirdly, it is a grave responsibility to give decisions in matters that involve the rights and interests of others. No one who fears God and knows what severe accountability for it he will be subjected to by his Lord, can dare take the heavy burden of it solely on himself. Such boldness is shown only by those who are fearless of God and heedless of the Hereafter. The one who fears God and has the feeling of the accountability of the Hereafter, will certainly try that in a matter of common interest he should consult all the concerned people or their authorized representatives so as to reach, as far as possible, an objective and right and equitable decision, and if there occurs a mistake one man alone should not be held responsible for it.

2. According to the latest census in 2007, the population of Kuwait was 3,328,136, of them 1,038,598 are Kuwaitis by nationality, and the remaining are non-Kuwaiti residents. There are about 200 Christian Kuwaitis, of approximately 250,000 Christian residents, most of them are Filipinos and South Asians.
3. In so many incidents when *hudūd* laws were applied, the Prophet always sought to apply the easiest and less severe penalties; in several reported incidents where the penalties for adultery or larceny might have been applicable, the Prophet was very careful to give the perpetrator an excuse and thus to find grounds for letting them go. For instance, in a case when someone accused his housemaid of stealing and she admitted it to her lord, the man raised the issue to the Prophet, and the maid was brought to trial, and then the Prophet said to his company: "This maid cannot be a thief! O maid, say you did not steal. I shall never believe it!"

The Qur'ān is also very strict in terms of the conditions and terms of accusing a human being of adultery, making it nearly impossible to actualize: four witnesses at the time of the act of adultery plus the condition of attesting to the act of penetration—how likely is this to be satisfied? The significance of these *hudūd* or severe punishment laws is for people to prohibit themselves from perpetrating the sins on which these penalties are conferred rather than to hurt or torture humans.

4. Primary School 5 years, Intermediate School 3 years, Secondary School 4 years.
5. For a detailed description of parochial Qur'ānic schools, see Anzar, 2003.
6. See: Isin and Turner, pp. 119-127.

APPENDIX**SURVEY ON ISLAMIC EDUCATOR'S VIEWS ON CIVIC EDUCATION**

With the statements in this section, we would like to inquire about your views on civic education *within* the Islamic Education curriculum of schools in the State of Kuwait.

Section A: How should civic education be taught?

Please rate the statements below on the following scale:

	<i>Civic and human rights education...</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>
1	should be taught as a specific subject.			
2	should be taught integrated into subjects related to human and social sciences, like history, geography, languages, religion, as well as being a specific course.			
3	should be integrated into all subjects taught in all pre-university schooling.			
4	should be an extra-curricular activity.			

Section B: What is worth learning in Islamic education about civic and human rights education?

Please rate the statements below on the following scale:

	<i>Civic and human rights education...</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>
5	There is broad consensus in our society as to what is worth learning in civic education.			
6	Teachers should negotiate with students what is to be studied in civic education.			
7	Teachers should teach according to curriculum standards/requirements in the area of civic education.			
8	What is important in civic education cannot be taught in school.			
9	Because of conflicts and different opinions in society there cannot be agreement on what should be taught in civic education.			

		<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>
10	Changes have been so rapid in recent years that teachers often do not know what to teach in civic education, but this can be well integrated within Islamic education topics.			
11	Religion and religious education are important for knowing about civic and human rights education.			
12	Islamic education can be an interdisciplinary subject for learning general concepts in religion, science, and social science to serve the humanization of man.			
13	Controversial issues such as sex change or nationally significant political decisions should be commensurate with Islamic Sharī'ah.			
14	Islamic education provides Muslim learners with basic knowledge on human rights as conceived by modern man.			
15	Islamic education helps enable young men to participate in the social, political and economic life arenas.			
16	Islamic education, in its present curriculum, contributes to building a socially and politically caring and sharing Muslim individual.			

Section C: How much does civic education matter in Islamic education courses?

- A. Significance for teaching within Islamic education:
Please rate the statements below on the following scale:

	<i>Civic and human rights education...</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>
17	are important for enlarging the scope and application of Islamic education.			
18	are entailed in the Qur'ān and Sunnah implications and explicit teachings in enough material so adequately organized and presented that they support civic and human rights teaching within Islamic education curriculum.			

19	should seek religious background in Kuwaiti education.	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>
20	should be significantly provided within the scope and continuum of Islamic education with regard to topics discussed in the Parliament.			

- B. Domains of teaching:
Please rate the statements below on the following scale:

<i>Islamic education for learning about civic and human rights are really and should ideally be geared towards...</i>		<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>
21	engaging in political discussion.			
22	taking part in activities to protect the environment and other species' rights.			
23	being patriotic and loyal [devoted] to the country.			
24	ignoring [disregarding] human-imposed laws that violate human rights and are not consistent with the principles of Islamic Sharī'ah.			

Thank you for participating in this survey.