

The Inculcation of 'Adab' as the Essence of Education

Nor 'Adha Abdul Hamid¹, Suziana Hanini Sulaiman², Wazzainab Binti Ismail³,
Intan Fadzliana Ahmad⁴, Khairunnisa' Ismail⁵, Siti Noor Ahmad⁶

International Islamic University College Selangor (KUIS),
MALAYSIA.

¹ noradha@kuis.edu.my, ² suziana@kuis.edu.my, ³ wazzainab@kuis.edu.my,
⁴ intanfadzliana@kuis.edu.my, ⁵ khairunnisa@kuis.edu.my, ⁶ sitinoor@kuis.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Education is a learning itinerary and a well-planned journey of experience in achieving the desired learning objectives. It is a tool to educate the new generation properly and assisting them to enrich their talent, strength, professionalism and preparing them to be responsible for themselves, family and society. The emergence of numerous institutions of higher learning in generating graduates from various disciplines is the result of the curriculum developed by the scholars. However, recent issues concerning the degradation of moral and social values affecting the economy, politics, laws and even family relationship 'triggered' by the educated people or the university graduates has triggered a question mark: is there any loophole in the curriculum of a higher learning institution that caused a production of soul-less or 'robots in flesh'? This paper will discuss on the concept of instilling adab in the education process in purpose of reclaiming soul in education. The views from the Islamic education scholars are taken as the reference besides looking at KUIS' approaches in developing the student's character. It is hoped that this paper will provide a clear worldview in developing the students of a higher learning institution. In conclusion, a few suggestions are given emphasizing on the coordination of the curriculum and co-curriculum management.

Keywords: Education, Adab, Soul

INTRODUCTION

Issues on education have long been discussed by the intellectuals. According to Dr. Fadhil bin Hamidah Al-Kathiri (2005), a perfect education is the education that is able to portray the ultimate role of a human being in the society. It is important to equip students with various tools in preparing them to face challenges in life. Edgar Faure et al. (1978) stated that education is in its own world and imagining the vastness of the world, education is a crucial factor in developing the society and ensures the desired human resource are equipped accordingly. Abd Rahim Abd Rashid (2001) views the main objective of education is to build and raise the awareness on moral, behaviour and ethical issues in the life of every individual as well as in the society. The value of education is something that needs to be instilled and well-nurtured. Meanwhile, Le Thanh Khoi (1985) dicusses on comparative education issues that is the knowledge that analyses and explains the political, economic, socila and cultural issues. Ghazali Basri (1991) states that knowledge must be transcendental to God, human and environment. While Prof. Dr. Hasan Langgulung (1995) views that education needs a new thinking revolution and open-mindedness.

A good education can contribute to healthy growth of student's mind, psychological, spiritual and social elements. In mind growing aspect, curriculum helps to develop student's alertness, talent, interest, strength and skill of his mind. Whereas, in psychological aspect, curriculum

can help to mould students' feelings and interest and turn them into strength and motivation that leads a well-planned career development. In the aspect of spiritual growth, it helps to nourish and strengthen faith, belief and knowledge on God and religious jurisprudence. Meanwhile, students' social growth prepares them to be socially effective and productive individuals (Hassan Langgulung 1995).

The fast revolution of education especially in tertiary education level has witnessed the emergence of many higher learning institutions. Malaysia has 20 public higher learning institutions and hundreds private higher learning institutions offering various programs with their own curriculum, based on the National Philosophy of Education, "Education in Malaysia is a continuous effort towards enhancing potentials of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner in order to create individuals who are well-equipped intellectually, spiritually and emotionally. This effort aims to produce knowledgeable, ethical and responsible Malaysian citizens who can contribute towards the harmony and prosperity of the community and nation." (Mok Soon Sang 2009). These have proven that the nation is becoming more educated and civilized, in line with the 1993 Noble Prize winner, Nelson Mandela who says that "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

However, recent development does not portray such things. The turbulence among the political leaders, high statistics of white collar crime, abandoned babies, drug addiction, social degradation such as free sex, illegal racing, broken families, phonography as published in the media, are actually involved by 'the educated people' such as the leaders, university graduates, professional workers or students of higher learning institutions. This phenomena has posted a big question mark as rationally, a knowledgeable and educated individual should have his or her conscience. Although it is well known that the more the educated people are, the more systematic and harmony the society would be, but the real fact seems a denial.

Frustration from the parents, leaders and scholars concerning this chaotic moral crisis among the society has concluded that the failure to achieve the philosophy of education system in one of the main reasons. The factors of character or moral crisis are:

1. Unstable religious belief that leads to failure of self-control.
2. Ineffective moral development by the family, educators and authorities.
3. Materialism, hedonism and secularism practised by the education institution which fails to balance between character building, manner and morality.
4. Lack of emphasis from the leaders on the importance of character building and instilling moral values in the society.

This paper will focus on the discussion on education aspect which also look at the confusion or misconception that occur in the world of education, especially in the institution of higher learning. This misconception has led to students' inability to balance their core competencies and core ideology.

CURRENT EDUCATION ISSUES

Teacher as a Curriculum Despatch

This misconception has occurred where the teachers or the lecturers thought that they paid by just delivering the content in the syllabus or the textbooks. The students' performance will be tested through examinations. Teachers merely transfer the knowledge from books to students' mind, which levels down the noble position of teachers.

Students From The Institution Of Higher Education Are Equipped With Basic Religious Background.

Majority of educators thought that most of the students are already equipped with adequate basic religious background before entering the tertiary level. Thus, they were fed with their only specific programmes and subjects. For instance, an engineering student needs to only focus on engineering subjects without having to learn any subject related moral and ethical values.

Student as Customers

Private higher learning institutions have become a business due to external factors such as the emergence of new technology, added cost of education development, lack of government subsidy as well as striving of becoming a better institution since students have many options to choose the best institution. The thought of treating students as customer is best applied in the aspects of providing them with good transportation services; convenience during registration and in providing other services but it would cause a problem if students are also treated as customers in education and disciplinary aspects. If they were treated as customers, students with disciplinary problem would not be charged for the misconduct. “Do not scold the student, if he quits, we will lost 40 thousands, how are we going to pay the lecturers’ salary?” This will definitely causes difficulties and troublesome in the process of educating the students.

Graduates are Products

Acknowledging students as products produced for the industry, the focus of the educators and the institution management are only on fulfilling the demand of the industry.

The curriculum is developed towards fulfilling the need of the market by ensuring that the “product” can be “sold” which resulted the production of soul-less robots in flesh.

THE JOURNEY OF EDUCATION: ADABIC (MANNER) BASED EDUCATION

Bringing Back “Soul” in Education

Education must nurture a good man, upholds manner and aware of the ultimate objectives in life. A good man is the one who is sincerely conscious of his responsibilities towards the true God; who understands and fulfills his obligations to himself and others in his society with justice, and who constantly strives to improve every aspect of himself towards perfection as a man of *adab*. (Syed Naquib al-Attas 1999)

To achieve this objective, the higher learning institutions should have the right worldview of how a learning institution should be. A university should portray a man, a precious man. A university should not be the manufacturer of “a breathing machine” who serves the economy as a human resource. When they are good needed by the economy, they would turn into waste. The process of moulding a good man plays a prominent role in nurturing a well-mannered students and graduates. Without *adab*, students will be cruel and unethical.

The Role of Adab

According to Syed Naquib al-Attas *adab* means “The recognition and acknowledgement, progressively instilled into man, of the proper places of things in the order of creation, such that it leads to the recognition and acknowledgement of God in the order of being and existence. Recognition is knowledge; acknowledgement is an action. Thus, without acknowledgement, education is nothing but merely learning without actions. It means that

matters and things are already in their respective proper places in the various orders of being and existence, but that man, out of ignorance and arrogance, makes alterations and confuses the places of things such that injustice occurs". (Syed Naquib al-Attas 1999)

Adab is also defined as putting things in its proper place or doing things right and properly. A genuine scholar is respected due to his knowledge, manner and character but not the way he speaks. A scholar should be honoured, respected and chosen due to his proper *adab* and brings goodness to the society but not based on his ability to talk bad about others or selfishness. According to Prof Sidek Baba, learning process involves the process of knowing, understanding and accepting meaning. It starts with the process of disseminating knowledge to answer the "what" question which leads to "why" in order to understand the unseen and the reality. As a result, the process of accepting knowledge occurs.

The Function of an Educator

An educator does not only share the knowledge, but he provides his students the strength and ability to filter the irrelevant and detrimental information. Apart from being the knowledge transmitter, a teacher must be able to explain, to be a good exemplary and able to inspire his students. A teacher must possess a vast knowledge in his field, having a deep interest in teaching and learning, able to rationalize the things learnt, open-minded and treats all his students without prejudice.

Character and Moral: Everyone's Duty

The responsible of teaching Moral subject is always given to religious teachers or disciplinary teachers. Indeed, all teachers are their student's guidance. Every aspect of knowledge must be made meaningful and related to manly character as well as adab. A teacher must have the potential of integrating the concept of teaching (transfer of information, experience and professionalism) and *tarbiyyah* (Nurturing personality, attitude and life style based on noble values) so that the learning process will develop well-equipped students who are not only good in skills, yet disciplined and highly spirited students.

Students as Learners

Student enters a university with the intention to attain knowledge. Thus, the teacher or the lecturer must treat their students as those who are in need of something and those need must be properly fulfilled. The changing process from searching for knowledge to being a knowledgeable person should be based on perspective, intuitive and applicative approaches. A teacher should not be afraid of disseminating the truth. All students wrongdoings must be rectified with wisdom and love. A teacher must also care about his students well-beings.

Education: A Man Moulding Process

Every teacher must be aware of their huge responsibility. They are responsible in the process of moulding a man into a well-nurtured man. They must realize that education is not merely the process of transferring knowledge, but it is more than that. It is a process of transforming a man into a good man. In order to attain this objective, a learning process must undergo 5 strategies of learning process. Firstly, a memorization process which helps to memorise the formula or important notes. Secondly, the understanding process which needs a good delivery skills by the teacher. Thirdly, the process of articulation that helps to produce students who manage to analyse facts or ideas which also develops students thinking process. Fourth, the process of internalization, to build the ability to immerse into the knowledge and develops the intellectual disciplines and finally, the process of actualisation known as the ability to attain values and ethics portrays through behavior and manner (Prof Sidek Baba ICSEI 2010).

THE KUIS APPROACH IN TA'DIB PROCESS

To ensure that the education system in KUIS embodies spirit and achieves its aim to establish a university that represents insan, the KUIS student development committee has drafted the student fortifying process to produce the ta'dibi insan. In Islamic education philosophy, a holistic education connotes the terms *tarbiyyah*, *t'alim* and *ta'dib*. But the concept of ta'dib is seen to be the most accurate. The structure of the ta'dib concept already contains elements of knowledge (*'ilm*), teaching (*t'alim*), and the cultivation of goodness (*tarbiyah*) and thus, it can be said that the concept of Islamic education is formed by the three-pronged concept of *tarbiyah-t'alim-ta'dib*.

Three Concepts of Ta'dib

The KUIS student development committee planned 3 Ta'dib concepts which were implemented to achieve the creation of the adabi insan: Al-Mas'uliyah (accountability), Qudwah al-Hasanah (good example) and Biah Solehah (good environment).

1. Al-Mas'uliyah

Accountability refers to the duties and responsibilities of a person who is ready to bear the consequence and implications of an action. This concept includes responsibility towards God, fellow insan and the environment. Responsibility towards God means performing duties as His slaves in this world by adhering to all of His commands and avoiding all of His forbidding, adjoining goodness and preventing evil. The responsibility towards insan can be seen in the roles of a child, mother, father, wife, employer, worker, teacher and student being fulfilled. And to the environment, one upholds the responsibility between man and nature, which is inclusive of animals, plants, amenities and systems.

To attain this concept, the plans and programmes executed must be able to mould appropriate skills for students and are achievable, be owned and fruitful, be implemented, in accordance to interests of students and learning activities, and be applied to the society. Students themselves should be critically analytical towards these adapted programmes.

2. Qudwah Hasanah

To be a good example means the informal education that reveals the concept of ihsan by following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). This generates insaniah skills in life. Ihsan refers to doing the right action even in private. A person having the value of ihsan needs to know, do and be. He understands trustworthiness, implements it and is trustworthy in his life. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is to be emulated as he has shown qudwah hasanah (exemplary behaviour) to be followed. Therefore, as Muslims, one should be example to others. All of one's actions serve as a representation of Islamic principles and adab. These are seen in dietary aspects, clothing, speech, peaceful times, travelling and in all actions and inaction. Soft skills are 7 crucial skills needed by students in facing the real working world.

They serve also to mould good insan. The 7 skills are:

- I. Communication skills;
- II. Critical thinking and Problem-solving abilities;
- III. Ability to work in a Team;
- IV. Ongoing learning and Information management;
- V. Entrepreneurship skills;

VI. Adab, Value and Professionalism;

VII. Leadership skills

3. Bi'ah Solehah

Bi'ah solehah or good environment means arranging a wholesome environment that promotes the experience of knowledge, iman and amal (practice). The integration of these components is relevant to create a harmonious condition for *bi'ah solehah*. The implementation of the concept of *bi'ah solehah* involves a few components, namely the mosque, student activity, language, culture and facilities.

The mosque is the center for the development of character and it is the symbol of the integral nature of knowledge. The role of the mosque is to develop the mental activities of students which include the relationship among insan and with God. Examples include programmes on religious months, emphasis of congregational prayers, recitation of the Holy Quran and zikr as well as talks implemented in mosques to aid in creating a *muttaqin* or God Conscious environment.

Student activities are areas for students to develop their potential and soft skills. Proper organizational policies with noble values as well as good planning would ensure smooth implementation of programmes and activities. Language is an effective communication medium in the process of unifying the diverse ethnicity in the society. The use of appropriate language in the environment of an institution of higher learning and the diversity of languages such as Malay, English and Arabic allow students to strive to have a good command of language and be in a knowledge environment.

A culture is a *substance* formed by other cultural elements. A good environment can be implemented by inculcating a positive attitude in life such as the exchange of salam, helping one another, alms-giving and striving to do good. The implementation of *bi'ah solehah* requires amenities and facilities. It is therefore crucial to ensure that good environment exists also at facilities such as cafes, library, transport, hostels and others that will aid students to maintain a valuable culture which is not only limited at lectures, but beyond the walls of the campus.

CONCLUSION

Education is the process of ongoing and integral inculcation of adab throughout one's life. The result of insan with adab for generations in all areas of life encompassing religion, the economy and trade, politics, law and society, the arts and literature is the establishment of an excellent civilization. On the contrary, insan without adab creates barbarism.

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