

Promoting Researches in Islamic Universities: Lecturers and Students within The Ethics of *Adl, Sabr And Ihsan* for Academic Productivity

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Abstract

Research is an effort to search for factual way of solving a problem, mostly measured through level of productivity, an indicator that assess the efficiency of any university system. There can be different methods to evaluate good researches. It could be measured in terms of the number of papers published, patents that are filed with the authorities, inventions commercialized by industry, completed projects, quality of graduating students, quality of postdoctoral candidates supervised and other indices. In most Universities researchers have no defined set of rules to measure their efforts of problem solving in their respective societies. This paper subscribed to qualitative research methodology tools to generate data through content analysis of secondary data, reviewed from relevant literature sources. Lecturers and students are the pillars of any university the world over. The Islamic ethics of Adl, Sabr and Ihsan are supposed to be the guiding principles of the way we teach, learn and research into issues that will be beneficial to humanity. For lecturers and students to be motivated in doing what is expected of them in academic productivity, there has to be avenues for building a robust culture of meaningful researches for academic productivity within the framework of Islam. The paper concluded by recommending the integration of Islamic ethics of researching in Islamic university system, in order to boost knowledge creation and promoting problem solving researches for humanity.

Keywords: Research Students; Lecturers; Ethics; Productivity; *Adl; Sabr; Ihsan*.

Introduction

The institution of learning in Islam was well rooted in the traditions and different Islamic historical epochs, that had been promoting it to the superlative. Mankind from time immemorial has been inquisitive to learn new things that come his way and persistently construct and reconstruct his educational curriculum (Hashim, 2019). The teachings of the first revelation in Islam capsule the general endeavor for struggle to acquire knowledge. New bodies of knowledge keep on emerging as Universities embark on researches. Most of these researches will be coming from developed minds that are pursuing postgraduate studies. Ways of measuring research productivity varies from one place to the other. Within these discrepancies of making efforts to measure level of academic productivity through researches, issues of ethics and belief will automatically come in and quality and productivity levels will in a way be influenced by the degree of *Adl, Sabr and Ihsan* on the part of the researcher and his lecturers. Ethics are not about one single principle (Ismail and Badron, 2013), being ethical is trying to be holistic in approaching things that are viewed as wholesome (*Tayyib*). Promoting benefits and removing harm through researches, inclusion, capacity building, re-interpretation, consultation with intellect (*Aql*), justice (*Adl*) and benevolence (*Rahma*) are all efforts done by Muslim academics to satisfy their curiousness of producing the best from efforts of their researches (Mattson, 2019).

Academic Researches in Universities

There are many definitions and understandings of academic researches. Researches are always made to address issues that require solutions be it at individual, local or global levels. Any academic researcher should aspire to identify and resolve previously unanswered issues in his field of expertise and get fair recognition for his work after solving the given problem. For the Muslim universities to excel, researchers have to be conscious of this statement: "If we work on research topics that the West is not interested in, we will always be 20 years ahead. If we work on topics that the West is interested in, we will always be 20 years behind" (Ahmad Zewail, as cited in Muyibi, 2012). As researchers in Islamic Universities, we have to know our research priorities and how to objectively achieve them. Objectives should be SMART i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timed. Being specific as a researcher is trying to be

precise about what you are going to achieve in the course of the research. MEASURABLE- Quantify your objectives. ACHIEVABLE- are you attempting too much? REALISTIC- Do the researcher have the resource to make the objective happen (human resources, financial, the right context and opportunities)? Lastly, time- state when the research will achieve the objective and be disciplined in keeping to time. There has to be a harmonized way of measuring research productivity in Islamic Universities, these methods can be many and various, but will have to address issues that will people benefit from the work, inventions and patents resulting from the work, projects reports from the researches and quality of students produced (employability) as a result of being groomed from quality researches in Islamic universities (Abdul Rauf, 1995).

Qualities of Good Researcher

A good researcher first requires the purposeful intention (all actions are judge by their intentions-*niyya*, Hadith) to be involved in research and thereafter to show a dedicated interest to do the best research, goes a long way in developing students and lecturers. Islam, through prophetic traditions, teaches that there is contentment in things done with gentleness as against things done hastily. The researcher must accumulate the knowledge needed in his research field in order to advance the current ideas already existent in the research area and build more advances and solve societal problems. Most meaningful researches aimed at addressing directly or indirectly some real issues in the world. Clearly stating the variables or constructs to be examined is another quality, no matter the field of study, a good researcher states in clear terms the variables that are key in his research. Valid and verifiable facts and data have to be highlighted, such that whatever the researcher concludes on the basis of his findings are seen as correct and can be verified by others (Sambo, 2008). The researcher should sincerely be abiding by research ethics and this made results arrived at to be reliable and objective. Mentoring young researchers by lecturers is supposed to be a brotherly issue in the art of teaching, Islamic scholarship promotes that the student be treated with compassion (he who does not show compassion to fellow beings, is likely to lose out-*Hadith*). The lecturer should be honest and righteous in all research procedures/processes. Truthfulness and fulfilling promises bound with patience and perseverance should be shown by lecturers to students in all researches (Salihi, 2006). Socialization during researches should be encouraged, students should be seen as 'colleagues' in the process of interacting, observation, sharing information and team work in respective research group works and interactions, but that should not be abused by the students to deny giving due respect and recognition to the lecturer (Az Zarnuji, 1947).

Concerns for Quality in Productivity

Grooming students well for assured good quality output for all researches should be the major preoccupation of research minded lecturers. Productivity by lecturers within the academics is mostly seen when they work within their fields and beyond in multidisciplinary studies, impacting meaningful knowledge and building result yielding researches. This can be achieved through encouraging students to form research groups during candidature. Students should endeavour within the spirit of *Sabr* and *Ihsan* to join the research conversation in their respective fields and network with the larger global research groupings to improve productivity (Salihi, 2006). There is *rahmain jama'ah* (Group Work), coming in short term or long term. Identifying and understanding the research and tools required in any field of endeavour will boost productivity and quality in research. Knowing priorities in the field of research is another big challenge; a simple way to address this is to follow: 'The Big Rock Approach' followed by gravels and lastly filled up with sand. Having a good grip of qualitative, quantitative or mixed method researches will go a long way in making the research design superb and result yielding (Ibrahim, 2013). Technological advances in a globalized world give researchers good resources/ materials via the net to perfect their work and produce good and qualitative results. Lecturers and students alike should try and have interest in their researches and be passionate in academic relations (*husn ul khulq*) with all those that are involved in the research project (Hawa, 1983).

Mentoring as Global Practice

Do Islamic Universities have International Research Networks? in efforts to make researches attain best practices in supervision, lecturers should support the research processes through assisting in mentoring: for collecting, collating and analyzing research data using the ideal tools. Moderation in all dealings is a prophetic teaching, and should be inputted in the research field, and will go a long way to discourage “master-slave” notion in research supervision (Q 22:41). Lecturers are expected to provide intellectual and social capital support (Bourdieu, 1983), which will enhance collective action in researches and productivity through perfecting the basic research processes of observations, interactions, documentations and replications. Explore contemporary rationality-informed practices to develop knowledge of your discipline and expertise (*Fas’alu ahlu zikr...*). Lecturers and students alike are expected to follow laid down research guidelines (in chosen field). Calling for collaborations at all levels of the Institution is another way of enhancing doing the needful in research. Lecturers/Researchers should be organised: having specific identified schedules and regular sessions to evaluate students’ progress and growth across various research goals, this will be in line with the Islamic teaching of responsibility monitoring, whereby any leader will be responsible with what happened in his territory (*Kullu kum raa’in...Hadith*). James and Baldwin cited in Kumar and Lee (2011) identified these tips for effective and good researches: Teachers should ensure that the right partnership for the project is established. Know the students’ capabilities and assess his academic needs from time to time. Work with the students and establish reasonable expectations (*Studies in Higher Education Journal, 2007*). Encourage students to write early and often, because writing makes facts retrievable (Az Zarnuji, 1947) and with writing there are a lot of inculcating *sabr, adl* and *ihsan* ethics on the side of the student.

Good and Productive Researches Within Ethics

Initiate regular contact and provide high quality feedback in all research endeavours as highlighted by Waziri Junaid in his 1972 speech at Ahmadu Bello University Zaria (Salihi, 2006). Inspire and motivate students by involving them in the ‘life’ of the research. Careful monitoring of the final production and presentations can increase productive research work. Establish clear goals for the students in the light of University’s requirements (*Journal of Teaching in Higher Education 2007*). Engage in “Reflective Practice” to identify and ponder on what makes good research supervision (*Journal of Reflective Practice*). In Islam the building of a straight forward personality is based on inculcating good ethics in the human being (*husn ul khulq*) as amplified in the *Hadith* that: one of the prophetic missions on earth is to strengthened good manners. Anything good has to come from *adl, sabr* and *ihsan* and a lot of traditions have established the importance of these ethics in building a viable and productive Islamic character.

Publications and Research Authorship

Publication makes academics lively and research reports have acceptable formats and some peculiar to a given institution, communicating research findings to the outside world are best done through publications (Sambo, 2008). Follow accepted guidelines that span all educational boundaries e.g “The Vancouver Protocol” developed by International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (*ICMJE, 2009*). Don’t exploit ‘authorship’ by denying others the right to be recognized as authors in jointly conducted researches. Joint authorship has no boundaries in the field of research. “*PhysicalReview Letters*” by *ATLAS Collaboration*, in 2015, has a Physics paper with 5,154 authors, surpassing the 2008 record of 3,000 authors for a published paper in the CMS Experiments (www.nature.com/news/physics-paper-sets-record-with-more-than-5-000-authors-1.17567).Lecturers should always recognize the contributions of

their students in all their jointly conducted researches, this will go a long way in motivating them the more as being recognized by their lecturers and mentors (Abu Sulayman, 1993)).

Effective and Good Research Supervision

James and Baldwin cited in Kumar and Lee (2011) identified these tips for good supervision: Ensure the right partnership for the project. Know the student and assess his academic needs as exemplified in Sankore University where scholars and students were tied very closely to each other, propelling gigantic intellectual academic outputs (Salihi, 2006). Working with the students and establishing reasonable expectations also help in furthering bonding and bridging between scholars and students for good research output (*Studies in Higher Education Journal*, 2007). Encourage students to write early and often: (writing makes facts retrievable). Initiate regular contact and provide high quality feedback in all research endeavours. Inspire and motivate students by involving them in the 'life' of the research. Careful monitoring the final production and presentation will go a long way in increasing productive research work. Establish clear goals for the students in the light of University's requirements (*Journal of Teaching in Higher Education* 2007). Engage in "Reflective Practice" to identify and ponder on what makes good research supervision (*Journal of Reflective Practice*). Orient all researches as an act of *ibadah*. We should excel in doing the best -*ahsanu 'amal* (Mulk:1-3). Actions should be conditioned by *Adl, Sabr and Ihsan*. *Q16:90*; Imam Ahmad highlighted that *Sabr* was mentioned 90 times in the Qur'an, impliedly showing students of knowledge its importance in scholarship and related issues. Islam through many divine teachings promotes insightful thinking (*tafakkur*) and pertinent pondering (*tadabbur*) that will direct and promote researches as seen in Islam with scientific inventions recorded in Islamic civilisations (El-Rouayheb, 2015). Imam Zarnuji in his *Ta'alim* explains the knitty-gritty of seeking knowledge from cradle to grave. Hafizul Maghrib in his *Jami'u bayan Ilm wa Fadhlilihi* also x-rays seeking knowledge in Islam using *nusus* from *Qur'an and sunna* all in efforts to make the scholar serving as role model to the research student.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Islamic universities should be organised in worldly and religious research endeavours. Lecturers should make sacrifices and investments in promoting knowledge of research by engaging their students under the ethics of *adl, sabr* and *ihsan*. Lecturers should be passionate to their students at whatever level of research, perseverance and endurance usually characterizes the mentoring of students. Academics and students should endeavour to know people in their respective knowledge community and keep on discovering ways to help humanity through ground breaking researches that will be used to solve major problems of the *Ummah*.

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