## Analysing Islamic Values through Student Personal Reading Logs

Hanani Ahmad Zubir1\*,

Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pulau Pinang, Permatang Pauh, 14000 and Malaysia

Email: hanani.az@uitm.edu.my

Norhaslinda Hassan2.

Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pulau Pinang, Permatang Pauh, 14000 and Malaysia

Email: haslinda.hassan@uitm.edu.my

#### Maizatul Akmal Mohd Mohzan3,

Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pulau Pinang, Permatang Pauh, 14000 and Malaysia

Email: maizatul.akmal@uitm.edu.my

## Rofiza Aboo Bakar4,

Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pulau Pinang, Permatang Pauh, 14000 and Malaysia

Email: rofiza@uitm.edu.my

\*Corresponding author Email: \* hanani.az@uitm.edu.my

#### **Abstract**

A value is a principle, standard or quality regarded as worthwhile or desirable and deemed a basis of unity. Each religion emphasizes on the importance of various values. As Islam is viewed as a complete way of life, Muslim scholars believe that Islamic values should be instilled in every discipline, including English Language teaching and learning, specifically in reading classes, as English is an important language in the service-led economy. Reading influences the mind. Thus, it is important for students to be able to identify Islamic values in reading short stories. With regards to Islamisation of knowledge, this research was conducted to explore the Islamic values through student Personal Reading Logs. Data were collected using analysis of Personal Reading Logs written by 158 students of Universiti Teknologi MARA. The findings revealed that students were able to discuss intellectually on Islamic values. There are nine themes employed by them in response to these texts: adab, akhlaq, Arabic terms, hadith and the Quranic verses, stories of the prophets, the Muslim student's related experience, Islamic history, Islamic practices, and Islamic prohibitions. Hence, teachers should infuse Islamic values in their effort to promote Islam as a way of life.

Keywords: Islamization of Knowledge; Islamic Values; English; Personal Reading Logs

#### 1 Introduction

According to al-Faruqi (1981), Islamization of knowledge is an act of integrating knowledge into the corpus of Islamic legacy by eliminating, amending, re-interpreting, and adapting its components as the world view of Islam and its values dictate. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Akgunduz (2015) explained that Islamic values define the foundations for good individual and social life and it will not be for real unless Muslims truly practice Islamic values.

Immoral conducts involving Muslims are on the rise, especially among students in higher learning institutions across Malaysia (Nik Rosila, 2013). Considering researchers' experience as educators, it is safe to conclude that there is a need to address this issue in order to mitigate immoral conducts among Muslim students by equipping learners as well as teachers with some awareness of Islamic values. It is important to note that although Islam advocates noble practices and good moral conducts, it is undeniable that Muslim students

are the ones who largely contribute to the increasing number of various disgraceful acts (Che Noraini & Hasan, 2008). Such a backdrop has sparked the researchers' interest to examine the awareness of Islamic values among Muslim students. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the Islamic values awareness among Muslim students of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). Specifically, the present study intends to analyse the Islamic values discussed in students' Personal Reading Logs which are beneficial for them to record their thoughts and responses as they interact with the reading texts (Bakar, 2015; Bakar & Zubir, 2014) as well as the importance of incorporating Islamic values in English Language teaching (and learning). UiTM was chosen due to the fact that the majority of UiTM students are Muslims. Hence, incorporating Islamic values would be an acceptable approach with benefits in mind. The present study looked into one assessment component of Integrated Language Skills: Reading, namely Personal Reading Log (PRL). PRL requires students to respond to a question based on a short story that they have read.

#### 2 Literature Review

Each religion has a contribution to existing values (Ahmet Akgunduz, 2015). These existing values are also known as moral values or common values. Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and many other religions stress a lot on values. However, the emphasis on various values differs from one religion to another. There is no religion that promotes immoral behaviour. Many studies were done on moral values (see Alexander & Esther, 2016; Katsikis, 2021; Nurlaela Sari, 2013). Hence, this study focused on Islamic values as it is more acknowledged among Muslims as adab, which came to imply as the sum of intellectual knowledge that makes a man courteous and urbane. Discussions on moral values has managed to attract attention from various parties since ages. The main focus of the discussions is mainly on attitude, habit, behaviour, etiquette and other human activities. With regards to evaluation, the value of the behaviour is assessed whether it is good or bad and so on. However, the question relies on what is the standard in determining whether an action is good or bad, sinful or not? Various answers can be obtained when the concept of ethics and moral values are analysed and understood. Ethics came from a Greek word ethos which means law, culture, custom, and etiquette. Meanwhile, Latin which mainly inherits Greek culture also uses the word mores for the same concept. Mores is a root word for moral which is defined as morality, courtesy, politeness, tradition, and many more that determine the standard or norm. Nonetheless, some relate ethics and moral values with community rules, which consist of the manner and discipline of a particular society. Rules of the common people are referred to as tradition, norm, habit or custom, value and taboo of the society. Notably, community rules exist not within an individual. In addition, rules exist or emerge and were set by authorities in the community (Abdul Rahman, 1999). Morality for non-Muslims is determined by ethics. Ethics are philosophies on axiology (theory on values). Values which seem good by the ethics are known as good values, while the values which seem bad are known as bad values or immoral behaviours. Islamic values, on the other hand, are not a theory. The concept of Islamic values is not the same as ethics, which were brought upon by the Western world. Islamic values are the spiritual attitude of glorifying human behaviour towards Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala towards themselves and other creatures, according to orders and prohibitions, as well as guidance from the Qur'an and Hadith. Positive values are known mahmudah and negative values are known as mazmumah. According to Gazalba (1983), Islamic values are determined partly by akhlaq. Akhlaq is an Arabic word in plural form from the word al-khuluq which means manner, behaviour, and habit (Mustafa, 1996). Imam al-Ghazali defined the term akhlaq as attitudes embedded in a person's soul and from there behaviours are shaped easily without the need of prior thinking. When one is in the state of soul, positive and commendable values will unleash in accordance with intellect and Islamic law, it is known as good akhlaq. If the other way round, it is known as bad akhlaq (Al-Ghazali, 1988).

English is an important language in the serviceled economy (Kubota, 2020) making it important to be learned. There have been writeups and studies done to show that inculcating Islamic values in English texts helped in educating students (Khairiah, Engku Haliza, Ainon Jariah, & Isarji 2011; Nuriman & Fauzan, 2017). Among the emphasized Islamic values are to be kind to others, to respect your parents, to love each other, to have faith, to set a good example, to visit the sick and elderly, to give to the needy, to forgive and forget, to guard your modesty, to perfect your character, to maintain unity, to practise justice and equality, to be grateful, to be honest, and to be patient (Zubir, 2016). A study which is similar in nature to the present study, i.e., Annisa and Siti Hadijah (2017) focused on Islamic values by means of incorporating Islamic values in the English teaching and learning process. Their revealed teachers' approach recommendation influenced the Islamic values incorporated in teaching English. Notably, their focus is on teachers; students' responses were not looked into. This is because the teachers did not directly prepare the students for question on Islamic values and hence, the findings were more likely to be useful to check on the students' background knowledge.

## 3 Methodology/Materials

The present study intends to analyse the Islamic values in students' PRL responses and to highlight the importance of incorporating Islamic values in English Language teaching. In doing so, the students' PRL responses were analysed. PRL is the first assessment for Integrated Language Skills: Reading (ELC151), in which students have to answer a question based on a short story that they have read. The students' responses should be around 200 to 250 words. Thus, document analysis was employed as the research instrument of this study. Document analysis was done by scrutinizing relevant documents, i.e. students' PRL responses. Students' responses were scrutinized in terms of the Islamic values discussed in their PRL responses. The

researchers looked into the Islamic values discussed by the students and further categorized them into themes.

Convenience random sampling was employed as students who are undertaking Integrated Language Skills: Reading (ELC151) were chosen. Non-Muslim students were excluded from the samples. The population size of this study was 267 students. This research used 95 percent confidence to provide forceful conclusions with the margin of error of 5 per cent (Statistical & Technical Team, 1992). The sample size generated by Raosoft was 158 students. The researchers managed to collect 160 PRL responses. However, there were 2 outliers as they did not fulfill the task. Therefore, 158 PRL responses were analysed using Nvivo12. The responses were categorized and coded according to their themes. This was done twice to ensure that there were no main ideas being overlooked.

## 4 Findings

Upon analysing the students' PRL responses, nine themes were identified namely adab, akhlaq, Arabic terms, exemplary behaviour of the prophets, the Muslim student's related experience, hadith or Quranic verses, Islamic history, Islamic practices, and Islamic prohibitions. Figure 1 below presents the number of occurrences of each theme, which were extracted from Nvivo12 analysis. The highest occurrences is adab (n=45), followed by hadith or Quranic verses (n=43), akhlaq (n=27),Arabic terms (n=21),Islamic prohibitions (n=21), exemplary behaviour of the prophets (n=7), and the lowest are the Muslim student's related experience and Islamic history (n=1, respectively).

Figure 1: Number of occurrences according to identified themes

No.	Themes	Number respondents	of Number occurrences	of
1.	Adab	29	45	
2.	Akhlaq	20	27	
3.	Islamic Arabic Terms	20	21	
4.	Hadith/Quranic Verses	30	43	
5.	Exemplary Behaviour of The Prophets	11	12	
6.	Islamic History	1	1	
7.	The Muslim Student's Related Experience	2	2	
8.	Islamic Practices	5	7	
9.	Islamic Prohibitions	16	21	

The occurrence percentages of the identified themes is presented in Figure 2 below. 25% of the occurrences is on *adab*, 24% on hadith or Quranic verses, 15% on *akhlaq*, 12% on both Arabic terms and Islamic prohibitions, 7% on

exemplary behaviour of the prophets, 4% on Islamic practices, and 0.5% on both the Muslim student's related experience and Islamic history.

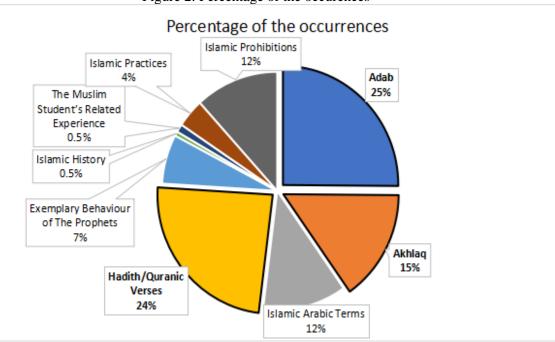


Figure 2: Percentage of the occurences

## 4.1 Adab

It is noteworthy that students of the present study discussed manners, morals and decencies as prescribed in Islamic etiquette, which was termed as *adab*. Among the *adab* highlighted by students were *adab* towards parents, family members and the community. Moreover, the students also explained on what kind of behaviour or *adab* should a Muslim have.

Some students highlighted the adab towards parents such as "In Islam, mother is someone that we need to respect the most", "Islam have taught us to always respects the eldest especially our parents". By extension, adab towards family was also explicated as the students wrote "a father and a husband are responsible for wife and children not only financially, but in terms of education and attention as well", "we must care for our family and not leave them behind" and "Islam has taught us to help each other especially when our family members in troubles and never marginalize them without single help form us". These responses from the students revealed the Islamic values embedded in how a Muslim should behave in relation to their family institution.

Zooming out from the family institution, the students also discussed *adab* with regards to

community, i.e., the adab towards community. A student wrote "As a Muslim who lived in the same earth, we should be kind to all people no matter what country they're from and what is their race." Another student wrote "as a Muslim, we need to always help each other if one of us were in trouble."

Adab, in its general form was also discussed in the PRL responses, which refers to the behaviour that a Muslim should have. For instance, a student wrote "In Islam, we need to always tell the truth even though it is very difficult." This shows the Islamic value of being honest and never telling lies. Another student also wrote "In Islam, parents need to teach our children not to lie and speak the truth." Some other students highlighted on politeness such as "In Islam, we are taught to be polite whenever we meet people especially with older people" and "we have to respect older people like greet and shake hand with them".

#### 4.2 Hadith/Ouranic Verses

Hadith/Quranic Verses is one of the salient themes used by the students when discussing Islamic values in the PRL responses. Hadith is an account describing the words and actions of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH whereas Quranic Verses are statements from the Quran.

This theme was widely used in the students' responses to discuss the strengthening of ties among families and community. For example, when discussing about polygamy and how a husband should be treating his wife, some of the examples of hadith/Quranic Verses highlighted by the students were "Then if you fear that there will be no justice (between your wives) then (marry) only one, or (wear) the female slaves you have. That is closer (to prevent) so that you do not do injustice." (Holy Qur'an, 4:4), "the believers whose faith is most perfect are those who have the best morals and the best of you are those who are the best to his wife".(At-Tarmizi) With regards relationships with parents, students display their understanding by citing "It is also stated in the Quran ,(29:8), that we must urge on humankind to be kind to parents", "Prophet Muhammad SAW once said that a human being is not from his nation if he is not affectionate towards children and respect the elders" and "There is a hadith records that Prophet Muhammad S.A.W defined "the greatest of great sins" as polytheism and refusing to obey one's parents".

Students also used Hadith/Quranic verses to highlight the importance of having mahmudah morality or praiseworthy conducts among Muslims. For example, when talking about patience, students cited "Only those who are patient shall receive their rewards in full, without Hisaab (without limit, calculation and estimation)" (39:10) and "There is great reward only for those among us who are patient with facing challenges" (Quran, 39:10). Other than that, students also wrote about how lying is forbidden in Islam by citing "The signs of the hypocrite are three, even if he fasts and prays and claims to be a Muslim: When he speaks he lies, when he promises he breaks (the promise), and when entrusted he betrays (that trust)." (MUSLIM), "...Indeed Allah does not guide one who is a transgressor and a liar." (Quran 40:28) and "And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it]," which shows that Islam opposes the value of lying." (Quran, 2:10).

## 4.3 Akhlaq

As opposed to *adab* which focuses on manners, *akhlaq* on the other hand focuses more on ethics that indicates moral philosophy. In the students' responses, having good *akhlaq* was repeatedly emphasised as part of Islamic values they learnt through their PRLs. The students highlighted

the importance of instilling good akhlaq towards Allah SWT and towards other people in oneself. With regards to akhlaq towards Allah, a student emphasized on being grateful by stating "This explains that this morality is found in Islam which asserts that every Muslim to always be grateful for the gifts and sustenance given by Allah SWT". Another student response highlighted the need to be patient by stating "it is clear that this patience is in Islam which demands that His servants always be patient in every test and trial given by Allah".

Inculcating good akhlaq towards other people was also highlighted in the students' response. For instance, a student wrote "Secondly, as a parents we should have mercy to every human being". Another student wrote "Firstly, we must have mercy towards others. Giving a help to others is one of the type mercy that we can do".

The students' responses show that they understand the importance of having good akhlaq, not just towards Allah but also among themselves.

#### 4.4 Islamic Arabic Terms

In elaborating on Islamic values learnt from the short stories, students also employed the use of Islamic Arabic terms that they are familiar of. Some of the terms are used to describe both good and bad traits in Islam such as amanah, tagwa, tawakkal, husnudzon, sabr, redha and munafiq. Examples of the students' responses are "For a Muslim, children are an amanah that we need to ensure they will become an asset to the society", "Secondly, in certain situations, a man is allowed to marry more than one wife, with the condition that he treats his wives with justice, and takes the decision with Taqwa or God Consciousness", "It is because in Islam, before you fully rely on god, you have to keep trying first and then you can rely on god. In Islam, it is called as "tawakal", "Secondly, is give the benefit of the doubt or in a more familiar Arabic word, called as 'Husnudzon'. Furthermore, Arabic terms are used by the students to illustrate Islamic Laws such as halal, haram and fardu ain in which they wrote "In Islam, a woman can use expensive products but the products used must be halal and follow the correct guidelines...", "That (is) why in Islam, the surgery treatment is haram" and "Allah always gives the best for His ummat, the ummat themselves needs to believe and keep on doing

all the fardhu ain, prayers and get more closer to Him.

Other terms used also include *Jannah*, *silaturrahim*, *aurah*, *qada*, *qadar*, *hijab*, *mahsyar*, and *adab*.

## 4.5 Islamic Prohibitions

12 percent or a total of 21 occurrences was found in this study on Islamic prohibitions. The students tend to condemn the sinful acts instead of pointing out the virtuous acts.

There were six occurrences of abstaining from lying. The students indicated "In Islam, lying to other people is a sin and Muslim has been told to prevent from telling a lie", "In Islam lie is forbidden and considered as sin and Muslims must prevent from telling a lie", "lying to other people is a sin in Islam, and we as Muslims, have been told not to tell a lie", "Some of the Islamic lesson that I found in the short story is that we shouldn't lie to whatever situation we are in", "the Islamic lesson that I learn in the story is that cheating in marriage will never be okay", and "In Islam, we should not lie and take this as an example because it can lead to fight and divorce".

At the same time, there were five occurrences of refraining from wasting. Among the responses were "We shouldn't spending our money to much or over do it for something cause it's not a good habit", "The last is that we should practice not wasting because wasting is the devil's practice", "We should be frugal rather than wasting buying goods that only remain temporary", "while in Islamic not necessarily buying expensive goods is good", and "the last Islamic lessons is Islam does not teach to waste".

There were two occurrences of avoiding from comparing with the others, the two responses were "According to Islam, comparing oneself with others is also a bad thing to do" and "Lastly, we should never compare ourself with others". Another two responses were on stop being ungrateful for His blessings by clarifying "If in Islam that means they are not grateful for having their skin even their skin also beautiful" and "In Islam, if we change our God's create it is totally wrong and sinful".

The rest of the occurrences were mentioned only once for each specific value. A student stated on shun infidelity by expressing "As Muslim we should not having affairs". There was also a student who pointed out the fact that one should not jump into conclusion by stating "Rushing to conclusion without evidence will

create even more conflict and is rightfully condemned by Allah and the Prophet'. "Among the first lessons I learned was that in every human being there can be no arrogant attitude towards others" was mentioned by a student to stop being a snob.

Another student indicated that one must avoid bothering others with your problem by stating "Secondly, as Muslim we should not involve our problem to children". "In Islam, we cannot attend parties that provides men and women can associate freely without limits plus hijab is mandatory in Islam" mentioned by one of the students on free mixing between men and women that is forbidden in Islam. Lastly, another response appeared on the prohibition of disobeying parents as the student said "It is a great sin for a child to refuse to obey what their parents asked".

Indeed, humans are His weak servants and are always exposed to despicable matter. Allah said, "And whoever transgresses Allah's limits has truly wronged his own soul" (at-Talaq: 1). The students accentuated on Islamic prohibitions rather than recommending virtuous acts logically as an attempt to put emphasis on the reminders and warnings of Allah's retribution.

4.6 Exemplary Behaviour of the Prophets Some exemplary behaviour of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W were discussed by the students in their PRL responses in terms of dealing with people, family, women, and enemies.

When dealing with people within the community, some students highlighted that "Rasullulah taught us to always help people regardless of religion, race and ethnic background", "we love for ourselves, but also be love for others too" and "be kind and show mercy to others". These present the exemplary behaviour of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W that is always kind and loving towards anyone without any discrimination. Moreover, a student wrote, "Muhammad S.A.W had great compassion for people in dire need of help" further explains the behaviour of prophet Muhammad S.A.W.

Apart from the community, family is an institution that is also discussed by the students. A student wrote, "we should emulate the noble nature of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W in leading family members towards goodness and emphasizing religious values in daily life".

Further, honesty was also highlighted in the

students' responses as a student explained how the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W taught Muslims to "not tell the lie and being a honest person so that our relationship with someone even friend, family, teacher and etc not broken and more stonger than a thousand thread of strands". The act of patience is also highlighted by a student:

"we as a muslim that follow prophet Muhammad SAW must in islam we had learn to have nature of patient because from this attitude we can solve the problem that we face smoothly witout fight and blame to others like our role model the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) that had patient in spread relegion of islam." Another value that was highlighted in the students' responses was that how Islam treat women as special. One student wrote "Prophet Muhammad S.A.W has lifted woman's dignity". With regards to dealing with enemies, one student responded, "even our Prophet still respect his enemies even though they talk bad things and done bad things to him."

#### 4.7 Islamic Practices

The Islamic practices were also reflected in the student's responses. There were seven occurrences or four percent on the theme of Islamic practices, specifically on saving money and other resources, performing prayer, sharing knowledge, and teaching good conducts.

The three occurrences of saving mentioned by the students were "Islamic lesson that found in the short story is thrifty", "Next for the second lesson in the short story it is treasure food", and "in Islam, all the people must save their money and use to buy the thing that important only". Meanwhile the most important Islamic practices, the five pillars of Islam were highlighted in two occurrences, they are "Islamic lesson that we need to know even when we were kid is five pillars of Islam including prayer" and "first it is always prayers when it time come like Chitra perform prayer".

Another student talked about sharing knowledge by indicating "The last lesson I can state is that every human being must share knowledge with each other because sharing knowledge is also categorized as giving alms". Finally, a student wrote on teaching good conducts by stating "First Islamic lesson that I found in this story is we must teach a good moral to children". Evidently, when the students indicated Islamic practices, it is a sign that they remember the fundamental beliefs as Muslims.

# 4.8 The Muslim Student's Related Experience

While writing their responses to the PRL, the students reminisced on their own experience, which are related to Islamic values. One student highlighted her grandfather's advice that "The child will not learn to be truthful except from a truthful educator". She wrote this as she explained about being honest and how Islam inculcate such act in our daily lives. Another student explicated that in Islam, it is a practice for every Muslim to respect the elderly as the she wrote, "we have been taught to honour elderly people...greeting them nicely when you meet them."

## 4.9 Islamic History

Islamic history encompasses political, social, economic, and cultural developments in Islamic civilisation. There are many Islamic historical events that students can make reference to. However, there was only one student who contributed an occurrence or 0.5 percent on Islamic history. Islamic history is among the least occurrence probably due to the nature of history which requires memorisation of facts, so students hardly use this theme. The student mentioned "Truth can be scary and painful, but one must seek out the truth just like our prophet Muhammad SAW that saw the terrifying truth of heaven and hell during Isra' Mikraj". Isra' Mikraj is an important and remarkable event in the Islamic calendar that signifies a Muslim or kufr. It is a miracle from Allah SWT to Prophet Muhammad SAW that the previous prophets were not awarded. It is impressive that the student was able to mention this remarkable event.

#### 5 Discussion

The study was administered to explore the Islamic values through student Personal Reading Logs. The study found that there were nine themes employed by students in responding to reading texts: *adab, akhlaq,* Arabic terms, hadith and the Quranic verses, stories of the prophets, the Muslim student's related experience, Islamic history, Islamic practices, and Islamic prohibitions.

The themes identified in this study were closely related to Khairiah, et al. (2011), which highlighted five recurring themes in the Muslim lecturers' teaching materials in discussing English short stories. In particular, Khairiah, et al. (2011) investigated the Muslim students' responses towards some English short stories and found nine themes. The four overlapping

themes of the two studies were on unIslamic practices or Islamic prohibitions, Islamic Arabic terms, related the text to stories of the prophets, and hadith or the Quranic verses. However, one theme on current Muslim related issues from the preceding study was not found in this study possibly because students find it difficult to relate or are not aware of the ongoing Muslim related matters. In contrast, the other five themes identified in this study were not specified in the prior study, namely adab, akhlaq, the Muslim student's related experience, Islamic history, and Islamic practices. This may be due to the fact that data from the present study were greater in number as compared to the limited number of teachers in Khairiah, et al. (2011).

Further, findings of the present study suggest that it is of utmost importance to inculcate Islamic values in teaching and learning activities as this is in one with Nuriman and Fauzan's (2017) findings. Nuriman and Fauzan's (2017) highlighted that there is a significant impact of inculcating Islamic values in the education system because this may help the teachers in cultivating Muslim's behaviours and preventing immoral conducts among students. It is the researchers' conviction that based on the students' responses of the present study, students are able to relate what they read with Islamic values if there is intervention in the process of teaching and learning. In the case of the present study, the intervention comes from the teacher, who initiates a discussion on Islamic values from the short stories read by the students. As a Muslim, it is part of the teacher's job to educate the students as well as inculcationg the Islamic values along the way. As of the present study, it has to be noted that even in an English language class, inculcating Islamic values is not impossible.

Islamic studies is integrated in classrooms from kindergarten, primary school, secondary school to tertiary education. In the case of the present study, students may employ the knowledge on Islamic values from Islamic studies class, which may not only be from their educational institutions. They may also learn from their parents, people around them since they were small besides reading on their own, watching Islamic programs or listening to Islamic talks on various platforms, live or recorded online. This is evident in the findings of the present study as the students' responses reflected their knowledge in relation to Islamic values that

were learnt formally and informally. The former being what they have learnt in their educational institutions and the latter being their very own experience as well as values they learnt from their family.

## 6 Conclusion

Inculcating Islamic values in learning English texts enables students to recall, remind, and further strengthen their faith. Teaching English is not only about producing good English proficiency among students, but at the same time, bringing forth virtuous Muslim students. The researchers hope by carrying out a study of this nature would make Islam as a way of life closer to the students' heart even in English language classrooms. It is hoped that more studies will be carried out on inculcating Islamic values in any classroom, not only exclusive to Islamic studies classrooms. Moreover, future studies may want to focus on both teachers' and students' constituencies in inculcating Islamic values in English language classrooms.

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