

ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES: REFLECTIONS ON HUMANIZING EDUCATION

Editors

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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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Synopsis

This book compiles twenty (20) written expressions of the participants from 2021 KENMS *'Ibadah* Camp with the theme “attributes of true believers in the Quran and *Sunnah*” in the framework of humanizing education with *maqasid al-shari'ah*. The attributes of true believers should be rooted in spirituality. Azniza argued that *tazkiyyah al-Nafs* should be the root for humanized education. The spirituality root should be related to the responsibility of academics. Ahmad Zamri reflected on the roles of academics in humanizing education. In fact, Rodrigue Fontaine argued that everyone needs to go back to basics.

Suhaimi reflected on *sabr* (patient) quality in the humanizing education agenda. The quality of academics can be related to the lifestyle. Siti Salwani emphasised on the need to strive for work life balance. Azura Omar was unable to comprehend the operations of humanizing education with *maqasid al-shari'ah* when the reality was not humanizing. Jarita gave an example of humanizing education in the post-graduate supervision for both supervisors and supervisees. Nur Kamariah argued on the need for having a clear framework on the psychological needs of students.

Dzuljastri and Suhaimi reflected humanizing education into edu-action approach of m-kitchen project. Echoing edu-action of mkitchen, Ahasanul and Suhaimi argued on food waste reduction effort on campus. Dolhadi, Suhaimi and Rohaziah also showed the edu-action of humanizing education into consumerism advocacy and vegetable gardens. Izyani reflected on her personal journey of humanizing education. Muhammad Tahir Jan contended that humanizing education and sustainable development can be blended into edu-action.

Nur Kamariah argued that the need to sustain Islamic personality in facing multi sided challenges. Indeed, Marhanum emphasised on the need for self-evaluation (*muhasabah*). While not compromising the delivery of quality work, Nevertheless, Irwan argued about the importance of incentives to sustain volunteerism.

Zaini argued that humanizing education is about producing better Muslims. Indeed, Yusof contended that the need to link between the resolutions and talks in the *'Ibadah* camp with Islamic roots. In fact, Yusof argued that the virtual-based *'Ibadah* camp has been communicated through e-mails from a few committee members with different emphasis.

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

THEME

ATTRIBUTES OF TRUE BELIEVERS IN THE QURAN AND SUNNAH

BACKGROUND

In line with the University's efforts towards University, IIUM requires a more concerted effort for capacity building of the IIUM personnel. From the perspective of Islam, the spiritual enhancement, alongside other physical managerial, curriculum, research and other enhancements, is indeed part and parcel of this human capacity building. Indeed, Imam al-Ghazali, in his *Ihya' Ulumuddin*, identifies spiritual enhancement as the key to human well-being.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

IIUM organizes annual *Ibadah Camp* to achieve the following objectives:

- a) To conduct *Ibadah Camp* for all staff (administration and academic).
- b) To create awareness of the importance of spiritual enhancement together with physical enhancement in order to gain the worldly and other-worldly (*al-dunya wa al-akhirah*) successes (*al-falah*).
- c) To engage in spiritual enhancement activities that can purify one's soul (*tazkiyyah al-nafs*) and improve his/her relationship with Allah.
- d) To inculcate the virtue of seeking for only Allah's pleasure (*mardhatillah*) that helps to shape one's personality and ethics, internalize the spirit of *'ibadah* in one's day to day activities and thus perform them as best as possible.
- e) To improve everyone understanding of his/her existence and his/her relationships with the Creator and the created beings (*habl min Allah and habl min al-nas*) in realization of Islam as *Rahmatan li al-'Alamin*.

CORE ACTIVITIES

Several activities are identified as core activities of *Ibadah Camp* are:

- 1) Congregational Prayers
- 2) *Ma'thurat* Recitation throughout the ibadah camp
- 3) *Qiyam al-layl* through the ibadah camp
- 4) *Tilawah al-Qur'an* through the ibadah camp
- 5) *Tafsir al-Qur'an* through the ibadah camp
- 6) Lectures / forums

Organizing Committee for *'Ibadah Camp.*

Chairman

ASSOC. PROF. DR DZULJASTRI ABDUL RAZAK

Secretary

ASST. PROF. DR NUR ARFIFAH ABDUL SABIAN

Asst. Secretary

SR. NURATIKAH NORDIN

Treasurer

ASST. PROF. DR AHMAD KHALIQ

Program coordinator

ASST. PROF. DR KAMARIAH WAHID

ASST. PROF. DR ASLAM AKHBAR

PROF DR AHSANUL HAQUE

Special task

PROF. DR SUHAIMI MHD SARIF

ASSOC. PROF. DR HAFIZ MAJDI

ASST. PROF. DR SUHARNI MAULAN

BR. RAZLISYAM RAZALI

CHAPTER 5

HUMANIZING EDUCATION: THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK LIFE BALANCE IN ONE'S LIFE

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Abstract

Living in the demanding and uncertain world nowadays, everybody must have a secured job to put food on the table food or even to maintain a lifestyle. There are a lot of instances whereby we concentrate so much on our work, job or career that we fail to balance between career and family or other commitments which equally important to achieve the happiness or contentment not only in this world but also hereafter. This paper reflects on how important to have a work life balance by fulfilling our basic duties and responsibilities not only to our employer but also our families, community and ultimately to the God or Our Creator.

Keywords: work life balance, balanced life, fulfilment of duties and responsibilities

Defining work-life balance involves looking at how working people manage time spent at and outside of work. How do we balance between working and managing other important aspects in our life namely managing our responsibilities to our families, our relationships with other people such as friends, colleagues or neighbours. This may also include on how we can allocate our times to fulfil our body needs, our interest and hobbies and ultimately fulfilling our responsibilities and duties as servant of Allah.

Allah says in the Quran;

But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters.” (28:77)

This verse clearly emphasizes on the importance of having a balance life for every Muslim. We may work hard to provide or fulfill responsibilities to our family and at the same time do not forget our responsibilities to Allah. Even so, we are also not allowed to just fulfill our religious duties to Allah that we forget to fulfill our duties and responsibilities to our family, employer or even to mankind and *ummah* as a whole.

Currently, the challenges to have a work life balance might have been greater especially during this pandemic era. Most people work from home so it might be difficult to juggle between work and family. Our families might have demanded more time from us and at the same time our employer's expectation might have been the same, working from home or not.

Poor work-life balance can lead to some serious consequences such as fatigue and if you are over tired it reduces your ability to work productively. Your physical health might also be affected. Too many online meetings or classes, too much screen time, this can cause stress which may have adverse effects on one's immune system. Worst case scenario is that it will affect you mentally and this will lead to depression and probably lead to mental illness.

Below are the tips and sharing on how to have a work life balance in our life especially during this pandemic era;

1. Critically examine our situation, set our priority on what is the most important things in our life. This might differs from one to

another but by having these priorities set, we will be able to manage it wisely.

2. Take care of our health. Health is wealth and do whatever necessary to be in the pink of health be it physical, emotional, mental and social wellness.
3. Be assertive in a reasonable situation. Sometimes it is important to learn to say No if by saying Yes, we are not happy about it. If we think that our office hour stops at 5pm then avoid doing our job after that. Spend our time to other things which will make us happy so that we can be more productive in our job the next day.
4. Plan fun activities, do our hobbies or do whatever we like that can give us satisfaction or happiness. Be it exercising, cooking, watching TV or even online shopping and whatever things that we like to do.
5. Take some time to '*muhasabah*' and reflect ourselves as to how do we stand in the eyes of Allah. Spend some time to feed our soul with religious activities. More Quranic recitation, online religious forum or *tazkirah* might be useful to fulfil our spiritual needs.
6. Give more in whatever means possible according to our preferences. We can use social media as a platform to do this. Some may prefer to give *sadaqah*, some give words of advise, join webinar, spread knowledge online or any other activities which may give satisfactions to ourselves.

All in all, having a worklife balance is utmost important in our daily lives so that we can play our roles effectively in whatever position or situation we are in. A good Muslim is the one who knows how to balance their duties and responsibilities to fellow mankind and their duties and responsibilities to Allah, the Creator of the mankind.

CHAPTER 6

DECIPHERING HUMANIZING EDUCATION

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Abstract

The focus of this reflection is on the concept of humanizing education. In trying to deciphering this concept, I examined what I took away from the KENMS 2021 *Ibadah* camp what I understand from my own readings, and from my experiences in teaching. Humanization is perhaps a comprehensive concept that requires us to look at the entire education system – from the inputs, to the transformational processes and the outputs. Focusing on only one or two components of the system may lead to failure. Additionally, to make the system work well, the entire eco-system must be taken into consideration – from the markets to the educational governing bodies. Maybe humanizing education is not just about students and only students?

Key words: reflection, flexible education, humanizing education, humanization

Humanizing education is the buzz word in IIUM but I am yet to fully understand what it really entails. Is it about making education available to all? Making sure that no students are left behind in the pursuit of knowledge? Or is it about getting students to learn how to apply knowledge in their everyday life?

The recent KENMS *Ibadah* Camp 2021 seemed to indicate that humanizing education is very student-centered in that academics are asked to ensure that students are the focus the academic programs and that no-one should be left behind. So, this entails having flexibility in

teaching and assessment plans and methods, to make them more inclusive rather than exclusive. But does it also include making coverage of syllabus flexible too, giving students what they want and to exclude topics that students do not appreciate?

My years of experience teaching International Business indicates that some materials covered are not liked by students. Students from my own department dislike the topic of FOREX and often question why we need to cover FOREX. But yet FOREX is an integral part of making it in international business. IKEA when it first entered the US market ignored the fact that its home currency was appreciating and much stronger than the host currency. Prices of its products was set in the United State dollars but all the costs were in Swedish kronas. It recorded losses.

In a pursuit of a university degree, one must remember that the purpose of a university degree is to prepare the graduate for working adult life and a career. Some careers have standards that are set by the professional bodies and in such cases; it may not be possible to adopt certain styles of teaching and assessment or to adapt the content of a curriculum.

Flexibility is kept to the minimum. It has been suggested that maybe we should never constraint ourselves to standards that are set by others. We should go our own way. But can we do that? What about students' employability? This is an important issue as we are reminded about it on a yearly basis. The Department of Business Administration is told every year the "poor" employability of our students.

Years ago, I watched BBC's Top Gear and in one episode Jeremy Clarkson tested a specially designed Bugatti. He narrated it was the ultimate car and that if we were to leave to car engineers, this was the car that would be out there – it was an engineering dream with the best engine technology then, leather seats and sleek design and dashboard. But it was not what the market wanted, so the car remained a prototype.

Demand of the market ruled the industry and it still does today. A few years back, finding a Korean eatery was not easy. Now Korean eateries are everywhere, from restaurants in shopping malls to food trucks selling Korean street food. Why? Because high demand. Blame it on the K-culture that is not only conquering Malaysia but the world too. Even in the education industry, demand by the market is key in determining what degree we need to offer. Marketplace also affects the courses we can offer.

Ten years ago, the world was buzzing with internet marketing and thus we offered that course. Today, it is about digital marketing, social media marketing and big data analytics and the expectation is for us to offer them. In addition to the marketplace, we also need to address the requirements that have been set by the governing bodies which includes the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) and the Ministry of Higher Education.

How I wish we could simply ignore these bodies (it would make our lives much easier and reduce the paperwork) but that is something that we simply cannot do. Like it or not, our reputation (and survival) is linked to the MQA accreditation. Plus, failing to meet the MQA standards may result in lawsuits by former students! Of late, we have seen such cases in the news. We have been repeatedly asked to verify our MQA status by our graduates, locally and internationally. So, can we simply close our eyes to the MQA standards?

In the act of deciphering humanizing education, I came across Freire's conceptualization of humanization. Humanization is the process of becoming more fully human as social, historical, thinking, communicating, transformative, creative persons who participate in and with the world (Freire, 1972, 1984). He argued that to become humanized, we all must become aware of our world and our positions in the world, as individuals and as part of a social collective.

My contention is that humanization thus must include the acknowledgement of our strengths and limitations. We must then take

a look at ourselves when we are attempting to humanize education. Based on my management knowledge, we must apply the systems viewpoint in which we must think education as a system with inputs, transformational processes and outputs. Or so I think. It seems that thus far (at least t in my opinion) we are focusing a lot on the transformational processes (the teaching and learning process) and the outputs (graduates that we are producing).

But what about the inputs? Being aware of our limitations as academics, whether is because of our own limitations or the constraint of the system or environment we operate in, will thus affect our attempt to engage in student-cantered education. Failure to acknowledge the limitations will undoubtedly increase stress, as a number of us of are experiencing now

I must confess that I have a lot of weaknesses that have limited my ability to humanize education (if I even know what it means). For one, I am not a technology geek and I find this online teaching extremely taxing. I have lost count the number of times we have done online teaching and every semester I learn new things about the technology I am using.

Imagine, after one year of using ZOOM, I found out that the platform actually record attendance – one just has to learn how to use the platform. Every semester thus far is a journey of discovery. My first semester of online teaching was about learning how to be a YouTuber to reduce the need for students to download video lectures which I was told uses a lot of data plan (?).

It took me almost a day to figure out how to post a 45-minutes video since YouTube allow “ordinary uses” to upload only 15-minutes videos. The second semester was learning about Google Classroom. I have no problem in admitting that I have weaknesses and learning to overcome my weakness.

My issue is how to overcome them faster? When I rely on myself (self-taught and self-learnt), I will get there but it takes me ages to get

there, all using what is equivalent to dummies-guide materials available online. While the final destination of the journey is rewarding, the journey itself is can be painful as there are so many trials and errors. My longest “learning period” was three days. to make a short five-minute promotional video. And when training is given, the prevailing assumption is everybody has the same level of working knowledge. No consideration is given to what the individual academic knows.

I am a novice (and will forever be one because of my reactive nature to learn only what is needed at the time) when it comes to technology but some of my colleagues are experts. When we go to training, we are all given the same training. I wish for a better support, improved training and in most cases, more training. I learned the ZOOM attendance function through training that was held recently.

I like the idea of humanizing education to be a comprehensive and more inclusive idea that includes students, academics and everything in between us. The input is as important as the output and thus in our attempt to give better services to the students and create a student-centred learning, we must take care of our academics too. Give them support, train them, and make sure the systems are all in place. I write this one week before the new semester start and as off today, I only have full access to students for one of my courses. I have three courses. How do I find out who are in the two other courses? May Allah help me. In short, maybe humanizing education is just not about students and only students? I cannot say that I have deciphered humanizing education – I don’t know what it means still.

10 KENMS IBADAH CAMP 2021 RESOLUTIONS

1. To continue sharing knowledge and improvements on humanising education;
2. To strengthen rapport with students through activities;
3. To plan for community engagement as a holistic approach to sustainability;
4. To continue with *Tazkirah* and *Tarbiyyah* of *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*;
5. To continue with the practices taught by Prophet Muhammad SAW that can help to purify our soul;
6. To love, respect, help and remind each other to achieve the IIUM's mission;
7. To observe sincerity in our intention, words and actions for the sake of Allah's Pleasure;
8. To continue acquiring skills, upskilling, and reskilling in enhancing work of *'ibadah* quality;
9. To subscribe to *sejahtera lestari* with *maqasid al shari'ah*, *afiyah*, and *rahmatan lil alamin*;
10. To subscribe to *Khalifah-Amanah-Iqra-Rahmatan lil alamin* (KhAIR) with *Fatonah-Amanah-Siddiq-Tabligh* (FAST) attributes.

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