

# Integration Of Islamic Values in Undergraduate Nursing Program: An Expository Analysis

Mohd Said Nurumal<sup>1</sup>, Thandar Soe Sumaiyah Jamaludin<sup>1\*</sup>, Norfadzilah Ahmad<sup>1</sup>, Siti Aesah@Naznin Muhammad<sup>2</sup>, Chong Mei Chan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kulliyah of Nursing, International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Kulliyah of Medicine, International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>Department of Nursing Science, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

## ABSTRACT

Nursing is a caring profession which has sympathy, compassion, and helping others inherently which is known as soft skills in current modern day. Those skills are the foundation of Islamic values for a Muslim graduate nurse who should pose. Hence, this study aimed to address the importance of integrating Islamic values in the undergraduate nursing program. This paper provides an account that is intended as an expository analysis method for the integration of Islamic values in the undergraduate nursing program. Paying attention not only to the material world of human but also his or her soul and spirituality dimension. Thus, the subject area to investigate the effect of the integration on Islamic values or soft skills in the undergraduate nursing program is extremely recommended for future study.

**KEYWORDS:** Nursing, Islam, Social skills, Communication, Empathy

## INTRODUCTION

For every professional, education plays a vital role in developing a good personality. In this current modern-day, undergraduate nursing students are trained to become a quality safe nurses and good personality nurses as defined by the learning outcomes of the nursing program's curriculum. In the context of training and educating of future nurses, the nursing academics are responsible to enhance the mental development of the undergraduate nursing students. Furthermore, nursing academics also need to enhance the student's analytical and methodical power, and not trying to make them learnt and memorize all the time in every lecture but also guiding them to hold the professional values.

It is desirable that undergraduate nursing students are inculcated with the correct mindset that is in consonance with the Islamic ethics, principles and values when educating future nurses from the Islamic perspective especially in the practicing of Islamic majority country like Malaysia. Islamic values or which is known as soft skills in the modern word is a critical element should have in every Muslim graduate nurses (1). Furthermore, nursing is a clinical profession influenced by social and environmental change (2). Therefore, nursing academics should take into account both Islamic values or soft skills when facing the continuing evolution of the nursing practice environment for future nurses particularly in Malaysia.

Since nursing clinical education undergoes radical reform, it must address both current and future healthcare demands inculcating of Islamic values or soft skills as we are a role model of Islamic nurse (1,3). Moreover, literatures showed that nursing students continue to face significant difficulties applying classroom knowledge to clinical practice (4, 5). Thus, this paper uses expository analysis to address the importance of integration of Islamic values in the undergraduate nursing program as well as relevant factors of influence. The authors also provide suggestions for meeting future societal demands from Muslim graduate nurses.

## INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC VALUES IN EDUCATION

Any education in this world is dynamic in nature, it has the capacity to propel human beings into becoming a better person as well as being the caliph (Kalifah) of Allah (representative or vicegerent of Allah on earth). To produce a 'balanced' human being, an integrated concept must be practiced. It is a type of education that guides and trains the mind, body and soul of a person based on Islamic values and the revelations from Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah to produce a pious human being who is devoted to Allah (6). Therefore, Islamic education emphasizes the following concepts: (i) A lifetime education; (ii) The development of the total potential of the soul, mind and body integrated and adequately in the three aspects - cognitive, affective and psychomotor; (iii) The capability to carry out duties as a servant of Allah and as a caliph of Allah and knowledge and virtuous deeds to achieve happiness in life in this world and the hereafter (6).

Integrating of education emphasizes the unison of knowledge, not merely the installation of one's knowledge but somehow follows after or emulates the approach and method of implementation and techniques used in the teaching and learning in a classroom (7). Moreover, an integrated education focuses mainly on implementing Islam as a whole

\* Corresponding author

Thandar Soe Sumaiyah Jamaludin  
Kulliyah of Nursing, International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuantan, Pahang.  
Email Address: sumaiyahsj@gmail.com/  
sumaiyah@iium.edu.my  
Tel: +60166092641.

with philosophies. Those are promoting a strong belief and knowledge, the balance of the physical element and the soul, the world and the hereafter, the thoughts, the heart, the mind and the search, and application of revealed knowledge (8). Therefore, a person can be educated and trained to understand and uphold the Islamic faith, the laws and the morals in one's life through an integrated education program (6). Moreover, an integrated education unifies the different knowledge in life with congruity between the development of community (Ummah) and its teaching, the relation between human and Allah, the different components in oneself, towards creating equilibrium in mind, spirit and body (7,8). The main objective of integrated education is to obtain richness of the heart and brilliance of the mind. Furthermore, it governs the entire education process, knowledge development, incorporates the spiritual, physical and mental aspects in its implementation. Therefore, the integration of Islamization in education simply means that a student is made to understand that knowledge is pure (quds) and his/her involvement serves as a religious service for mankind (7).

### **INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC VALUES IN MEDICAL CURRICULUM**

At the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM), Professor Dr. Omar Hassan Kasule proposed an Islamic Input Medical Curriculum in 1995 which was an innovative effort to Islamize the medical curriculum (9). It consists of two separate but closely related components: Islamization and legal medicine. Islamization deals with putting medicine in an Islamic context in terms of epistemology, values and attitudes. It represents a noble effort of Islamization of medical sciences by bridging the dichotomy between traditional Islamic sciences and the medical sciences. Legal medicine deals with issues of application of the Law (Syariah) from a medical perspective including the 'grey area' for which simple categorization as good and bad, legal and illegal is not easy.

The curriculum ensures that medical students are exposed to the Islamic perspectives of medicine and its practice in terms of its worldview, professionalism, leadership and ethics. The students are prepared to internalize the moral and ethical dimensions of the profession; they are introduced to basic Islamic concepts, they are drawn to appreciate the human body and organs as the precious gift of the Creator reflecting His mercy and Bounty, they are familiarized with Islamic medical jurisprudence (fiqh) issues and appreciate the Islamic medical heritage. Medical teachers with fundamental knowledge of Islam are entrusted to integrate the Islamic input in their teaching of medical sciences as well as to demonstrate good values that are in consonance with Islam in terms of their professionalism, leadership and ethics (9).

His passion and contribution to the incorporation of Islamic values and philosophy into the medical curriculum and helping graduate and train Muslim physicians empowered with the highest ethical values (9). The Islamic input in the medical curriculum (IIMC) was started at faculty (Kulliyah) of Medicine, IIUM since 1995. The core motive of IIMC is to resolve the crisis of duality or dichotomy manifesting as teaching Islamic sciences separately from medical disciplines by different teachers and in different institutions. The IIMC resolves the crisis of duality by insisting that Islamic concepts should be taught by the same people who teach

medical disciplines. All lecturers in the Kulliyah of Medicine, IIUM go through a Diploma in Islamic Studies (DIS) whose modules are exactly the same as the modules of IIMC. This prepares them to be effective teachers of IIMC.

### **INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC VALUES IN NURSING CURRICULUM**

The literature for integration of Islamic values in nursing curriculum is in infancy stage. However, the authors strongly believe that as a Muslim graduate nurse this is the time to expose about nursing curriculum regards to this matter. Furthermore, newly employed nursing graduates seemed academically equipped as they enter the clinical setting but lacking in soft skills such as problem-solving, leadership, communication and critical thinking (10). Moreover, nursing is a caring profession which is considered an Islamic attribute in the Islamic thought, so that Islam emphasizes caring not only for humans but also for other creatures of the world (1).

Therefore, every nursing student should be re-emphasized again on the basic principles of Islamic values when they are in the classroom such as for most Muslims, what is considered halal (permitted) and haram (forbidden) in Islam especially handling with patients in the clinical setting. Furthermore, all undergraduate nursing students should be reminded again on a precise mindset like "Nurses as an agent of healing patients and Allah is the Ultimate Healer" and carried out the nursing duty as worshipping (Ibadah).

Moreover, clinical nursing curriculum should be inculcated with three main kinds of Islamic values: (1) 'akhlaq', which refers to the duties and responsibilities set out in the shariah and in Islamic teaching generally; (2) 'adab', which refers to the manners associated with good breeding; and (3) the qualities of character possessed by a good Muslim, following the example of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). These values are very important to hold as a Muslim nurse when dealing with sickly person.

Additionally, future nurses should be re-emphasized among the main differences between Islamic and western morality are the emphasis on timeless religious principles, the role of the law in enforcing morality, the different understanding of rights, the rejection of moral autonomy as a goal of moral education and the stress on reward in the Hereafter as a motivator of moral behavior (8). These are the characteristics of a safe nurse where most patients would feel safe and comfortable to receive their care that should be developed and nurtured during the training period especially in the clinical setting.

Nevertheless, training nurses to attain the ideal characteristics of safe nurse according to the ideal of Islamic nursing professionalism requires a proper curriculum, which has to be holistic, comprehensive and conforms to the Islamic worldview (6,7,11-12). The main learning objectives of the curriculum would be that of transforming nursing students to become good Muslim nurses. The training that students undergo should make them committed to practice their religious duties and obligations while ensuring that they achieve the desired level of competency as accorded by the profession, ethically sound in delivering their duties and able to communicate

with compassion to the extent that their patients perceive them as quality and safe nurses.

Furthermore, enthusiastic nursing academics are also needed to implement the learning objectives of the nursing clinical curriculum, guiding and mentoring students to achieve the desired learning outcomes. Ideally, the Muslim nursing academics should portray excellent qualities as the living example of a good Muslim nurse for students to emulate. Development of such attributes during the period of training will necessarily affect nurse-patient relationship and quality of patient care provided leading to ultimate health and illness outcomes for community (Ummah).

### **CURRENT ISSUES ON INTEGRATING OF ISLAMIC VALUES IN NURSING PROGRAM**

When we talk about Islamic values or soft skills, it will remain as rhetoric unless a concerted and serious effort is taken to materialize it. The integration of Islamic values in undergraduate Nursing Program is an effort of Islamization of knowledge on the nursing profession. In Malaysia, the Kulliyah of Nursing of International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) was started at the year 2004 as the status of Faculty (Kulliyah) while other Universities in Malaysia, Nursing is one of the Departments under the Faculty of Medicine or the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences.

The Kulliyah of Nursing, IIUM initiated with the undergraduate nursing program that is with embedded Islamic values in the teaching and practice of nursing which is totally the difference that we can see in the other institutions of Malaysia. During the course of the 4-year undergraduate nursing program, the curriculum provides venue for the Islamization process to take place for nursing students.

The Islamic imbued nursing curriculum is based on assumptions that Islam has moral values that are universal and, being found in other religions and belief systems, can be taught to and be appreciated equally well by Muslims and non-Muslim students, a qualified nurse must understand Islamic values relating to nursing field, Fiqh Tibbi, in order to practice successfully in a Muslim community whose culture and social norms are shaped by the Shariat, and finally a good nurse must be equipped with personal, communication, leadership and management skills based on Islamic teachings and empirical social and managerial sciences related to patient care.

In the nursing clinical curriculum and practical hands on session, nursing academics teaches students on the lawful and prohibitions in activities of daily living such as halal medicine, food and nutrition, exercise and healthy life styles in order to help patients to solve problems related to practical Ibadat such as ablution (wudhu), prayer (solat), fasting, and so on. Furthermore, nursing academics also focuses on developing students with important soft skills such as personal, communication, leadership and management skills based on Islamic teachings and empirical social and managerial sciences which also aligned with the Malaysian Qualification Framework (MQF) (12).

The Kulliyah of Nursing (KON), IIUM is the first to incorporate Islamic input in nursing curriculum in the country. The philosophy of Islamic imbued is

based on the premise that teaching of nursing in a holistic manner is being achieved by having a series of relevant lectures for the students every week throughout the 4-year course of the nursing program. Nursing academics from KON, IIUM teaches nursing students about the nursing program that is integrated with Islamic worldview. However, with the passage of time and taking into account the current needs of nursing education, the curriculum must also respond to these needs to stay relevant.

The inculcation of Islamic values in nursing curriculum is an important component of learning and teaching with regards to the proper personal and professional developments of the future nurses. Thus, every effort must be taken to integrate every aspect of teaching and learning of nursing so as to achieve its desired learning outcomes. However, similar integration into the area of research and publication is not yet fully established. Implementing the blueprint of the curriculum is not an easy task and needs evaluation and improvements (12). The perception of the students as one of the major stakeholders is necessary to evaluate whether the learning objectives and outcomes are met. As a nursing academic, not only emphasis on the importance of integration Islamic values in undergraduate Nursing program but also crucial in monitoring the quality of nursing students that produce from this program.

### **CONCLUSION**

Every Muslim Nursing academic is responsible and should be in the forefront to lead a positive change in the community (Ummah). Based on the paradigms of tauhid, the crisis of knowledge facing the ummah can be resolved by reforming the education systems and curricula of all disciplines to reflect Islamic epistemology. Integration of Islamic values in nursing program especially into the clinical area is the essence of the reform process for nursing professional. It describes the way we train nurses according to the worldview of Islam, which is based on the tauhidic paradigm and realization of Islamic nursing professionalism that emphasizes on acquiring the necessary expertise as safe nurses, embracing good ethical values and demonstrating good communication skills with compassion while attending to patients in clinical or community setting. The issues components that exposed in this paper will provide guidance for the authors to conduct further research on the effect of inculcation of Islamic values in nursing program.

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