

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Duration: 30-40 minutes

BACKGROUND

Students are guided by mentors on the responsibilities of a student at UniSZA, with an emphasis on the main responsibilities of being a student.

OBJECTIVES

This chapter focuses on several objectives, namely:

1. Foster understanding of the concept of role and responsibilities of a student
2. Explain the importance and main purpose of pursuing knowledge
3. Discuss the priority of the role and responsibilities of a student in various aspects of life

MATERIAL

1.0 Introduction

According to the Kamus Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (2013), the term "student" means a person who learns or studies. It also refers to a person who investigates knowledge. Meanwhile, "responsibility" means something (such as work or tasks) that must be done; or an obligation. Responsibility is also a dedication and sacrifice (Marni, Punari, & Yusof, 2015).

Seeking knowledge is an endeavour, activity, or obligation that is highly significant and valued as one of the commendable pursuits. Prophet Muhammad SAW explained the importance of seeking knowledge for Muslims. It is narrated that the Prophet Muhammad SAW said: "From Anas RA, he said: The Prophet Muhammad SAW said: 'Whoever goes out to seek or pursue knowledge, then he is a person who strives in the way of Allah until he returns.'" (Narrated by Tirmizi)

Such is the high status of respect and honour given to a seeker of knowledge from the Islamic perspective. This privilege is granted to a student because they face various difficulties, especially when they are burdened with the hardships of living in a foreign land. They are

usually willing to leave their beloved family members and friends to achieve the goal of acquiring or mastering knowledge, using various methods and techniques to think, memorize, and study the desired knowledge.

2.0 The Importance of Knowledge and the Purpose of Seeking Knowledge

The importance of knowledge and the benefits of the knowledge possessed by an individual are rather obvious. It only differs in terms of the forms and groups of knowledge sought, and its benefits also differ in terms of the impact on specific groups.

The words of Allah SWT in At-Taubah, verse 122 which is translated to: *"It is not for the believers to go forth [to battle] all at once. For there should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain understanding in the religion and warn their people when they return to them that they might be cautious."* (At-Taubah: 122)

From the verse above, the importance of knowledge in our daily lives is clear. Knowledge is of utmost importance to humanity in general as it serves to warn and improve the lives of individuals. It can also be likened to a lamp that illuminates the darkness of human existence.

However, in the pursuit of knowledge, it is incumbent upon a student or scholar to be aware of the original purpose of seeking knowledge. Seeking knowledge is not aimed solely at knowledge, but it is a means (*wasilah*) to understand and master it to be devoted (*ubudiyyah*) to Allah SWT (Marni, Punari, & Yusof, 2010). In Islam, intention plays a crucial role in ensuring that whatever we do does not go to waste. This can also be related to the activity of seeking knowledge and our responsibility as seekers of knowledge.

From Amirul Mukminin Abi Hafs, Umar bin al-Khattab (RA), he said, I heard that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: "Verily, every deed is judged by its intention, and every person will be rewarded according to his intention. So whoever migrates for the sake of Allah and His Messenger, his migration will be for the sake of Allah and His Messenger, and whoever migrates for worldly gain or to marry a woman, his migration will be for the sake of what he migrated for." (Narrated by Bukhari & Muslim)

Based on the hadith, students can understand that a person's intention can differentiate whether an action is rewarded with blessings or otherwise. If the intention is to seek Allah's pleasure, then the action becomes an act of worship and earns blessings from Allah. This can also be related to the discussion of a student's intention in pursuing knowledge, where it becomes a concern if the student is solely seeking worldly benefits and pleasures. In this case,

the student is likely to only obtain what is offered by the enjoyment and materialistic pleasures of this world, and is far from earning His blessings.

3.0 Student Responsibility

The role and responsibilities of students in their pursuit of knowledge can be divided into several aspects, namely; responsibility towards oneself, responsibility towards society, responsibility towards the environment, and responsibility towards knowledge.

3.1 Responsibility Towards Oneself

A student needs to prioritise being responsible for oneself even before considering obligations towards the public. Among the main responsibilities that every student should have towards oneself is to become a cultured (*beradab*) and morally upright person in the pursuit of knowledge. The meaning of '*adab*' here is to recognise that everything has its proper place, and it is one's responsibility to place it correctly and appropriately.

Knowledge and good manners are inextricably linked and must complement each other. The greater one's knowledge, the better their manner and morality towards others should be. The lack or loss of good manner is said to be one of the main causes of the problems facing society today. Although it is a fundamental concept, it is increasingly forgotten by modern generations, perhaps due to the lack of understanding towards the concept or confusion faced by many Muslims. The renowned scholar, Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak rahimullah, once said, "We are in greater need of even a small amount of knowledge of good manners than of merely increasing our knowledge of religion."

In addition, Imam Malik bin Anas (teacher of Imam Shafi) once advised a man from the Quraysh tribe with a compelling statement: "O my nephew, learn good manners before you learn (religious) knowledge." Therefore, it is important to take heed and emphasize the issue of manners and ethics in both acquiring knowledge and teaching it to others. This is because a person who has good manners towards others, even if he/she does not possess a lot of knowledge, is better and more noble than someone who has a lot of knowledge but lacks good manner.

Furthermore, there are several other responsibilities towards oneself that can be practised in the pursuit of knowledge as a student. These include maintaining good health, striving continuously to the best of one's ability, managing oneself, and being honest with oneself.

3.2 Responsibility Towards the Community

Furthermore, a student should also be responsible towards the community. Hamka (1962) once mentioned in his book that students are the flowers of society that will soon bloom or become a part of the society in the future. Based on these words, students need to understand that their role is important in shaping a generation in the community and being able to solve problems in a mature manner.

Aliff Basri (2010) quoted Prof al-Attas, who revealed that issues such as economy, politics, social, and various other problems that are occurring at every level of the society, are not the real problem. These crises are actually only symptoms or manifestations of the three main problems of the Muslims today, namely; (1) the confusion of knowledge, which leads to; (2) the loss of good manners among society members, resulting in; (3) the emergence of unworthy leaders. Hence, a student should understand and explore the problems of the ummah first before attempting to contribute to any solutions.

Therefore, to gain a deeper understanding of societal problems and identify the best methods to solve them, a student must actively engage in various community activities. This involvement is an effort to understand and cultivate human values within themselves, so that they are capable of achieving and manifesting holistic solutions. Inadvertently, the next generation of national leaders will be seen as the foundation for building a peaceful and prosperous nation.

3.3 Responsibility Towards the Environment

In addition to focusing on responsibility towards fellow human beings, a student is also responsible for the environment and various other forms of life that coexist on this planet. The earth does not belong solely to humans, and humans should not feel entitled to act as they please. The environment belongs to Allah and has been loaned to humans to share with other creatures. Based on the merciful nature brought by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for all creation (including humans, animals, and the environment), every creature in this world must be given the right to live and be cared for as best as possible.

As a student, what can be done to address the problems of pollution and environmental damage today and in the future? A student of a higher educational institution may one day become one of the implementers, managers, decision-makers, or policy-makers in the public and private sectors. Therefore, the attitudes and values of sharing this earth must be instilled and nurtured from now on.

The aspiration or determination to protect the environment must be in line with the development necessary for the global human life. In fact, the power to save the environment lies in one's own hands. If all members of the society (including students and the group that students will belong to after graduation) are responsible for playing their respective roles and collaborating to save the environment, then the environment can certainly be saved and fully preserved (Rosmidzatul, 2008).

3.4 Responsibility Towards Knowledge

Finally, being responsible towards knowledge is another important responsibility of a student. Considering the development of the world, knowledge has become a long-term asset towards a valuable life. The value of knowledge itself is the foundation for creating a better living environment. Therefore, students or knowledge seekers must constantly strive to elevate the position of knowledge in life, and try to overcome all obstacles and challenges that may hinder the pursuit of knowledge.

It is the responsibility of all students to continue seeking, modifying, creating, understanding, and adapting all forms of existing knowledge. Knowledge needs to be sought and explored to the best of one's abilities, and it would be meaningless if it is not accompanied by a profound understanding of how to adapt it to the life in this world and the hereafter.

Scientific knowledge that is not accompanied by understanding is unlikely to lead to any change or betterment. Knowledge that can elevate the quality and goodness of life is knowledge that is useful and can be utilized (Marni, Punari, & Yusof, 2010).

ACTIVITY

The implementation of the activity is as follows:

1. The mentor initiates a discussion by inviting the mentee to express gratitude for successfully continuing their studies at UniSZA.
2. The mentor provides an explanation of the concept or definition of a student and their general responsibilities.
3. The mentor explains the importance and main needs of a student pursuing knowledge.
4. Discussions are made and responses are requested from the mentee regarding the various responsibilities of a student in general.
5. The mentor explains the main aspects of a student's life and discusses the importance of responsibility in each aspect of life.
6. The mentee is asked to provide feedback on how to consistently implement all of the main responsibilities.

SUMMARY

The mentor summarizes all of the concepts, goals of pursuing knowledge, the main responsibilities of a student, and several other roles of a student. In addition to explanations and discussions, ways or methods of how to maintain these practices and responsibilities in daily life as a student are also discussed. Several important lessons regarding a student's responsibilities in pursuing knowledge are:

- i. understanding the concept of a student and their responsibilities in general
- ii. knowing the importance and main goals of a student pursuing knowledge
- iii. understanding and knowing the priorities and responsibilities of a student in several aspects of daily life, including towards oneself, society, the environment, and knowledge

In conclusion, according to Hamka (1962), the duty and responsibility of a student is to strive to interact as much as possible with various aspects of life for the purpose of developing potentials and talents, and acquiring knowledge that aligns with the values bestowed by Allah SWT through fitrah.

REFERENCES

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