



# Factors Affecting Issues on *Akhlak* among Undergraduates: A Case of Public Universities

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**Abstract:** Development of human through the formation of *akhlak* among undergraduates play an important role in the life and civilization of a nation. The emphasis on *akhlak* aspects in higher education is essential to produce graduates with a balance between needs of *duniawi* and *ukhrawi*. Teaching and learning that focus on academic achievement alone is not enough to be relied upon in producing holistic graduates with knowledge, identity and practice good manners. This paper aims to identify the factors of moral degradation among students in the selected Public Universities. This study is based on quantitative methods by distributing questionnaires. A total of 1110 questionnaires were distributed randomly in four universities which are representing by zone. The northern zone is represented by Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), the east zone by Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT), central zone by the University of Malaya (UM) and the south zone by Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). The findings show that the environment is becoming a major factor that encourages students to engage with moral problems.

**Keywords:** Factors, students, moral issues, The Malaysian Public Universities

## 1. Introduction

Morality plays an important role in the lives of individuals. Without morality, life will be crippled and civilization will be destroyed. Nowadays, various events that occur due to the gradual attitude among individuals such as corruption, crime, suicide, rape and so on. To make it worse, the moral decline also occurs among intellectuals and people with education. Issues such as IT specialists manipulate information, university students who carry out activities such as prostitution to earn more income, drug users among students and youth familiar with our country. Some are even willing to cheat and kill their own mother, father, grandfather, grandmother and so on in order to meet their individual needs. As a result, all of these cases will give negative effects on the development of the country.

This clearly shows that good characteristics and attitudes or good manners are emphasized in the lives of individuals, communities and countries. Enhancement of perfect morality among students can be used as a measurement tool and it can trigger human welfare and relates with the development of civilization

## 1.1 Problem Statement

Students are generally categorized as the youth generation that is important in shaping the leadership of a country. This group will inherit the reins of existence. Thus, this valuable asset needs to be guided correctly so that the country can be built according to the current flow. The production of quality teens needs to be rigged from the start. But the reality in producing good young generation, the problem behaviour has occurred anywhere, and every year the problem of youth moral has increased and become chronic. The moral problems among teenagers are increasing in 2000 and began to be taken seriously in a variety of media. In 2004-2005, there was an increase in juvenile crime by 94%, almost double the previous year (Suhaila Abdullah and Mohd Nizam Sahad, 2008). This caused the crime rate among teenagers at a worrying level, a total of 3,432 young people were arrested during 2006 involving adolescents aged 13 to 18 who are mostly still in school (Sunday Times, 6 April 2007)

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Definitions of *Akhlak*/Morals

Various definitions of *akhlak*/morals have been given by scholars according to different perspectives. The term of probation in terms of etymology is the plural to "*khuluq*". The term is used by al-Qur'an (al-Qalam, verse 4). Morals also mean nature, character, dignity, religion and a sense of one's inner (Ibn Manzur, tt; Tahqiq 'Abd Allah Ali al-Kabir, Muhammad Ahmad Hasb Allah and Hashim Muhammad, tt; Jamil Saliba, 1971; and Luis Ma' Maluf, 1908). Ibn Miskawayh (1934) states that morality is embedded in the nature of the soul that prompted the owner to do the act without thought and consideration. While Imam al-Ghazali (t.t) stipulates that probation is a trait that is embedded in the soul. Of soul, the acts are taken easily without any reason. This act is not subject to good deeds, but sometimes it also includes bad or reprehensible acts. When the action taken is good and admirable based on Islam discretion and common sense, the act is called good character. On the other hand, when the action taken is bad, it will be called bad manners (Muhammad Abul Quasem, 1975). Based on the meaning of al-Ghazali, the noble moral or admirable character is named as *al-Akhlaq Mahmudah*. While bad manners or morals reprehensible is named as *al-Akhlaq Mazmumah*. The above statement is supported by Zawiah et al. (2015) that mentions morals is very instrumental in the construction of the inner human values in shaping human behaviour with the virtues of honesty, integrity, fairness and trust.

### 2.2 Type of Morals Problems

Youth moral issues can be understood as negative acts of adolescents who violate the norms and values of religion and society. According to Mahmood Nazar (2008), misconduct can be categorized into several divisions:

1. Individuals - choice of sexual practices, substance use, family relationships (running away), the way of life such as living together without legal relationship.
2. Social - peers, sexual intercourse, group activities such as gangsterism, vandalism, terrorism, illegal racing, bullying and so on.
3. Career - sex (prostitution), crime.
4. Trust - outside the boundaries of religion, Satanism influence practices such as black metal and black magic.

According to Mahmood Nazar (2008), the Institute for Youth Development (IPBBM) has listed a number of the most significant issues affecting young people, namely:

1. Smoking - according to statistics released by IPBBM in 2006, a total of 47.2% were men and the rest were women.
2. Drug abuse - from 1988 to 2005 a total of 254,020 youth has involved in drugs and in 2005 a total of 2.3% of youth have involved with drugs.
3. HIV and AIDS - from 1996 until 2004 a total of 23,350 were affected by HIV, and 1961 have involved with AIDS, which aged 20-29 years.
4. Illegal racing - in 2001 and 2004 a total of 5,332 people were arrested, involving those aged 16-28 years.

### 2.3 Factors of Moral Problems

A study by Ab Halim Tamuri (2007) found that negative attitudes among peers, teachers, parents and the community, mass media, entertainment centres and job demands have a negative influence on the formation of student morals. Fathiyah Mohd Fakhruddin's (2002) who studied the method of moral development, also found that several factors cause moral problems in schools such as the environment, mass media, background of parents, friends, teachers and so on.

Sharif et al. (2011) in their study to identify the factors that influence adolescents involved in social problems in Sekolah Tunas Bakti, Sungai Lereh, Melaka found that self-factors is the factor that influences respondents to be involved in social problems compared to peer influence and school environment problems. However, the analysis found

that family background was not an important factor of respondents to be involved in social problems. On the other hand, the study of Musliha Salma et al. (2011) found that most of the application of generic skills in educational practice in schools does not affect the development of students' spiritual and emotional potential and does not help the development of students' morals in a better direction.

Mohd Khairi et. al (2016) found that the level of understanding of Islamic teachings covering morality among students of Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah Polytechnic is at a high level, but some students do not practice what they understand, especially matters related to morality. Azizah (2004) through her study found that the level of students' appreciation of ethical values is very moderate. From the sample made, it was found that 48 per cent of the 120 students stated that the ethical values that are lived are less in line with Islamic ethical values. This study shows that students do not take the initiative to appreciate the ethical values in the teachings of Islam. This situation certainly has a great impact on the formation of individual morals.

Abd Rahim (2006), Zainal & Sharani (2004) stated that the involvement of young people in various social problems caused by themselves, family problems, peer influence and school environment. While a study by Zainudin & Norazmah (2011) showed that the most affecting factor in social issues is the adolescents themselves as compared with peer pressure and problems from the school environment. Hence, human capital development is very closely linked with the formation of character in producing and establishing a balanced person holistically from the physical and spiritual aspect to perform the role of humans as the inheritors of the earth, and to please Him in this world and the hereafter (Atikullah Abdullah and Mohd Nizam Sahad 2008).

### 3. Research Methodology

This study uses a quantitative approach of 1110 questionnaires that have been distributed at Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Malaya, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. However, only 901 questionnaires can be used for analytical purposes in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This is because 209 forms were considered as damaged as there were a number of respondents who did not answer according to a prescribed method. In this case, the breakdown of the questionnaire obtained are as follows:

**Table 1 - Breakdown of the questionnaire obtained**

Item	F	%
Universiti Malaya	193	(21.4)
Universiti Malaysia Terengganu	292	(32.4)
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia	239	(26.5)
Universtiti Utara Malaysia	177	(19.6)
<b>Total</b>	901	100.0

The study was conducted on respondents consisting of students from four universities in Peninsular Malaysia, Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT). The selection of the four public universities was based on the division of four zones, namely:

1. Northern zone which was represented by Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)
2. Middle zone which was represented by the University of Malaya (UM)
3. Eastern zone which was represented by Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) and
4. Southern zone which was represented by Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)

For the purposes of this study, the researchers have prepared a set of questionnaires that had been distributed to each respondent. The questionnaire consists of a number of items which are divided into four parts. Part A contains the demographic items and background of respondents. These include gender, status, age, race, religion, level of education and so on. While the B and C contain items followed by responses to 6 scales, namely: "Strongly disagree / Never" is given a score of 1, "Disagree / Very rarely" (score 2), "Somewhat agree / Rare" (score 3), "Somewhat agree / Sometimes" (score 4), "agree / Always / usually" (score 5) and "Strongly agree / Always / Every time" (score 6). Each item in the parts mentioned is combined to form a scale to measure the types of problem behaviour and factors that affecting the moral issues. The categories of questions in the questionnaire have been summarized in Table 2 below:

**Table 2 - Categories of questionnaire questions**

Num	Sections	Total of Questions
1.	Section A: Demographic	18
2.	Part B: Type of Moral Problems	30
3.	Part C: Factors of Moral Problems	30
Total Number of questions		78

A total of 901 sets of questionnaires were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The results of the analysis of reliability testing performed on the items in part B and part C have provided the results as follows:

Part	Construct (type and factor) measured	Cronbach's Alpha
B	Part B: Type of Moral Problems	0.888
C	Part C: Factors of Moral Problems	0.899

Based on the reliability test, the result shows a good response to the survey forms that have been established. Thus, this form could be applied in carrying out the study in the next phase.

#### 4. Research Findings

The findings on the demographics section indicate the gender of respondents involved in this study, 39.7% (358) were male while 60.3% (543) were women. Female respondents dominated in answering the study where the difference composition was 185 (20.6%). In this case, the female respondents were 76.416 (59%), while the male respondents were 52,423. Based on this, the difference in the population is 18%. The big difference is valid from the population survey instead of the survey sample. Based on the age of respondents, the majority are aged between 21 years to 23 years (56.4%). This was followed by respondents aged 18-20 years which were 345 respondents (38.3%), 24-26 years, 45 respondents (5.0%) and age 27 and over was 0.3%. In this case, 84.2% (759 people) of respondents are Malays ethnic and followed by a Chinese 11.0% (99 people), 2.6% (23 people) are Indians, 1.8% are natives (16 people) and other races (0.4%).

In addition, 85% of respondents state that they are Muslims. This is followed by the Buddhist, 9.1%, Christian, 3.8%, Hindu, 1.6%, Sikh 0.4% and the others 0.1%. In terms of the students' education level, 43.2% (389 respondents) stated that they are at the middle level, 30.6% (276 respondents) said they are at the early stage and 26.2% (236) were students of the final stage. In this case, 77.5% (698 respondents) of college students living in residence, followed by 20.3% who live in rental housing (non-resident) and 2.2% stay at home. In terms of family income, the majority of students (60.6%) reported family income is below RM2000, followed by 18.2% of families earning between RM2001 - RM3000, 10.0% of families earning between RM3001 - RM4000, 6.5% family-Income between RM4001 - RM5000 and 4.6% of families earning more than RM 5001. Based on the number of siblings' respondents, 444 respondents have a number of siblings between 4 to 6 people (49.3%). This was followed by a number of siblings between 1 to 3 that are belong to 207 respondents (23.0%), followed by siblings between 7 to 9 of 193 (21.4%), 10 to 12 people (5.2%) and more than 13 people, 1.1%.

**Table 3 - Frequency of respondent profile**

Variables	F	%
<b>Gender (N=901)</b>		
Male	358	39.7
Female	543	60.3
<b>Age (N=901)</b>		
18 years - 20 years	345	38.3
21 years - 23 years	508	56.4
24 years - 26 years	45	5.0
27 years and above	3	0.3
<b>Nations (N=901)</b>		
Malays	759	84.2
Chinese	99	11.0
Indian	23	2.6
Native	16	1.8
Others	4	.4
<b>Education Level (N=901)</b>		
Early-stage	276	30.6
Middle-stage	389	43.2
Final Stage	236	26.2
<b>Shelter (N=901)</b>		
Residential College	698	77.5
Home	20	2.2
Rent House	183	20.3
<b>Family Income (N=901)</b>		
Less than RM2000	546	60.6
RM2001 - RM3000	164	18.2
RM3001 - RM4000	90	10.0
RM4001 - RM5000	59	6.5
RM5001 - RM6000	22	2.4
RM7001 - 8000	12	1.3
More than RM8001	8	.9
<b>Numbers of siblings (N=901)</b>		
1 - 3	207	23.0
4 - 6	444	49.3
7 - 9	193	21.4
10 - 12	47	5.2
More Than 13 siblings	10	1.1

\*Note: n = respondents; f = frequency

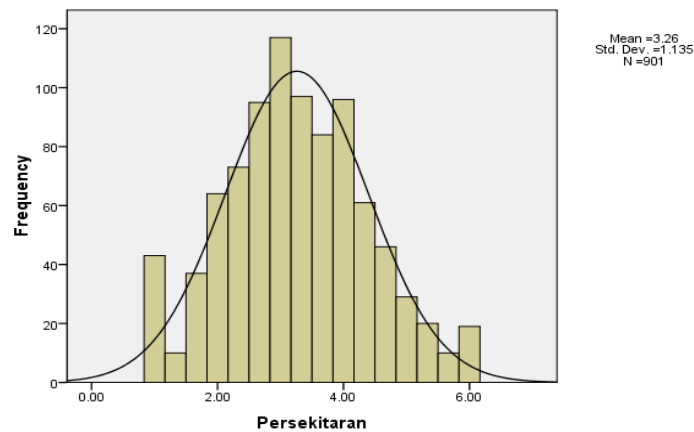
#### 4.1 Factors Affecting Morality Issues

In section C, there are 30 items related to the factors that affect moral problems. The negative statements were re-coded into positive statements to obtain the scores of the factors. In this case, all the moral issues have been re-coded into 5 main factors, namely family, finance, teaching/learning, environment and peers. The mean value of between 1 and 3.5 indicates a low score which means that these factors affect the moral problems that occur while a value between 3.5 to 6, indicate a high score which can be interpreted that these factors do not affect the problem among students. The mean value obtained from the samples is shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4 - Comparison of the mean factor of moral problems among students**

Num	Type of Factors	Mean	Total
1	Family	4.83	901
2	Finance	4.65	901
3	Teaching / Learning	4.30	901
4	Environment	3.26	901
5	Peers	4.08	901

Based on Table 4 above, it was found that environmental factor records the lowest mean which is 3.26. This shows that these factors ranging from the local community, the mass media and the campus location that is situated near urban areas has a great effect in influencing the action of morals among the students. The distributions of the mean from the sample is shown in Figure 1 below;



**Fig. 1 - Histogram distribution score for environmental factors**

Furthermore, other factors such as peer (mean, 4:08), teaching/learning (4.30), finance (4.65) and family (4.83) have exceeded the average mean of 3.6, which indicates a positive value of this factor that can be interpreted as giving less impact on the problem of morality among the students.

Based on Table 4, the family factor showed the highest mean of 4.83. This proves that the family is the main influence and socialization agent in the lives of students. According to Rohayati (2004), the failure of parents in educating children properly will cause them to fall into immoral activities and at the same time ruin the future of the children. Parents need to be role models and set a good example for children to follow. There are parents who are so busy with their careers that they do not have time to say hello, let alone make friends with their families and children. As a result, children are increasingly neglected, unmanaged and lacking in love. The financial factor showed a mean of 4.65 and became the second factor of moral problems among students. Nowadays, students who are mostly teenagers are easily influenced by the modern lifestyle, prestige, materialistic even if they do not have money. For disadvantaged families such as families in rural areas and squatter areas, low economic status sometimes forces students to do whatever it takes to obtain financial resources to meet their needs in entertainment, or to buy accessories such as mobile phones or motorcycles. They are willing to steal to get money or do whatever it takes to fulfil their desires.

The educational factor showed a mean of 4.30 and to some extent contributed to students' moral problems. This is associated with the inability of the teachers to guide the students in the best possible way due to the content of the existing curriculum that does not help the teachers and students to appreciate noble morals. Fatimah (2005) in her study on the influence of Islamic Education on the morals of UiTM students, found that the level of practice and influence of Islamic Education on morals among students is very moderate.

Next, the peer factor showed a mean of 4.08. Students prefer to hang out with their friends rather than to be confined and controlled by parents or the school or the educational institution. If personal problems occur, they tend to complain to friends rather than family and parents. Strong relationships among friends and peers facilitate the process of influencing each other. Typically, a more dominant friend will influence another friend. As a result, students will easily fall into moral problems if they make a mistake in choosing friends.

The last factor, the environment, gives the lowest mean of 3.26. Environment refers to the surrounding atmosphere, including the lifestyle of the local community, the mass media and the location of the campus located near the urban area. The uncontrolled and free environment gives space to students to do various moral problems because there is no reprimand or reaction from the surrounding community as a control. Fathiyah Mohd Fakhrudin (2002) explains the factors of moral problems in school including the environment, mass media, background of parents, friends, teachers and so on.

## 5. Conclusion

Although the findings show that the problem of morality among students is still ranked minor, if this problem is not handled effectively, it would become a serious problem in the future. This is because today's world has less boundary in the era of globalization that causes the influence of the culture of hedonism that can be easily practised and learnt by the students. This proved that the findings indicate that the environmental factors are the main causes of the students' involvement in disciplinary probation. Thus, the formation of quality human capital should be developed since childhood, which is from home. The establishment of good character needs to idolize the Prophet Muhammad as "*uswah hasanah*" because good characteristics and attitudes are the basis of the formation of personal glory. In the early days of childhood, the increasing intellectual potential, spiritual and physical need to be built in a balanced way so that it becomes a powerful fortress in the future. Implementation of the human capital program should be carried out by all groups at all levels. This includes the institution of family, education, government, non-government organizations and the public. They must work together and take heed to the problems that have long been bloated. The rise and fall of a nation and society depend on the younger generation that will propel the country. Thus the quality generation guarantees excellence in the development of the country and vice versa.

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