

UKM Teaching and Learning Congress 2011

Creativity in the teaching of shariah studies in institutions of higher education

Irwan Mohd Subri^{a*}, Nursilah Ahmad^b and Hasanah Abd Khafidz^c

^aSenior Lecturer, Faculty of Shariah and Law, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia

^bSenior Lecturer, Faculty of Economics and Muamalat, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia

^cSenior Lecturer, Islamic Studies Unit, School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Abstract

This article presents the use of creative ideas in teaching Shariah Studies. Among the creative ideas implemented and may be utilised is the method of role playing, done by assigning topics to students which they would then act out. The study conducted a survey questionnaire using purposive sampling to 100 students registering for the subject *Mabahith al-Hukm* during early March 2011. From the research done, it has shown a promising outcome in the aspects of the students' interests, reception and understanding on the subject learnt. This shows that such a method can be applied in all subjects, more so in Shariah Studies in institutions of higher education.

© 2011 Published by Elsevier Ltd. Selection and/or peer reviewed under responsibility of the UKM Teaching and Learning Congress 2011 Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Keywords: Creativity; islam; role-playing teaching method; shariah studies; teaching and learning

1. Introduction

Shariah Studies is one of the many components in the field of Islamic Studies. It is considered as one of the many cores of Islamic Studies. This explains why every institution teaching Islamic Studies, whether school, college or university would offer "Shariah" as one of the branches of Islamic Studies. Mahmood Zuhdi (1997) explains that Shariah Studies may be defined as the studies on the social understanding in Islam which encompasses law, politics, economy, administration, management, commerce, social relations, family matters, social matters and so on. In actuality, the scope is wider, as Shariah Studies too cover issues on religious practices, which looks at human behaviour in relation to the worshipping of Allah.

In its objective, Shariah Studies is not just about what is permissible and non-permissible, but it focuses on the social betterment of human development on Earth and in the Hereafter (Mahmood Zuhdi, 1997). Shariah Studies comprise of several subjects such as *Fiqh*, *Usul Fiqh* (Jurisprudence), *Qawaid Fiqh* (Legal Maxims), *Siyasah Shariyyah* (Islamic Political Science), *Maqasid Shariyyah* (Objectives of Shariah) among others. In terms of delivery methods, a few styles or systems are used by the instructors. The traditional "pondok" system practices the style of "*talaqqiy/halaqah*", while those in religious secondary schools are taught in classes based on set syllabus.

At the university level, it may be taught in the form of purely lectures as in Al-Azhar University or lectures with tutorials as what is practised in local universities. Suffice to say that most of the learning styles may be considered as "one way traffic" or traditional where the teacher teaches and the students listen. This method is seen as not

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +6-013-3543594; fax: +6-06-798-8531

E-mail address: irwan@usim.edu.my

providing much assistance to the students in understanding the Shariah subjects due to the one-way interactions. The students would become stiff and static in their learning of the Shariah subjects.

This is the reason why Prof. Dato' Dr. Mahmood Zuhdi (1997) has proposed that Shariah subjects should no longer be unproductive and unable to have students who can comprehend and apply what have been taught. This means that the Shariah instructor or lecturer needs to be more creative to gain the interests of the students, thus making them understand better the subjects which they have learnt.

This paper is therefore proposing one creative technique which has been applied by one of the writers in the teaching of several Shariah subjects. The aim is to assess the technique in teaching Shariah Studies to hold the students' attention to a subject they supposedly have difficulty understanding. The paper is organized as follows. After the Introduction section, Section 2 discuss the topic of creativity in teaching Shariah subjects. Section 3 continues with research methodology while Section 4 discusses the results. Section 5 concludes the discussions and offer suggestions and further recommendations.

2. Creativity in teaching shariah subjects

2.1 Definition of creativity

There are various definitions of the term creativity in relation to certain aspects or fields. According to Hasan Langgulung (1997), creativity means the willingness or ability to create. In the al-Quran, it is stated that there are four characteristics of Allah as the Almighty Creator namely *al-Khaliq*, *al-Khallaq*, *al-Badi'* and *al-Musawwir*. Human creativity can be seen in the third form of creation, which is direct creation, in terms of changing the shapes of items from one to another. This can be seen, one example, in the creation of a house from wood or bricks among others. As it is with intellects, creativity cannot run away from its divine origins. In other words, there are three aspects, which are man, the universe and the holy book (revelations) portraying the signs (words) of Allah, where each occupies its own place and which cannot function without one another (Hasan Langgulung, 1997).

Creative thinking meanwhile is the ability to generate various solutions to a problem, which is quite uncommon and defies the norm. This includes the ability to analyse ideas, to be imaginative and producing ideas which are new, original and diverse. Creative thinking differs from conventional thinking and is identified by the ability to view something from different perspectives. As such, this kind of thinking would attempt to formulate different ways of doing things. When an individual practices creative thinking, the intention is to create perception, concepts, ideas, theories, inventions, procedures and those of similar nature. This nature of thinking usually begins from curiosity, interest, need to experiment and so on. The process then continues on to how to produce or to find a solution. This is followed by the individual getting inspiration from various possible situations. After going through the active thinking process in looking for innovative alternatives, then the abstract idea would be realised in a more concrete form. At the same time, supporting ideas are also necessary to complement the solution (Shahabuddin Hashim & Rohizani Yaakub, n.d.).

From the abovementioned definition and explanation, it is now understood that creativity is the result of imagination and the willingness to experiment with new things. This is followed by action or implementation of the proposed idea. This is essential to ensure that students will not be contented with a singular viewpoint or course of action. This matter is criticised by Abdullah Hassan & Ainon Mohd (2000). They stated that exercise questions from textbooks in Malaysia require only a sole, correct answer. The same is also required in answering examination papers. In real-life situations, there is none that requires the talent and cleverness in looking for mainly one answer. The question "what can we do with old socks?" can be answered in many ways. The local humour magazine "Gila-Gila" once suggested that old socks should not be discarded. They can be used as sieves in making tea!

Our education system today has produced school-leavers and graduates who are terrified of thinking and trying out new ideas which may divert from the norm. The expression "*why don't we...*", is commonly given a negative reply. Such an education system shapes the behaviour of conformity or "*taklid*" towards the environment around us. This mentality does not allow the individual to challenge the surrounding in which they function. When faced with a problem, they would be compelled to adopt an already available solution. They will not question the prescribed solution to search for another, which would surely be available, and may even prove to be better (Abdullah Hasan & Ainon Mohd, 2000).

For the students to be more aggressive, more competitive and to think creatively, the teacher or lecturer has to be creative in the teaching methods. There is no harm in the teacher or lecturer trying out whatever new technique in

teaching. A teacher or lecturer who believes that the technique applied all the while is surely the best of all will not be able to propel the students' potential to strive better ahead.

This was one reason why, according to Hasan Langgulung, scholars of Islam had utilised the experimental method in the history of scientific development in Islam during the golden age. It was then that creativity grew in all areas of knowledge among the Muslims. He further added, creativity in that age was encouraged; even the education system at that time promoted the development of creativity among the Muslims. One aspect which concerns the growth of creativity was the use of experimental studies in academic researches (Hasan Langgulung, 1997).

2.2 Creativity in teaching the shariah subject through role play

One creative technique or method of teaching as practised by one of the writers of this paper to teach the Shariah Studies subject is role play. It has been in use in the teaching of the course LCA2013 *Mabahith al-Hukm* (one deliberation in the *Usul Fiqh* teaching) semester 1, session 2010/2011 for students from the Faculty of Shariah and Law, Bachelor of Fiqh and Fatwa programme.

At the end of the first semester of the academic session, the researchers conduct a survey by distributing questionnaires to investigate the response or perception of students regarding role play method. The objective of the study was to test out the method of role play applied in teaching LCA 2013 *Mabahith al-Hukm*. The purpose of the survey was to assess the students' acceptance and application of the role play in the learning of the course subject.

3. Research Method

The research was conducted during early March 2011 to a group of 100 students registering for the course LCA 2013 *Mabahith al-Hukm* during the academic session Semester I, 2010/2011. The students are undergraduates studying for the degree of Bachelor of Fiqh and Fatwa in the Faculty of Shariah and Law, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). This is an exploratory study using purposive sampling method, taking into account the nature and subject-matter of the course and the experience of the instructor in conducting role play teaching method.

The students were asked to complete an online survey questionnaires based on the "Survey monkey" available at "<http://www.surveymonkey.com/>" at the end of the semester after they have been exposed to the role play technique to assess the effectiveness of the teaching method. Some role play examples include having students studying historical figures of *ulama* encountering major problems and mock trial and moot court cases. Details of the research design and the survey instruments adopted for the study are explained below.

3.1 Research design

There are numerous definitions of role play. The definition used for this study is from Aronson and Carlsmith (1968) who described the role playing study as "an as-if" experiment in which the subject is asked to behave as if he (or she) were a particular person in a particular situation". The research design for the role-playing teaching method for one of the topics being discussed are divided into five parts and can be described as follows:

Part 1: Activities

The role play method in the LCA2013 *Mabahith al-Hukm* course is done by placing the students in small groups. Each group, made up of four students, is assigned a few topics from the course syllabus. Table 1 below lists the groups and the role play topics assigned to the students.

Table 1. Student Groups and topics of role play

No.	Name/Group	Topic of Role Play
1.	Group 1	<i>Wajib Mutlaq</i> <i>Wajib Muqayyad</i>
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.	Group 2	<i>Wajib Muwassa'</i> <i>Wajib Mudayyad</i>
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.	Group 3	<i>Wajib Muhaddad</i> <i>dWajib Ghayr Muhadda</i>
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.	Group 4	<i>Wajib Mu'ayyan</i> <i>Wajib Ghayr Mu'ayyan (Wajib Mukhayyar)</i>
14.		

15.		
16.		
17.		
18.	Group 5	<i>Wajib Ayniyy</i>
19.		<i>Wajib Kifa'iy</i>
20.		
21.		<i>Mandub Mu'akkad</i>
22.	Group 6	<i>Mandub Ghayr Mu'akkad</i>
23.		<i>Mandub Za'id</i>
24.		
25.		
26.	Group 7	<i>Haram Li Zatihi</i>
27.		<i>Haram Li Ghayrihi</i>
28.		<i>Makruh Tahriman</i>

In reference to Table 1 above, no. 1 to 28 refer to the list of names of the students in each respective tutorial group.

Topic: Wajib Mutlaq and Wajib Muqayyad

Each team is required to present a play or sketch related to the assigned topic, for example "*wajib mutlaq and wajib muqayyad*" (refer to Table 1). Each week, only one group is required to present their role play. Each group is given the opportunity to be creative in their role play, whether they would need "supporting actors/actresses" who are not from the group or to use props, costumes and so on. Each presentation would need to be between 20-30 minutes only. The lecturer would then pose questions based on the presentation. Students who are not from the group may also pose questions. If there are factual errors, the lecturer would point them out for correction.

The group which comes first from each tutorial group (6-7 tutorial groups) would be assigned the same topic. However, the resulting role play would be different, similarly the questions posed as a result of the role play. This provides the variation to the lecturer and students in the teaching and learning of the respective subject. Initial observations on the response from students on having the role play as part of the subject seem to be positive and well-accepted by the students. In the beginning, the students had some reservations and stumbled while role-playing. Later, they became more comfortable and enjoyed themselves and were able to finish a meaningful role play based on the assigned topics.

Part 2: Issue: Continue Studying in The Class During The Adhan (Calling For Prayer)

- Background of *Mabahith al-Hukm* regarding the issues.
 - *Naqliyyah* and *aqliyyah* reasonings.
- Main sources of arguments from the Four Schools of Thought.
 - *Fatwa, ijtihaad*, opinions from *fuqaha*.

Part 3: Presentation of Each Group

Pretend you are in the lecture class when there is an *adhan* calling for prayer. Do you continue your study or respond to the calling of *adhan*?

- Time allocated: 20-30 minutes.
- Introduction and information of the issue.
- Stances on issues/platform.
- Any other approved/acceptable ideas.

Part 4: Debate

- Opening statement: Why should you stay in lecture class while there is *adhan* calling?
- Stance on issues/platform.
- Rebuttal: think about what your opponents' stances are and be ready to defend your own.
- Closing statement: reaffirm your conclusion, what are the relevant *fiqh* and *fatwa*?

Part 5: Evaluation

- Presentation: 50.
- Class work observation: 50.

Total points possible: 100 (will be converted according to the weight assigned for continuous assessment). The students can be evaluated using the suggested Presentation and Debate Rubrics as follows:

Table 2. Criteria for presentation rubric and debate rubric for students evaluation

	Criteria				Points
Presentation Rubric	1	2	3	4	
Content Knowledge	Student does not have grasp of information and cannot answer questions about subject.	Student is not familiar with basic information of the subject and can answer few problems only	Student is at ease with content, but fails to elaborate.	Student demonstrates full knowledge with explanations and elaboration.	
Creativity	Student's presentation was not creative at all. They just read from the slides	Presentation was a little creative.	Presentation was creative and was well organized.	Presentation was highly creative and well researched	
Delivery/Verbal Techniques	Student speaks too quietly and unable to project the voice for the audience at the back	Student incorrectly pronounces terms. Audience members have difficulty hearing presentation.	Student's voice is clear and pronunciations of words are mostly correct.	Student used a clear voice and correct pronunciation of terms	
Debate Rubric	1	2	3	4	Points
Understanding of Topic	Student did not show an adequate understanding of the topic.	Students seem to understand the main points of the topic.	Student demonstrate clear understanding on the topic and able to present the ideas clearly.	Student understood the topic well and presented the info. forcefully & convincingly.	
Use of facts/Statistics	Every point was not supported.	Several points were supported with facts, statistics and/or examples, not much relevance given.	Major points were supported with relevant facts, statistics and/or examples.	All points were supported well with relevant facts, statistics and/or examples	
Respect/ Rebuttal	Counterarguments were not relevant to the issue discussed.	Most counterarguments were relevant.	Most counterarguments were accurate, relevant and include references.	All counterarguments were accurate, relevant and include appropriate references.	
					Total Marks

Note: The criteria in the rubrics are non-exhaustive and can be adjusted and added accordingly.

Other topics discussed are as listed in Table 2 above and covered during the first seven weeks of tutorial sessions. These topics are based on the course outline and are discussed and delivered during tutorial sessions according to the same research design as explained above.

3.2 Data Collection and Sampling Frame

Data are collected based on survey questionnaires distributed to 100 students at the end of semester during lecture in early March 2011. Incomplete questionnaires having more than 30 percent unanswered questions were re-send for the second round. The sampling frame of the respondents are based on purposive sampling of the students from the Faculty of Shariah and Law, who are currently registering for the subject *Mabahith al-Hukm* at the time the survey was administered. Only one respondent didn't answer the questionnaire (n=99).

3.3 Survey Instrument

Students were given a project that requires them to role play based on the specific LCA 2013 *Mabahith al-Hukm* topics assigned by the instructor (refer Table 2). At the end of the semester, students answer the online Likert-type survey questionnaires.

The survey instrument was designed based on the earlier instrument conducted by the researchers in 2005. The previous survey instrument was adapted based on the established service quality dimensions (SERVQUAL and related scales) and the attitudinal scale questions adapted from Parasuranam, Zeithaml and Berry's concept (1984) to measure perceptions and satisfaction. The survey instrument was subjected to peer-review evaluations and pilot

testing and subsequently improved based on the comments and feedback received. The previous instrument registered a Cronbach Alpha of 0.70.

The survey instrument consists of 4 main sections totalling 51 questions. Out of these, 44 are structured questions based on Likert-type question. The answers were based on the 1 to 5 Likert scale, where: 1 = Totally Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Agree; and 5 = Totally Agree. Answers 1 and 2 on the Likert scale are considered as non-agreeable or giving a negative response to the statement presented in the survey form. The answer 3 on the Likert scale is impartial while answers 4 and 5 on the Likert scale are considered as agreeable or giving a positive response to the reported statement. The summary of the breakdown of the survey questionnaire is as follows:

- Section A: 7 questions on the profile of respondents;
- Section B: 23 questions on perceptions towards the use of role-play teaching method in studying subject *Mabahith al-Hukm*;
- Section C: 11 questions on the issues/topics selected and discussed;
- Section D: 10 questions on the future prospects of using role-play as a teaching method.

Section A includes questions on the respondents’ backgrounds. Section B covers the perception on the use of role play to deepen the understanding of LCA 2013 *Mabahith al-Hukm*. There were 23 structured questions in this section where the answers were based on the Likert scale 1 to 5. Section C focused on the problems and contains 11 structured questions utilising the Likert scale as in Section B. Section D, meanwhile, looked at the future possibility of using the role play method and it has 10 questions with the Likert scale of 1 to 5. This section needed the respondents to do a self-assessment on the effectiveness of the teaching method, based on their confidence in the marketability and employability after graduation as an indicator.

4. Results and Data Analysis

4.1 Profile of respondents

A majority of the respondents are in the age group ranging from 21 to 25 years old. Almost two-third of them are female students while the rest are males, both coming from the Faculty of Shariah and Law, USIM. Based on the highest percentage, they come from Kelantan (24 percent), Selangor (20 percent) and Johor (18 percent), followed by other states in most of the peninsular. Perlis, Kedah and Pulau Pinang on the other hand, have a very small number of students. The management authority of USIM might need to initiate further promotion to the northern states in Malaysia to increase efforts towards higher student mobility.

From the aspect of educational background, half of the respondents either possess a diploma, a Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM) or a Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia (STAM) certificate. Almost half of the respondents have studied the subject of Usul Fiqh but gave an average mark of 3.37 (Undecided) to the question on the effectiveness of the teaching of the subject in the past. Table 3 shows the frequency and the total percentage of the respondents’ profile in the study.

Table 3. Total of Respondents’ Profile

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
< 20	3	3
20-25	94	95
>25	2	2
<i>Total</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>100</i>
Gender		
Male	25	25.3
Female	74	74.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>100</i>
State of Origin		
Perlis	2	2.1
Kedah	2	2.1
Pulau Pinang	1	1
Perak	6	6.3
Selangor	19	19.8
Melaka	4	4.2
Johor	17	17.7

N. Sembilan	7	7.3
Kelantan	23	24
Pahang	6	6.3
Terengganu	4	4.2
Kuala Lumpur	5	5.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>100</i>
Educational Background		
STAM	36	37.1
STPM	5	5.2
Diploma	7	7.2
Others	52	52
<i>Total</i>	<i>98</i>	<i>100</i>
Have You Studied Usul Fiqh?		
Yes	50	51
No	48	49
<i>Total</i>	<i>98</i>	<i>100</i>
Method of Delivery of Usul Fiqh		
Lecture	37	74
Lecture & Utilisation of Problems	13	26
Others	6	-
<i>Total</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Effectiveness in Method of Delivery</i>		
Totally Disagree	1	2
Disagree	16	31.4
Undecided	8	15.7
Agree	15	29.4
Totally agree	11	21.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: Survey questionnaires, 2011.

4.2 Perception towards the use of role play method

This section will explain the research findings based on the replies of the respondents in Section B - Perception on the use of role play method in the subject of Mabahith al-Hukm. Table 4 has listed the findings according to the highest average mark. The average for the total of 23 questions is 4.37. In relation to this, generally it can be summed up that the students have a positive perception on the use of the role play method and they agree on its applicability in class. This section identifies three main aspects of the perception of respondents. Firstly, the perception towards the role play method itself; secondly the perception towards the effectiveness of the role play method; and thirdly, perception towards the role of the lecturer in the application of the role play method. All the questions in this section are re-categorised based on these three dimensions.

However, attention should also be given to three items which received low marks on average. Firstly, students feel that there is no connection between the role play method in raising their academic performance (from the aspect of CGPA). Secondly, no individual attention given to students in using this method. Thirdly, guidelines to this method of teaching was not explained beforehand. This aspect should be given emphasis, continual assessment and the objectives explained during the teaching and learning process. One example, the ability to understand, analyse and provide solutions to certain problems within a shorter time at the end of the semester compared to at the beginning of the semester.

Table 4. Findings of study on the perception of using role play method

Section B: Perception Of Using Role Play Method	Average
The use of Role Play method puts more fun into the class.	4.89
The lecturer has the knowledge to answer your questions concerning the issue discussed.	4.72
The Role Play method can sharpen the creative thinking skills.	4.70
The use of Role Play method is very interesting.	4.66
The use of Role Play method is a new step in teaching the subject of Mabahith Hukum.	4.64
The lecturer should/need to provide feedback on the role play performance.	4.64
The use of Role Play may attract other students in class to speak.	4.63
You agree with the use of Role Play method in the subject of Mabahith Hukum.	4.61

The answer improves your skills in Mabahith Hukum.	4.58
The use of Role Play may attract other students to voice out their opinions in class.	4.56
The use of Role Play may sharpen the critical thinking skills.	4.56
The lecturer who uses this method for this subject, aims to provide the best to students.	4.55
The lecturer is always ready to assist students.	4.53
The use of Role Play increases your understanding about the subject of Mabahith Hukum.	4.41
The use of Role Play may attract other students to debate in class.	4.37
The lecturer provides answers to the role play performances.	4.37
The use of Role Play raises your confidence on the subject of Mabahith Hukum.	4.30
The use of Role Play is suitable to the subject of Mabahith Hukum.	4.25
The two-hour tutorial time is enough for discussions on role play performance.	4.11
The lecturer who uses this method for this subject, explains the guidelines beforehand in class.	4.09
While teaching, the lecturer who uses the Role Play method provides individual attention.	3.85
The use of Role Play method has the potential to increase your PNGS/CGPA.	3.81
The use of Role Play method is causing problems to understand the subject of Mabahith Hukum.	2.72
Total Average	4.37

Note: Likert scale 1= Totally disagree to 5 = Totally agree.

4.3 Application of arising issues in using the role play method

This section has 11 structured questions. The total average mark is 4.40, where it is higher than the average in Section B. To sum up, the students agree with the statement that the role play method was suitable, can hold their attention and assists them in understanding the subject of *Mabahith al-Hukm*. Most of the questions in this section put emphasis on the aspect of teaching the subject, and analyse less on students’ ability in doing self-assessment.

Nevertheless, the aspect of improvement based on the lowest average mark is related to the transparency of the role play method, and the delivery of subject matter that is organized, easy to understand and is current in nature. This matter is consistent with the findings from Section B. Maybe the students had less prior exposure to an interactive learning experience where they have to be well-prepared and play a bigger role in lectures as compared to conventional practices where teaching and learning is a one-way communication (see Table 5).

Table 5. Findings from study on application of arising issues

Section C: Arising Issues	Average
The use of Role Play can attract students’ attention.	4.67
The Role Play method facilitates students’ understanding of subjects taught.	4.56
The Role Play method fits the students’ way of studying.	4.53
The Role Play method suits the students’ level of knowledge.	4.46
The information conveyed through the Role Play method is easy to understand.	4.42
The Role Play method solidifies the understanding on the subject of Mabahith Hukum.	4.38
The teaching style using the Role Play method suits the subject of Mabahith Hukum.	4.33
The Role Play method used is realistic to the subject of Mabahith Hukum.	4.32
The Role Play method is a current issue.	4.27
Presentation of subject content is organised and easily followed.	4.24
The Role Play method used is clear.	4.19
Total Average	4.40

Note: Likert scale 1= Totally disagree to 5 = Totally agree.

4.4 Future prospects in using the role play method

Section D in the Questionnaire Form surveys the future prospects in using the Role Play method in teaching and learning the subject of LCA 2013 *Mahabith al-Hukm*. This section has 10 questions and the highest average total mark on the Likert scale of 4.42 as compared to Sections B and C. As such, the use of the role play method in the subject of Islamic Studies should be applied to provide a variety to the students of FSU specifically, and students in the religious stream in institutions of higher education. This simultaneously can raise their levels of competitiveness, competencies and soft skills applications.

Details of the study findings from Section D are presented in Table 6. Based on the table, students could see the uniqueness of this method and agree on its applicability in the future based on the highest score on the Likert scale, an average mark of 4.60. This is followed by the statement from respondents that they would select the class which applies the role play method in teaching the subject of Mahabith al-Hukm.

However, it was found that students could not relate to the skill of thinking out of the box with their prospects to be employed. This is based on the lowest average mark at 4.15 to the question on employability (refer Table 6). As a comparison, the aspect of marketability, competitiveness, self-worth and taking the Islamic education into the mainstream received the average total mark as the fifth lowest where the answer scale was closer to the Likert scale of 3 = Undecided.

Based on findings from the study, even though the respondents stated that they agree with the method and having positive perception towards understanding the subject of LCA 2013 *Mahabith al-Hukm* through the role play method, they were still unable to relate the skills attained to the long-term objectives. As an example, the increase in PNGS/CGPA and the aspects of marketability and employability as a result of the application of the role play method.

In relation to this, it is proposed that the lecturer explains on the skills attained which need to be polished and inculcated on a continual basis beginning from the first year of study until the end in year four. Such skills can be of use too for students who undergo industrial training during the final semester of their undergraduate programme.

Table 6. Findings from study on the prospects of using role play method

Section D: Prospects of using role play method	Average
You propose the continuing use of role play method in the subject of Mabahith Hukum at USIM.	4.60
The Role Play method makes the students from FSU, USIM unique.	4.60
There are 2 Usul Fiqh classes, the first uses the role play method and the other not using. You will choose the first class.	4.56
The Role Play method in the Shariah subject will be widely used in the future.	4.44
Role Play method should be applied into other subjects in Shariah studies.	4.42
Role Play assists in the marketability of students from FSU, USIM.	4.40
Role Play could bring Islamic education into the mainstream.	4.38
Role Play increases the competitiveness among students.	4.35
Role Play raises the self-worthiness of students.	4.31
Role Play assists in the employability of students from FSU, USIM.	4.15
Total Average	4.42

Note: Likert Scale 1 = Totally disagree to 5 = Totally agree.

4.5 Summary of results

The literature suggested several common themes with respect to role-play teaching method. Morris (2003) has suggested that “students feel empathy regarding events in the past when they act out the situation, and make connections between the character they play and real situations”. Hence, empathy is important for students to make learning meaningful. However, role-playing will lose its effectiveness if it is used too often (Duncombe & Heikkinen, 1990). Traditional teaching methods such as lecturing do not help students’ makes connections or feel empathy towards the material to the same extent role-playing does, but is necessary at times. Therefore,

interchanging activities and projects such as role play between the lectures can make the subject more interesting and help improve understanding.

The findings of the literature are consistent with the findings of the present research. Generally, from the study conducted, the teaching method of course subject LCA 2013 *Mabahith al-Hukm* based on role play was very well received by students. The respondents in general agree with the positive statements put forward in the survey form in relation to reinforcing their understanding of the subject. Only two questions received an average mark of less than 4 on the Likert scale, which was interpreted as Undecided.

Thus, it is proposed that the aspects of self-worth, competitiveness, marketability and employability with an improvement in academic performance should be given strong emphasis in the application of this method. Another aspect to be given focus is the statement concerning the respondents' unfamiliarity with the role play method. Respondents too were unsure how this method could assist in their academic performance (no relation to CGPA).

Respondents too were unable to relate on the skills acquired from the aspects of marketability and employability. The lecturer applying this method should assist by explaining the objectives; short-term (soft skills and CGPA) and long-term (career prospects) on a continual basis to students, while at the same time improved the level of understanding on the subject *Mabahith al-Hukm*.

5. Conclusion

The use of role play in teaching and learning is one example of creative teaching in Shariah Studies. It is, however, not the only method which can be applied by the lecturer in lectures or by a tutor in tutorials. From the findings of the study, it may assist the lecturers in the field of Shariah to apply the method in their lectures.

In addition, the study gives an important indicator that a lecturer needs to vary the teaching techniques to hold the students' attention. A lecturer should no longer be restricted to the traditional method of teaching where the students need to only listen. Using the role play method, soft skills like communication, teamwork, critical and creative thinking may be instilled in the students. It can add on beneficial values for students in the Shariah field in entering job market after graduation.

Although this role play method is applied in the subject of *Usul Fiqh*, it may be suitably applied to any other Shariah subject such as *Fiqh*, *Qawaid Fiqh* and so on. What is important is the readiness of the lecturer to step out from the traditional mold. This is not to say that the traditional methods are of no use, but it is more towards providing variations in teaching and learning to allow the students in the field of Shariah to be highly-skilled.

Reference

- Abdullah Hasan & Ainon Mohd. (2000). *Mendorong Kreativiti Kanak-Kanak*. T.tp: PTS Publications and Distributors Sdn Bhd.
- Aronson, E. & Carlsmith, J. M. (1968). *Experimentation in social psychology*. The Handbook of Social Psychology.
- Duncombe, S. & Heikkinen, M. H. (1990). Role-playing for different viewpoints. *The Social Studies*. Washington.
- Hasan Langgulung. (1997). *Kreativiti dan Pendidikan Suatu Kajian Psikologi dan Falsafah*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Irwan Mohd Subri. (2011). *Kaedah Lakonan Dalam Subjek Mabahith Hukum: Kajian Di FSU, USIM*. Penyelidikan.
- Mahmood Zuhdi Ab Majid. (1997). *Pengajian Shariah: Satu Pentakrifan*. Dlm. Mahmood Zuhdi Ab Majid (pnyt.). *Dinamisme Pengajian Shariah*. Kuala Lumpur: Berita Publishing Sdn. Bhd.
- Morris, R. V. (2003). Acting out history: Students reach across time and space. *International Journal of Social Education*.
- Rasidi Md Sidik. (2009). Inovasi Dan Kreativiti Dalam Pendidikan. <http://www.mudahbelajar.com/?p=154> [10th November 2011].
- Shahabuddin Hashim & Rohizani Yaakub. *Psikologi pembelajaran dan personaliti*. T.tp: PTS Publications and Distributors Sdn Bhd. <http://www.surveymonkey.com/> [31th February 2011].