Cognitive and Affective Domains in the Light of the Holy Quran: An Analytical Discussion of Educational Process in Pakistan

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To cite this article: Dr. Lubna Shoukat and Dr. Muhammad Waheed. 2021. “Cognitive and Affective Domains in the Light of the Holy Quran: An Analytical Discussion of Educational Process in Pakistan”. International Research Journal on Islamic Studies (IRJIS) 3 (Issue 2), 88-101.

Abstract

Educating the persons is a complex but very sophisticated process, which may be formal, informal, or non-formal. Whatever the form it takes, the main goal is the development of the personality of the person, which seems a simple statement but has a multifaceted orientation. The educationists have tried to identify and organize clearly these aspects so that the academicians, teachers, and curriculum developers have the vision in designing and implementing the educational activities for the teaching-learning process. Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives is one of these frameworks and has got more attraction of the educationists. It consists of three domains—cognitive, psychomotor and affective. In this article, besides the brief discussion on the nature of these domains, a relationship of cognitive and affective learning outcomes under the guidance of the Holy Quran is explained. The Holy
Quran puts man under the obligation of internalizing the beliefs and reflecting these through his character to become a righteous man. It is observed that the main focus in educational institutions is on the cognitive dimension of learning and the least concern is on the affective domain that focuses on character building. That is why, serious questions are posed on the attitudes of students that deny rules and value systems in daily life practices as observed in the campuses like a violation of traffic rules, not taking care of cleanliness and poor interpersonal interaction. Interpretive document analysis was adopted under the phenomenological approach to conducting this research. Also, a survey based on interviews was also conducted for additional data to support the analysis.

**Keywords:** Cognitive, Psychomotor, Affective, Teaching-learning, Internalization

1. Introduction

This research is a conceptual discussion with the help of empirical evidence on an important aspect that is the very foundation of educational pursuits organized for the learning of children. A better understanding of this perspective would be helpful in solving various issues raised on the education and education system in Pakistan.

Education is a process organized to make the students learn. Process means the educational process that involves teaching and learning; teaching on the part of teachers while learning on the part of students. All the other arrangements, set-ups, related resources, etc., facilitate this process to happen effectively.

Any society organizes the educational system to educate its children. This education system may be in different forms like informal, non-formal and formal. The ultimate goal of any of these modes of educational set-ups is to shape and develop the personality of children through learning that must be compatible to promote personal and societal progress. Therefore, different frameworks have been developed to guide what should be the focus of students’ overall development.

The domains of learning objectives or taxonomy of educational objectives provide a guide-line of what learning goals should be framed to offer learning experiences to students. The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives is a framework for classifying objectives we expect or intend to be achieved by students as a result of instruction. In other words, “The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives is a scheme for classifying educational goals, objectives”.

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Among the taxonomies like Taxonomy of ‘Significant Learning’ by Finks (2013), SOLO Taxonomy by Biggs & Collis (1982), ‘Depth of Knowledge or DoK’, etc., Bloom’s taxonomy has received substantial attention of academicians and educational researchers. Bloom’s Taxonomy was originally developed by a committee chaired by Benjamin Bloom. This classification has become the most popular domain of educational or learning objective encompasses the cognitive (mental skills/knowledge), affective (feeling domain) and psychomotor (Kinesthetic Domain) areas of development of the persons.

Every learning task requires the inclusion of all these domains in proportion according to the nature of the tasks. Some educational activity requires more cognitive orientation than psychomotor while others may focus more on affective than both cognitive and psychomotor. Learning always moves forward and leads to the development of faculties of individuals involved in that learning process, including attitudes and the acquisition of new skills.

The cognitive domain addresses the aspects of the acquisition of knowledge and also those that involve the development of the mental skills of the individual. This domain ascends from the lower order learning outcomes like ‘recall or recognition of specific facts to the higher-level concepts like ‘evaluation’. The cognitive domain includes six subcategories of knowledge; comprehension; application; analysis; synthesis; and evaluation in ascending order.

Each level or subcategory provides a foundation for the next one. Knowledge is the lower-most level, which does not mean that it is of least worth but, in a sense, that it comes very first of all, i.e., a starting level. Likewise, the sub-level of ‘evaluation’ lies at the top of the pyramid of this domain because it comes in the end after achieving the other five levels behind it.

The psychomotor domain refers to the ability to use physical movements and coordination between them. The committee chaired by Bloom and his colleagues did not

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3 L. D. Fink, Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2003)
7 D. A. Sousa, How the brain learns (Corwin Press, 2011)
8 Bloom, B.S., Taxonomy of educational objectives
elaborate the psychomotor domain. However, Dave (1970), Simpson (1972) and Harrow (1972) created their versions of psychomotor taxonomies.

The sub-categories under the psychomotor domain are perception; set; guided response; mechanism; complex overt response; adaptation; and origination. These sub-categories ascend from an initial level of perception which involves sensory information to motor activity to the higher level of origination that refers to creativity based upon highly developed skills as a result of learning involved in previous sub-levels.

The affective domain deals with feelings or emotions, i.e., social and emotional learning of the individual. As previously described, similar to cognitive and psychomotor domains, the affective domain also moves in a hierarchical fashion; and is organized in sub-categories that deal with simpler feelings to more complex ones. David Krathwohl played the primary role in the development of the affective domain. The sub-levels of the affective domain are receiving, responding, valuing, organization, and characterization.

The learner moves step-wise from feelings and emotions attached to a phenomenon he attends at the first stage of ‘receiving’ such as listening attentively in the class and acting consistently in accordance with the values to the highest level of ‘characterization by value set’. Receiving is the first stage where the learner concentrates his feelings or emotions on certain phenomena or ideas. It means that he shows his attachment to that phenomenon. At the second stage of ‘responding’, the learner willingly takes part actively in an activity like discussion in the class. ‘Valuing’ is the next higher stage where the learner becomes able to see the value or worth of something and also express it. Sharing the views and ideas by the learner means that he has attained the level of ‘valuing’. If the learner reflects the ability to prioritize one value to another and then develops his unique value system, then the learner has achieved the next higher level of ‘organization’. For example, a student prefers his studies over watching a film on TV. The highest stage of this domain is ‘characterization’ that explains the ability of the learner to absorb and internalize the values that control his behavior or actions.

12 Elizabeth J. Simpson, The Classification of Educational Objectives.
13 Elizabeth J. Simpson, The Classification of Educational Objectives.
15 David R. Krathwohl, Benjamin S. Bloom, and Bertram B. Masia. Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.
attaining this stage, the student is well guided by the value system he has developed and acts accordingly under the influence of this value system.

We expect our students, as a result of education, that they should develop a value system and respond to the world accordingly. This outcome can only be achieved through the implementation of the framework of the affective domain, which is the most dominant aspect of education because it focuses on character building as an ultimate goal of education. As a result, the students have the ability to appreciate ideas, values and culture through their actions. The students become able to appreciate many ideas and subject areas they learn rather than just mastering the skills.

It is accepted as a universal truth that development in education makes a society prosperous and helps eradicate negative trends, unlawful and unethical factors in society. If we look at the growth of education, it seems remarkable. A number of educational institutes have become manyfold. A number of universities and degree awarding institutions have never been in such a great number. A huge number of religious institutions are also prevailing in every corner of the country. Parallel to these, the well-organized and established systems of preaching exist in which hundreds of thousands of people are devotedly working to ‘educate’ people for developing positive personalities who could play their roles in uplifting the society to the divinely defined standards of humanity.

However, it is generally discussed that our society is declining day by day on ethical grounds. People, usually, do not follow rules, bribery has prevailed as a common practice, crime ratio is increasing, availability of pure food is not ensured, almost every person is unsatisfied with the system of justice and many more. These facts are evidently at variance with our religious, cultural and ethical values. Where is the gap that needs to be filled? This study has tried to analyze this aspect in detail.

2. Objectives
   1. To discuss the concept of knowledge as described by the Holy Quran.
   2. To seek guidance from the Holy Quran to understand the relationship of knowledge (cognitive domain) and the behavior/characterization (affective domain) of man.
   3. To analyze how does our education system address the cognitive and Affective domains in the teaching-learning process?
3. Methodology

This study is based on document analysis in a broader sense. Documents are taken as ‘social facts or any cultural product that are produced and shared in a socially approved way.\textsuperscript{16} As one of the forms of qualitative research, document analysis systematically examines the evidence required to answer the research question.\textsuperscript{17} Document, as a source of main evidence in a research inquiry, is examined systematically to describe its content in many ways subject to the intent of the study.\textsuperscript{19} Document analysis may be used as additional or confirmatory evidence for any other research like observational or survey study making its use different from what we call literature review.

Varied techniques may be used to analyze the document depending on the purpose or question under investigation. Phenomenology is one of the various approaches of document analysis, which is concerned with interpreting the underlying meaning with the purpose of drawing inferences from the document.\textsuperscript{21} Keeping in view the nature and objective of the present study, interpretive document analysis was used under the phenomenology approach. However, a survey based on interviews was also conducted for additional data to support the analysis.

4. Discussion

The first part includes a logical discussion based on arguments from the Holy Quran for the purpose of explaining the overall picture of the cognitive domain. In the mid-section, it is tried to highlight how cognitive and affective domains complement one another. In the last, some empirical data will shed light on the prevailing situation regarding the affective domain and its status in educational institutions.

4.1. Ilm / Knowledge

Ilm (علم) is an Arabic word that means to know.

\textsuperscript{22} م. ت. قادر، مفهوم المعرفة (Lahore: Minhaj-ul-Qur\’an Publications, 2007), 17
“Knowledge is the awareness of a thing with reference to its reality”.

What the Holy Quran says about ilm/knowledge is so clear and mentioned in a number of verses that requires a full-length book. However, some of these are referred to here to make clear the concept of knowledge and its dimensions. We take the guidance of the Holy Quran on what Ilm or knowledge is.

“Behold thy Lord said to the angels: “I will create a vicegerent on earth.” They said “Wilt thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? Whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?” He said: “I know what ye know not.” God, in response to the humble question by angels, says, “I know what ye know not” makes clear the difference between knowing and not knowing. So, knowing is the Ilm or knowledge.

In this verse, it refers to God, so, it will be absolute knowledge.”

“And Allah taught Adam the names of all (things), and then presented them before the angels and said: ‘Tell Me the names of these things if you are true (in your assumption).’” Allah taught the names of all things to Adam and, therefore, Adam became familiar to those things. So, it became the knowledge of Adam.

“They said, "Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise.”

“He said, "O Adam, inform them of their names." And when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed.”

23 Al-Quran, Surah al-Baqarah 2:30

24 Al-Quran, Surah al-Baqarah 2:31

25 Al-Quran, Surah al-Baqarah 2:32

26 Al-Quran, Surah al-Baqarah 2:33
When Adam told the names of the things to angels which the angels did not know, then God makes it clear to the angels that His knowledge is ultimate and infinite and covers that one cannot even imagine. It is explicit that the meaning of knowledge inferred from the holy verses of The Quran that knowing of or familiarity of things, information, facts refers to one’s knowledge.

4.2. Is knowing (knowledge) enough? (Internalization)

The above discussion establishes the superiority of Adam (human) on angels only on the basis of knowledge. Now, a question arises is knowledge enough or does it associate some other characteristics for the logical justification of having knowledge?

After having established the superiority of humans on the basis of knowledge, God ordered the Angles to bow down before the human.

وَأَوْلَيْلَأَلْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنْ جُنُوبًا أَوْ أَفْلَامُ، فَسَجُدُوا إِلَى الْجِبَلِ وَأَلْبَسُوا مَا أَلْبَسُوا

“And (also recall) when We commanded the angels: ‘Prostrate yourselves before Adam.’ Then they all prostrated themselves to Adam except Iblis (Satan). He refused and showed arrogance, and (consequently) became one of the disbelievers.”

The Angles obeyed the order. The important aspect is what the angles learned (gained knowledge) had also internalized. So, knowing or learning something is not enough but integrating it with one’s personality is the ultimate goal and logical outcome of knowledge. If the internalization or integration of knowledge is done then behavior emerges according to it as the angles reflected what they understood and internalized.

On the other hand, iblees did otherwise and it was what he understood and internalized.

فَتَطَمِعُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنوْا أَنَّكَمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ قَانَ فَرْقَ وَقَنْفَتَمْ فَيَسِعُونَ كُلَا مَرْضَاتُ اللَّهِ وَيَفْعَلُونَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

“(O Muslims!) Do you expect that they (the Jews) will believe in you, whereas amongst them were people of a group who heard the Words of Allah (Tawrat [the Torah]), then altered it (themselves) after understanding it, although they knew well (what the truth was and what they were doing)?”

This verse of the Holy Quran enlightens us on what the process of internalization of knowledge is. The verse calls the attention of the people to the fact that although they (jews) knew the truth they did not internalize it as such and, therefore, acted otherwise.

27 Al-Quran, Surah al-Baqarah 2:34
28 Al-Quran, Surah al-Baqarah 2:75
“Is one who is devoutly obedient during periods of the night, prostrating and standing [in prayer], fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, [like one who does not]? Say, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" Only they will remember [who are] people of understanding.”

Worshiping of the believers is the action as a result of the process of internalization (understanding the knowledge and making it the active part of personality) of the knowledge that Allah is almighty and they have too answerable to Him. Allah calls these people ‘wise’. The Holy Quran has distinctly elaborated that knowing and believing is important but not enough unless these are translated into one’s deeds. Conversely, Deeds are the reflections of what a person actually believes.

Deeds (actions/behaviours) have a close association with belief. Man comes to know something, makes it the part of his knowledge system while considering it true, and then practices what he believes to be true. It means that a bond establishes between the ideas or knowledge and actions and this bond is internalization or characterization.

“By (the Token of) Time (through the Ages), Verily Man is in loss, except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) In the mutual teaching Of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy.”

This surah reveals a very beautiful explanation of the bond between faith and deeds. Allah guarantees his blessings for those who have faith (knowledge and understanding of truth) and also do the righteous deeds and, hence, affirm the necessity of bond between knowledge and actions.

In following verses, this mandatory relationship is narrated as required to be the best creation before God:

“Those who believe and do good deeds are the best of creation”.

29 Al-Quran, Surah Az-Zumar 39:9
30 Al-Quran, Surah Al-Asr 103:1-3
31 Al-Quran, Surah Al-Bayyinah 98:7
“Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabians [before Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ)] - those [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness - will have their reward with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

“Surely, those who believed and did pious deeds, the Most Kind (Lord) will create love for them in the hearts (of the people)”. "Surely, those who say: ‘Our Lord is Allah,’ then stick to it (firmly)’

“But they who believe and do righteous deeds - those are the companions of Paradise; they will abide therein eternally”.

All the above-sacred verses from the Holy Quran make this aspect evident and undeniable that knowing the reality or knowledge itself is indispensable but not sufficient unless the man develops his deeds righteously under the influence of his beliefs. Therefore, faith has two dimensions- one is knowledge and understanding of the conceptions or ideas and the other are feelings attached to them. In Surah Fussilat, Faith is defined as:

“Surely, those who say: ‘Our Lord is Allah,’ then stick to it (firmly)” ‘Allah is our Lord’ is knowledge and its understanding while ‘then stick to it (firmly)’ refers to feeling or emotion attachment with the ideal.

In another verse, a similar notion is narrated as:

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32 Al-Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:62
33 Al-Quran, Surah Maryam 19:96
34 Al-Quran, Surah Ali ‘Imran 3:114
35 Al-Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:82
36 Al-Quran, Surah Fussilat 41:30
37 Al-Quran, Surah Al-Hujurat 49:15
“In fact, true believers are those who believed in Allah and His Messenger, then entertained no doubt”.

4.3. Relationship of cognitive and Affective Domain

The nutshell of the above discussion is that knowing and understanding the ideas, facts and information constitute the knowledge of the man and his cognitive domain of his learning. This is one-half of the truth and is highly significant but remains incomplete unless the other half combines with it to make a complete reality, i.e., internalization and characterization under the influence of conceived knowledge. This second half comes under the affective domain. A bond between these two domains of learning must be established to become a righteous man.

Islam emphasizes practicality and does not support a mere theoretical and philosophical framework. The cognitive aspect provides the mainspring for actions and actions strengthen the belief system of man. According to At-Tabarani the Holy Prophetﷺ said that: “God does not accept belief if it is not expressed in deeds, and does not accept deeds if they do not conform to belief.”

The action of a man strengthens the belief attached to it. If a person does not follow what the belief requires for a long time, the influences of that belief on his actions or behaviors get weaker and weaker and ultimately diminish leaving the room for entering the negative feeling and harmful practices. In this way, the person consciously or unconsciously attaches to those feeling and habits that are in contradiction to his original knowledge or beliefs.

4.4. State of Affairs in Educational Institutions

It is obvious that in our educational institutions, syllabi are so designed that cover the cognitive domain as its major part; and the psychomotor domain also have some reflection. However, the affective domain is of the least concern. The whole educational system focuses mainly on cognitive skills – how much the student should know and understand. All the teaching-learning activities are so designed that inculcate cognitive, mental and psychomotor or kinesthetic abilities and skills. That is why the students want to achieve degrees that reflect their grades on achievement of knowledge and skills.

The education system is least concerned to establish a system in which students could practice their ideas through their actions. The teaching-learning process requires imparting a stock of knowledge and skills to the learners without motivating them to internalize the knowledge and, therefore, a bond is not established between cognitive and affective domains. As a result, serious issues are emerging at social and ethical levels that are disturbing seriously the value system and smooth running of the society.
If someone enters the educational institutions rather than higher education institutions and starts observing behaviors, attitudes, actions of the persons and impressions left in the surrounding, unfortunately, he will find no difference from what is going on in the rest of the society. One can argue that these educational institutions are the parts of the society, therefore, these are also influenced by society. This argument does not carry any weight because every society establishes these institutions so that they can play a leading role in uplifting the society in every walk of life otherwise these institutions lose the grounds of their existence.

During this study, it was observed the cleanliness of the grounds, lawn, canteen areas, bus stops, classrooms, etc., in the morning and then in the evening at institutions. In the morning, these places were fairly cleaned but were stuffed with trash and garbage scattered across the places in the evening. Once, some working boys were found searching something here and there, under the bushes while holding bags on their shoulders. The researchers asked,” what are you searching for?”. They replied; empty bottles, spoons, and teacups because the students usually threw these away after taking the drinks, and we had to collect these.

Bathrooms were found with obscene pictures, vulgar phrases and drawings on walls and doors similar to those found in public bathrooms at bus stops, parks and markets.

There are common practices of irregularities among teachers, students and administration staff. No academic or co-curricular activity starts in time and, the worse is that this has been accepted as a norm.

You would be confronted with a highly disturbing noise whether you are in the office or in the classrooms. You would, usually, find a group of people standing here and there, outside the classrooms, in nearby lawns while discussing some matters or have a gossip with a high tone of voice. The researcher recorded audio of such a situation, then played it in the classroom and asked to guess what this place could be. When told that this was the recording around the classrooms, the students just gave a dull smile.

It was observed that most of the students, in the university campus, did not use footpaths. A brief survey was conducted to find out the reasons behind this act. We asked them why they did not use these footpaths. The findings are given below.

a) **The number of students who did not use footpaths = 58%**. It was done by counting the students who were not using the footpaths at different places of the campus at different times in the morning, during working hours and at an off time. The total number of students passing through a certain place and those who were not using footpaths were counted for an interval of three minutes. The calculation was made based on collected data.
b) Reasons expressed by non-user of footpaths

- When we move into a group, we cannot talk easily with each other.
- Roads are vacant; therefore, we can move on roads.
- The majority of the rest is also not following this rule.
- We feel easy to move on roads than footpaths as there are breaks in the footpaths and we have to move up and down to follow it.
- Some of the respondents (majority female students) just started laughing or smiling at the question as if they did not want to answer or they did not have any reason.

Comparison of Situations

Another interesting task was given to some students. The researchers asked the students to take photographs at the university bus stop in campus and also at the general bus stand at the time when people were getting into the buses. These identity marks in the photos were hidden. These photographs were shown to the students in the class and enquired to identify any difference. They mentioned almost no difference between those photos.

The students were asked why did you rush the buses to take seats. You are young if you do not find any seat, you may stand for 15 or even 30 minutes easily. Some students replied, “in this way, we would travel by standing every day”.

Some students were assigned to take photographs of lawns in the university campus in the morning and then in the evening. The photos of the lawns in the morning were clean and neat while the ones taken in the evening were showing a hell of a mess across the lawns.

The researchers practiced advising the students to follow footpaths while stopping their vehicles near the students and asked, “Beta (dear), footpaths are nicely constructed and are spacious also, so please use these”. “Sorry, we are following, they usually replied”. It was estimated by observing through the back mirror that 60% of students followed the advice.

5. Conclusion

The education system has been expanded during the last few decades in terms of a substantial increase in the number of educational institutions, both in public and private sectors that resulted in an increased number of graduates. But, at the same time, the impact of education is under serious question regarding the character building of the students. The shortcoming is in the process of education designed by the educational institutions or policymakers who focus only on the cognitive aspect of the education and concentrate on marks and grades which are mainly based on the cognitive aspect of learning and ignore the affective aspect of it which should be the ultimate goal of personality development.
The affective domain emphasizes emotions, feelings and value attached to certain things, ideas or principles and, therefore, motivates to reflect it through the actions or behaviors. The feelings attached to learned ideas establish a bond between learned things and actions that emerged under the influence of that learned thing. In this way, the person internalizes what he has learned at the cognitive level. The Holy Quran has already emphasized that only knowing or believing is not enough but to follow the belief practically is the ultimate achievement required by God. The analysis and supporting data show that there are least efforts seen on the part of educational institutions to educate students in a way that enables them to internalize what they learn at the cognitive level. Imparting knowledge only does not serve the purpose as data shows that although the students know the rules and ethical obligations do not reflect through their actions.

So, there is a dire need that educational institutions should concentrate on such educational design that motivates the students to develop a bond between knowledge and their actions or behaviors. In this way, ‘the educated people who have the knowledge that cleanliness is ‘half of the faith’ and would not through the garbage anywhere.

The present education system is producing Babooz (boss) who are highly literate but have nothing to do with professional ethics and accountability concern. As a result, so-called ‘educated people’ are rapidly increasing but society is declining morally and ethically.