

AKHLAQ SELF-REGULATION AND STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN THE ISLAMIC EDUCATION COURSE AMONG PREMIER POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

The literature suggests that religion fosters self-regulation producing a person who possesses magnificent akhlaq. As the study concerns with students and the way they behave, especially within the outrageous community showered with social problems, this study aims to identify the self-regulation aptitude and the impact of akhlaq self-regulation on academic performance in Islamic Education course. On the basis of a self-reported questionnaire, the data were obtained from 341 students, who have taken the Islamic Education course at the three premier polytechnics in Malaysia. Statistical Software for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 19.0 was used to analyse the data. The results show that the levels of AS in personal, social dan religious affairs are high with the overall mean score of 3.89, 3.91 and 4.27 consecutively. The level of academic performance in the Islamic Education course is shown to be at the average (mean score=2.62). The result shows that AS in personal affairs has weak positive relationship with academic performance in the Islamic Education course ($r_{s=.137}$). The study concludes that the premier polytechnic students have high level of akhlaq self-regulation in personal, social and religious affairs, however, only akhlaq self-regulation in personal affairs have little impact on academic performance in Islamic Education course.

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ABSTRACT

The literature suggests that religion fosters self-regulation producing a person who possesses magnificent akhlaq. As the study concerns with students and the way they behave, especially within the outrages community showered with social problems, this study aims to identify the self-regulation aptitude and the impact of akhlaq self-regulation on academic performance in Islamic Education course. On the basis of a self-reported questionnaire, the data were obtained from 341 students, who have taken the Islamic Education course at the three premier polytechnics in Malaysia. Statistical Software for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 19.0 was used to analyse the data. The results show that the levels of AS in personal, social dan religious affairs are high with the overall mean score of 3.89, 3.91 and 4.27 consecutively. The level of academic performance in the Islamic Education course is shown to be at the average (mean score=2.62). The result shows that AS in personal affairs has weak positive relationship with academic performance in the Islamic Education course ($r_s=.137$). The study concludes that the premier polytechnic students have high level of akhlaq self-regulation in personal, social and religious affairs, however, only akhlaq self-regulation in personal affairs have little impact on academic performance in Islamic Education course.

INTRODUCTION

The concern of education in Islam is to inculcate *akhlaq* self-regulation among Muslims; hence it seeks to produce remarkable Muslims community. In the effort of fulfilling the education prophecy in Islam, align with the philosophy of education, the Ministry of Education has designed couple of subjects to promote good *akhlaq* and morality among students, which are Islamic Studies and Moral Studies. Islamic Studies (*Pendidikan Islam*) was introduced as a subject to spread knowledge, skills and to internalize Islamic values based on the Quran and Sunah with the purpose to mould behaviour, aptitude, personality and view of life as a vicegerent of Allah S.W.T., thus having the responsibility to develop the self, society, environment, and the state towards achieving prosperity in the world and the hereafter (Ministry of Education, 2002).

If Islamic Education is able to promote good *akhlaq* (behaviour), therefore a series of Islamic Education throughout the six years of primary education and another five years of secondary education, plus another Islamic Education course at the tertiary level, should be enough to internalize the Islamic values as so to produce students portraying magnificent *akhlaq*. McCullough and Willoughby (2009) found that religion has the power to affect self-regulation and it promotes health, well-being, and social behaviour as well academic achievement among college students. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali was the

first to combine self-discipline with the observation of religious practice and expedite the practice of Islamic law as a result of moral impetus (Moosa and Mian, 2012).

According to the theory of self-regulation, people involve in the affective and behavioural process to maintain a positive sense of oneself while behaving in a society in appropriate manners and working towards the attainment of one's goal (Oyserman, 2007). By the definition, in the context of students, a self-regulated person should be able to portray positive behaviour as well as attain the goal of academic performance. It also shows that self-regulated behaviour helps students to self-regulate learning to perform higher academically. Ajmain@Jimain Safar and Ab. Halim Tamuri (2012) believe that an excellent student is a person who demonstrates excellent academic achievement as well as rendering beautiful behaviour. When Islam accentuates the accountability of human on their deeds, it implies the capacity of human mind and soul in projecting morally behaviour and thinking, and this is mentioned by Allah S.W.T. in the Quran:

Meaning: "By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right; Truly he succeeds that purifies it, And he fails that corrupts it!"

(Al-Shams, 91: 7-10)

It is mentioned in the Tenth Malaysian Plan (20011-2015) that technical and vocational education creates a pathway for the students' self-actualization for their potential to meet the future prospect of career opportunities (National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010, 2007). Apart from the objective of this plan is to make polytechnics a leading institution of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), by building an international reputation and being outstanding national higher institution in TVET (Sahul Hamid Abdul Wahab *et al.*, 2010). The strategic planning of the higher education sector aims to produce individuals who are knowledgeable, skilful, creative, innovative, competence, productive, possessing robust identity, and morally upright in the effort of producing the first class mind citizens, those who are thinkers, enthusiastic leaders, intellectual who are committed, confidence, and willing to take risk, which also supports the Polytechnic Transformation Plan (Jabatan Pengajian Politeknik, Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi Malaysia, 2009).

When the major concern of education is to produce knowledgeable and morally upright citizen, be possessed of harmonious character, (which Islam regards as *akhlaq*) (Moosa and Mian, 2012), it is a dire need for the education to come out with mechanisms in producing well-balanced Malaysian citizens in terms of knowledge and *akhlaq*. A series of Islamic formal education, throughout the primary and secondary school, should serve as a platform to inculcate *akhlaq* self- regulation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To achieve the above aims and objectives, this study was designed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1 What is the level of *akhlak* self-regulation among premier polytechnic students?

RQ2 What is the level of the academic performance of the Islamic Education

course among premier polytechnic students? RQ3 What is the relationship between *akhlak* self-regulation and academic performance in the Islamic Education course of the premier polytechnic students?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative multiple-cases study methodology was used to examine the impact of *akhlak* self-regulation on performance in the Islamic Education course. Self-completed survey was used to understand the respondents' demographic information, achievement and co-curriculum activities related to Islamic Education, and *akhlak* self-regulation.

The total sample of the study was drawn from the population 1368 second semester Muslim students enrolling Science, Technology and Engineering in Islam in the second semester. These students have completed the Islamic Education course (AA101) in the first semester, and passing the course is pre-requisite condition to register the Science, Technology and Engineering in Islam course. Therefore, as referred to the Krejcie and Morgan statistical table of deriving the number of sample from the total population (Piaw, 2006), 302 students should have participated as respondents. Even though the required sample from the total population is 302, the researcher has distributed more than 500 questions.

Distributing more than the required sample helps to encounter the problems of missing and invalid data, the screening process, 148 questionnaires were found invalid, and finally, only 341 questionnaires were available to be computed. The final amount of the sample was confirmed to be 341 respondents.

All data encoded were analysed using computer software *Statistical Package for Social Science 19.0 (SPSS 19.0)*. RQ1 and RQ2 were analysed descriptively. The analysis includes frequency, percentage, mean score and standard deviation (SD). All reversed items were recoded and marked (*) before the analysis was carried out. As ordinal data is the main data involved in this study (using 5-point Likert scale), Spearman *rho* correlation coefficient should be used to analyse RQ3. According to Gay *et al.* (2009), Spearman *rho* correlation coefficient should be used, instead of Pearson *r* correlation coefficient, in dealing with ordinal data. According to Muijs (2010), Spearman *rho* correlation coefficient calculates the ranking of the data instead of the real data. Therefore it is suitable to use Spearman *rho* correlation coefficient to analyse ordinal data; those data in

ordered categorical scale, and they are prevalent in social sciences in measuring attitude and opinions (Agresti, 2012).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

RQ1 What is the level of *akhlak* self-regulation among premier polytechnic students?

Akhlak self-regulation, in this research, is divided into three categories as discussed, which are *akhlak* self-regulation in personal affairs, *akhlak self-regulation* in social affairs and *akhlak* self-regulation in religious affairs. These categories of *akhlak* self-regulation help to identify the level and the specific *akhlak* that the students have been practicing throughout their life.

Firstly, *akhlak* self-regulation in personal affairs reflects the *akhlak* a person has been practicing regardless of social and religious affairs. It concerns with the individual himself and the way he or she governs their daily life.

Table 1.0 Descriptive Analysis of *Akhlak* Self-regulation in Personal Affairs

Item Code	Items	Frequency and Percentage (%)					Mean	Std. Dev.
		Never	Seldom	Almost	Freq.	Very Freq.		
API	I only buy what I need	4 (1.2)	64 (18.8)	94 (27.6)	100 (29.3)	79 (23.2)	3.55	1.08
AP2	I spend effort to the utmost in everything I do	8 (2.3)	45 (13.2)	105 (30.8)	106 (31.1)	77 (22.6)	3.58	1.05

AP3	I don't finish my meal when I eat*	95 (27.9)	173 (50.7)	34 (10.0)	23 (6.7)	16 (4.7)	3.90	1.03
AP4	I lie when I speak*	46 (13.5)	226 (66.3)	54 (15.8)	9 (2.6)	6 (1.8)	3.87	.74
AP5	I like cleanliness	1 (0.3)	8 (2.3)	63 (18.5)	107 (31.4)	162 (47.5)	4.23	.85
AP6	I appreciate the value of time	1 (0.3)	40 (11.7)	126 (37.0)	127 (37.2)	47 (13.8)	3.52	.88
AP7	I commit illicit sexual intercourse*	322 (94.4)	12 (3.5)	4 (1.2)	2 (0.6)	1 (0.3)	4.91	.42
AP8	I consume alcoholic drinks*	322 (94.4)	12 (3.5)	3 (0.9)	2 (0.6)	2 (0.6)	4.91	.46
AP9	I cover my <i>'aurah</i>	16 (4.7)	57 (16.7)	95 (27.9)	92 (27.0)	81 (23.8)	3.48	1.16
AP10	I watch porn movies*	128 (37.5)	173 (50.7)	26 (7.6)	10 (2.9)	4 (1.2)	4.21	.80
AP11	I make sure I eat halal food	8 (2.3)	8 (2.3)	18 (5.3)	76 (22.3)	231 (67.7)	4.51	.88
AP12	I seek knowledge to improve myself	2 (0.6)	10 (2.9)	65 (19.1)	129 (37.8)	135 (39.6)	4.13	.86
AP13	I easily get angry*	4 (1.2)	33 (9.7)	95 (27.9)	117 (34.3)	92 (27.0)	3.27	.99
AP14	I make sure other people know the good deed I have done*	8 (2.3)	13 (3.8)	23 (6.7)	140 (41.1)	157 (46.0)	1.75	.91
AP15	I prefer giving more than receiving charity	4 (1.2)	33 (9.7)	95 (27.9)	117 (34.3)	92 (27.0)	3.76	.99
AP16	I vandalize public property*	223 (65.4)	100 (29.3)	13 (3.8)	2 (0.6)	3 (0.9)	4.58	.68
Total							3.89	.33

N=341

According to Table 1.0, *akhlak* self-regulation in personal affairs falls under the high category of mean score interpretation (Mean=3.89, SD=.33). The overall analysis of *akhlak* self-regulation in personal affairs shows that students have highly practiced the *akhlak* pertaining to personal matters such when eating and speaking. The finding of *akhlak* self-regulation in personal affairs shows that most of the students spend to only what they need, put effort in everything they do, appreciate the value of time, hygienic, consume *halal* food, seek knowledge to become a better person, cover the *'aurah*, and give charity to the person in-need. Faber and Vohs (2011) believe that impulsive and compulsive purchasing behaviour can be the sign of self-regulatory failure. They explain impulsive behaviour occurs when someone makes an unexpected purchase to fulfil desire, while compulsive behaviour occurs when purchasing is made to improve the state of mood, however, most of the times buyers never used the thing they purchased. Even

more than half of the respondents able to self-regulate their purchasing behaviour (item *I only buy what I need*), more than 30% of the students in this study fail. Islam regards this matter more to wasting. Allah S.W.T. has mentioned it in the Quran:

Meaning: "Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (tbalance) between those (extremes)."

(Al-Furqan, 25: 67)

With regard to the wasting behaviour, more than half of the students do not finish the meal they eat, and this is again, condemned by Allah S.W.T. in his verse:

Meaning: "O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters."

(Al-A'raf, 7:31)

Another wasting behaviour is wasting time. Therefore, all forms of wasting behaviour demonstrate self-regulatory failure. These include those who have wasted his times for example cyberslacking, as such *it will only take a minute to check the facebook* leads to procrastination (Pychyl, 2010). Magar *et al.* (2008) suggest that self-regulation of behaviour can be divided into emotional regulation and cognitive regulation. The respondents agree that they easily get angry and hope everybody knows the good deeds they have done. This emotional distress leads to self-regulatory failure and people involve in action that yield immediate pleasure, such as drinking alcohol, addicted to drugs, consuming high-calorie food, illicit sex, extra sleeping, making expensive purchases, playing time-wasting games, and other entertainment (Golan, 2011).

Self-regulatory failure and risk-taking play a part in delinquent behaviour (Evans- Chase *et al.*, 2013). Negative behaviour such as illicit sex, consuming alcoholic drinks, drug addicts, watching porn movies, vandalisme, loafing, and clubbing can be the sign of social problems (Mohammad Abu Bakar Shis, 2011). The finding of *akhlAQ* self-regulation in personal affairs shows that more than 20 students have committed illicit sexual intercourse, consume alcoholic drinks and vandalize public property, at least once, and more than half of the respondents waste food, lie and watch porn movies. The aforementioned findings also echo the findings of another study by Wan Norina Wan Hamat and Ahmad Fkrudin Mohamed Yusoff (2012) about the lifestyle of polytechnic students in Malaysia, who found that the students are inclined to frequently watch porn movies, and even though it involves a small quantity of students, if it is not controlled, it might affect other students as well. Self-regulation failure, especially in terms of poor emotion regulation, increases the propensity to risk-taking in drinking alcohol (Magar *et al.*, 2008).

However, the students have practiced a number of *akhlAQ* that leads to academic self-regulation mastery, such as spending effort in action (item *I spend effort to the utmost in everything I do*), managing time (item *I appreciate the value of time*), and setting goal (item *I seek knowledge to improve myself*). In the previous study on basic arithmetic, the researcher found

that students who failed to obtain good computational performance achieved better result after one academic year due to the effort attribution to success (Throndsen, 2011). Stoeger and Ziegler (2011) have put more emphasis on homework accomplishment with regard to time management, while Mason *et al.* (2011) believe that students should be taught to have more specific and challenging goal to achieve higher result.

Secondly, *akhlaq* self-regulation in social affairs reflects the *akhlaq* a person has been practicing regarding to the relationship with other people. It concerns with the social interactions and the way the students govern their *akhlaq* with others.

Table 2.0 Descriptive Analysis of *Akhlaq* Self-regulation in Social Affairs

Item Code	Items	Frequency and Percentage (%)				Mean	Std. Dev.	
		Never	Seldom	Almost Freq.	Very Freq.			
AS17	I speak in a moderate intonation when I talk to other people	4 (1.2)	75 (22)	102 (29.9)	103 (30.2)	57 (16.7)	3.39	1.04
AS18	I use offensive language to humiliate someone in public*	60 (17.6)	189 (55.4)	60 (17.6)	22 (6.5)	10 (2.9)	3.78	.91
AS19	I help other people in enjoining good deed	0 (0.0)	22 (6.5)	105 (30.8)	133 (39.0)	81 (23.8)	3.80	.88
AS20	I practice good manner when I attend a ceremony	1 (0.3)	21 (6.2)	82 (24.0)	133 (39.0)	104 (30.5)	3.93	.90
AS21	I enter my parents' / guardians' room anytime I want*	32 (9.4)	41 (12.0)	55 (16.1)	151 (44.3)	62 (18.2)	3.50	1.19
AS22	I give <i>sa.la.rm</i> every time I enter a house	1 (0.3)	32 (9.4)	70 (20.5)	90 (26.4)	148 (43.4)	4.03	1.02
AS23	I keep my promise I have made to others	1 (0.3)	32 (3.2)	154 (45.2)	114 (33.4)	40 (11.7)	3.47	.83
AS24	I easily forgive other people	4 (1.2)	31 (9.1)	89 (26.1)	117 (34.3)	100 (29.3)	3.82	1.00
AS25	I kindly treat my parents/ guardians	1 (0.3)	10 (2.9)	57 (16.7)	123 (36.1)	150 (44.0)	4.20	.84
AS26	I ask permission to leave a meeting	3 (0.9)	41 (12.0)	85 (24.9)	131 (38.4)	81 (23.8)	3.72	.99
AS27	I advise my friends to perform good deeds	4 (1.2)	51 (15.0)	113 (33.1)	109 (32.0)	64 (18.8)	3.52	1.00

AS28	I take something that does not belong to me*	153 (44.9)	155 (45.5)	22 (6.5)	6 (1.8)	5 (1.5)	4.31	.79
AS29	I simply accuse someone without presenting solid evidence*	179 (52.5)	137 (40.2)	19 (5.6)	5 (1.5)	1 (0.3)	4.43	.69
AS30	I immediately reply the <i>salam</i> given by other people	2 (0.6)	8 (2.3)	79 (23.2)	120 (35.2)	132 (38.7)	4.09	.87
AS31	I make fun of other people to make me look superior*	186 (54.5)	113 (33.1)	28 (8.2)	6 (1.8)	8 (2.3)	4.36	.89
AS32	I spy on someone else when I become suspicious of what the person might be doing*	170 (49.9)	124 (36.4)	34 (10.0)	8 (2.3)	5 (1.5)	4.31	.86
AS33	I treat others well regardless of their background	14 (4.1)	34 (10.0)	84 (24.6)	111 (32.6)	94 (27.6)	3.68	1.11
AS34	I use bad names to call my friends*	107 (31.4)	177 (51.9)	41 (12.0)	12 (3.5)	4 (1.2)	4.09	.82
Total							3.91	.43

N=341

According to Table 2.0, *akblaq* self-regulation in social affairs falls under the high category of mean score interpretation (Mean=3.91, SD=.33). The overall analysis of *akblaq* self-regulation in social affairs shows that students have highly practiced the *akblaq* pertaining to social interactions. They give and reply *salam*, speak in moderate tone, help people in-need, demonstrate good manners in any occasion, ask permission to leave a meeting and treat others well regardless of their background. They also kindly treat their parents, easily forgive other people, advice friends and keep their promise. Effective self-regulation supports the adaptation in social environment, facilitates the obedience to meet the demand of norms and laws for appropriate responding (DeWall *et al.*, 2010). Even though Canamero (2008) argues that motivation in self-regulation and social interaction and the effect of the relationship with emotion are not well-established, DeWall *et al.* stressed on the involvement of some level of self-regulation in social interaction. Developmentally, they refer this matter to passivity and social anxiety; occurs when people fail to self-regulate social interactions because they might be afraid of the negative evaluation or feedback from other people.

Therefore, when Allah S.W.T. acknowledges the right of a Muslim upon other Muslims by emphasizing on the self-regulation of *akblaq* in social affairs, Allah S.W.T. does not only preserve the right of human as individual, He also regards the right of the social entities as a whole. Observing the manners in social interaction helps to create a

harmonious society. The Holy Quran has discussed the wide area of social interaction, especially regarding to the manner of speaking. Allah S.W.T. mentioned:

Meaning: "O ye who believe! let not some men among you laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): nor let some women laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other... "

(Al-Hujuraat, 49:11)

The study found that students have problem to self-regulate the speaking behaviour. More than half of the respondents use offensive language to humiliate other people in public. Some students even blindly accuse someone without providing solid evidence, look down upon others, secretly investigate (spy) other people, and use bad names to call friends. Allah S.W.T. condemned this behaviour in the Quran. Human should acknowledge the superiority of Allah S.W.T. above other creatures, which Allah S.W.T. has created. He mentioned:

Meaning: "Allah loveth not that evil should be noised abroad in public speech, except where injustice hath been done; for Allah is He Who heareth and knoweth all things."

(Al-Nisa', 4:148)

This matter also reaches the concern of the prophet p.b.u.h. too. The prophet p.b.u.h. was a loving man, and he urged everyone to show the attitude of loving and mercy towards other people. One of the *ahadith* demonstrates the prophet's p.b.u.h warning to those who refuse to show affection towards children and the old folks. As the prophet p.b.u.h. mentioned:

Meaning: "Ibn al-Sarh reported from the Prophetpbuh as he said, "Anyone who does not pity the children amongst us and does not know how to perform the duty towards older people is no from us."

(Al-Tarmidhi, Abu Dawud and Ahmad)

The finding of the *akhlaq* self-regulation in personal interaction is somehow interconnected with the finding of *akhlaq* self-regulation in social affairs. According to Mohd. Hairudin Amin and Kmarul Azmi Jasmi (2011), when someone advises a friend, he will make sure that he also preserves himself from the negative behaviour. They believe that advising helps to lessen the number of disciplinary problems in school. The students have less practiced the behaviour of advising friends. Maybe they are inclined to the proverb in Malay, which is *jangan jaga tepi kain orang*, meaning it is not advised to become a busybody. However, they should know that Islam has imposed the responsibility of a Muslim upon another Muslim because

Muslims are brothers and sisters, and they enjoin the good and forbid evil. As Allah S.W.T. mentioned in the Quran:

Meaning: "The believers, men and women, are protectors one of another: They enjoy what is just, and Jbrbid what is Evil: They observe regular prayers, practise regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour his mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power, wise."

(Al-Taubah, 9: 71)

Finally, *akhlak* self-regulation in religious affairs reflects the *akhlak* a person has been practicing regarding to religious performance. It concerns with the religious interactions and the way the students govern their *akhlak* in implementing their responsibility in religion.

Table 3.0 Descriptive Analysis of Akhlak Self-regulation in Religious Affairs

Item Code	Items	Frequency and Percentage (%)					Mean	Std. Dev.
		Never	Seldom	Almost Freq.	Very Freq.	I		
AA35	I perform the five daily prayers	1 (0.3)	49 (14.4)	92 (27.0)	111 (32.6)	88 (25.8)	3.69	1.01
AA36	I believe in the existence of the angels, even though I can't see them	0 (0.0)	3 (0.9)	11 (3.2)	54 (15.8)	273 (80.1)	4.75	.55
AA37	I use my mind to think about the magnificent of Allah SWT	0 (0.0)	5 (1.5)	48 (14.1)	109 (32.0)	179 (52.5)	4.35	.77
AA38	I remember Allah SWT in everything I do	0 (0.0)	10 (2.9)	75 (22.0)	130 (38.1)	126 (37.0)	4.09	.84
AA39	I turn to Allah SWT when I need help	0 (0.0)	6 (1.8)	33 (9.7)	100 (29.3)	202 (59.2)	4.46	.74
AA40	I am grateful for the blessing of Allah SWT	0 (0.0)	5 (1.5)	28 (8.2)	111 (32.6)	197 (57.8)	4.47	.71
AA41	I leave all my effort in the hands of Allah SWT	0 (0.0)	5 (1.5)	39 (11.4)	105 (30.8)	192 (56.3)	4.42	.75
AA42	I seek refuge in Allah SWT against the evil's temptation	1 (0.3)	5 (1.5)	29 (8.5)	82 (24.0)	224 (65.7)	4.53	.74
AA43	I immediately perform my prayer after I heard the <i>adzan</i>	1 (0.3)	101 (29.6)	134 (39.3)	75 (22.0)	30 (8.8)	3.09	.93
AA44	I perform fasting in the month of Ramadhan	0 (0.0)	11 (3.2)	23 (6.7)	66 (19.4)	241 (70.7)	4.57	.76
AA45	I think the Quran is outdated*	304 (89.1)	3 (0.9)	10 (2.9)	17 (5.0)	7 (2.1)	4.70	.90
AA46	I am earnest in performing ibadah	1 (0.3)	29 (8.5)	113 (33.1)	147 (43.1)	51 (15.0)	3.64	.85

Item Code	Items	Frequency and Percentage (%)					Mean	Std. Dev.
		Never	Seldom	Almost Freq.	Freq.	Very Freq.		
AA47	I am pleased with what Allah SWT has destined for me	0 (0.0)	4 (1.2)	47 (13.8)	104 (30.5)	186 (54.5)	4.38	.76
Table 3.0 Descriptive Analysis of <i>Akhlak</i> Self-regulation in Religious Affairs (Cont.)								
AA48	I immediately seek forgiveness from Allah SWT whenever I feel guilty	1 (0.3)	12 (3.5)	58 (17.0)	106 (31.1)	164 (48.1)	4.23	.88
AA49	When the name of the prophet Muhammad pbuh is mentioned, I immediately answer it with <i>sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam</i>	0 (0.0)	17 (5.0)	67 (19.6)	98 (28.7)	159 (46.6)	4.17	.91
AA50	I spend my time to think of the time I return to Allah SWT	2 (0.6)	17 (5.0)	74 (21.7)	138 (40.5)	110 (32.3)	3.99	.89
AA51	I recognize Allah SWT as the only God to be worshipped	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	12 (3.5)	34 (10.0)	294 (86.2)	4.82	.51
AA52	I think about my condition in the Day of Judgement	1 (0.3)	13 (3.8)	34 (10.0)	77 (22.6)	216 (63.3)	4.85	.84
Total							4.27	.43

N=341

According to Table 3.0, *akhlak* self-regulation in religious affairs falls under the high category of mean score interpretation (Mean=4.27, SD=.43). The overall analysis of *akhlak* self-regulation in religious affairs shows that students have highly practiced the *akhlak* pertaining to religious performance and religious beliefs. They always think of Allah S.W.T., rely on Him in asking for help, thank Allah S.W.T. for His mercy, seek His forgiveness, think of death, the Day of Judgement, and the magnificent of Allah S.W.T. They also believe in angels, pray for the prophet p.b.u.h., and believe in the authenticity of the Quran. However, among all self-regulated students in religious affairs, quite a number of students arouse the attention of the researcher regarding to the percentage of those who do not perform the five daily prayers, argue the authenticity of the Quran and procrastinate in performing the prayer. More than 30% of the respondents fail to perform the five daily prayers, even worse more than half of the total respondents procrastinate in performing *solah*. These two matters were discussed in the Quran, as it mentioned:

Meaning: "Therefore to thy Lord turn in Prayer and Sacrifice."

(Al-Kauthar, 108:2)

Again, Allah S.W.T. mentioned the importance of prayer in different verse, which Allah S.W.T. mentioned:

Meaning: "Enjoin prayer on Thy people, and be constant therein, we ask Thee not to provide sustenance: we provide it for thee, but the (fruit of) the Hereafter is for righteousness."

(Thaha, 20:132)

As the five daily prayer has become obligatory upon all Muslims, therefore when someone fails to perform the prayer, he needs to *qada'* (replace) the prayer. As the prophet p.b.u.h. mentioned:

Meaning: "For those who have forgotten to pray or fall asleep and missed the prayer, the kafarah should be performing the prayer at the time he remembers."

(Muslim)

The problems pertaining to prayer has become a thoughtful issue in the society and it reaches the conscience of researchers to develop understanding in social perspectives about prayer. The study of Ahmad Firdaus Mohd. Noor (2010) found that students have knowledge pertaining to performing the prayer, however, they fail to make it obliged to be practiced. The finding is consistent with the study of Mohd Hairudin Amin and Kamarul Azmi Jasmi (2010), that the students have strong foundation in Islamic teaching because they have attended the religious school during primary and secondary education. The study of Sharifah Nur Abu (2012) on 150 polytechnic students found that the students understand the importance of *solah* and the method of how to perform the *solah*, however, the number of students who perform the five daily prayers maintains at the unsatisfactory level. She also found that students most of the times fail to perform the *Subh* prayer.

The second crucial issue that have caught the eye of the researcher is students have started to argue the authenticity of the Quran. More than 35 students believe with the item *I think the Quran is outdated*. If only they knew that the methodologies and systems in the Quran is the greatest source of all disciplines of knowledge (Mohd Zamrus Mohd Ali and Ratna Roshida Ab Razak, 2012). The act of

ignorance to accept the prevalent of the Quran is condemned by Allah S.W.T. in the Quran, as He mentioned:

Meaning: "Those to whom We have sent the Book study it as it should be studied; they are the ones that believe therein, those who reject faith therein, -the loss in their own."

(Al-Baqarah, 2:121)

RQ2 What is the level of the academic performance of the Islamic Education course among premier polytechnic students?

Academic performance of the Islamic Education course refers to the students' achievement in the Islamic Education course which is measured by the grade they obtained at the end of the semester. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to identify the level of academic performance in learning the Islamic Education course, based on the grade they obtained as the outcome of learning the Islamic Education course. The students are expected to pass; however they are given opportunity to improve their marks before they receive the cumulative marks for the students are continuously assessed throughout the semester. Therefore, they should pass; even they are expected to obtain good marks for the Islamic Education course.

Table 4.0 The Grade of the Islamic Education Course

Item	Frequency and Percentage (%)		Mean SD
	A B	C	
The Grade of the Islamic Education Course	227 99 (66.6) (29.0)	15 (4.4)	2.62 .57

N=341

According to Table 4.0, the grade of Islamic Education course falls under the average category of mean score interpretation (Mean=2.62, SD=.57). As it was mentioned previously, the students are expected to pass the course, and they do, yet the result is expected to be better with higher passing rate with A-grade. However, only 66.6% students have obtained A-grade, another 29.0% with B-grade, while 4.4% of the students with C-grade. The overall analysis shows that the performance of the students in the Islamic Education course is low. Even though majority of the students have obtained the A-grade, the concern of this research is more to the non-A-grade students; it is either they reluctant to improve the marks or they have problem in understanding the course itself.

Academic performance in this study refers to final grade obtained in the Islamic Education course. The students are expected to achieve the course learning outcome of the course. They are supposed to be able to demonstrate Islam as a religion, perform religious practice such as the prayer and recite selected verses, and discuss the contemporary issues related to Islam (Seksyen Pembangunan Kurikulum JPP, 2012). As the assessment of the course involves continuous assessment, therefore, students are expected to pass the course, and opportunities will be given to those who gradually strive to improve their performance. Instead of being assessed once in an academic semester, students are given time to improve their marks by being assessed several times until they are capable of demonstrating the outcome desired by the course. However, the attempts are not compulsion or enforced. If the students are satisfied with the first assessment mark, they can proceed with the grade.

The overall performance of the Islamic Education course reveals the disability of the students to achieve higher. The result indicates low performance level, even though more than half of the sample obtained the A-grade in the final assessment. The overall result also highlights the necessity to revise the current assessment method. Perhaps lecturers should consider multiple assessments to evaluate students' performance. According to Marsh (2007), examiners should identify the level at which learning outcome are examined (such as the course, programme, polytechnic) depending on the mission, vision and goal of each Division within an organization. She also argues the proposition of 'one size fits all' approach as it will only ineffectively measures students' outcome. Mohd Hairi Mohd Zaman *et al.* (2008) suggests an alternative method to support the existing method of assessment, which they consider as direct assessment (in the form of test and examination) and indirect assessment (the self-reported assessment). The self-reported assessment, according to them, measures students' perspective towards the course in term of the level of understanding and confidence in learning the course.

To conclude, instead of demonstrating the capability of the students, the continuous assessment also illustrates students' effort to improve their academic performance and achieve higher grade. High-achievers can be referred to those who have achieved excellent performance, or those who put tremendous effort in several attempt to strive and excel. While low-achievers contemplate the course as unimportant, and they are only satisfied with the passing grade they obtained. Despite of the failure of the course assessment methods, students still have to double the effort to achieve mastery in the Islamic Education course, as it does not only concern with its contribution to obtain higher CGPA, the course also covers all aspects of religious practices that the students perform throughout their life. The importance of learning the knowledge about Islam has become the pinpoint in the verse of Allah S.W.T., as Allah S.W.T. mentioned:

Meaning: "is one who worships devoutly during the Hour of the night prostrating Himself or standing (in adoration), who takes heed of the Hereafter, and who places His hope In the Mercy of His Lord - (Like one who does not)? say: "Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? it is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition."

(Al-Zumar, 39:9)

RQ3 What is the relationship between *akhlaq* self-regulation and academic performance in the Islamic Education course of the premier polytechnic students?

The correlational analysis defines the relationship between *akhlaq self-regulation* and academic performance in the Islamic Education course. As such, a null hypothesis is formulated in order to answer RQ3; the relationship between *akhlaq self-regulation* and academic performance in the Islamic Education course. The following

hypothesis is tested to find the relationship between *akhlaq self-regulation* and academic performance in the Islamic Education course.

H₀₁ There is no correlation between *akhlaq self-regulation* and academic performance in the Islamic Education course.

Table 5.0 The Relationship between *Akhlaq* Self-Regulation and Academic Performance in the Islamic Education Course

	Academic Performance in the Islamic Education Course	
	<i>r</i> ,	Sig.P
<i>Akhlaq</i> self-regulation in Personal Affairs	.137*	.012
<i>Akhlaq</i> self-regulation in Social Affairs	.048	.376
<i>Akhlaq</i> self-regulation in Religious Affairs	.098	.070

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The relationship between *akhlaq self-regulation* and academic performance in the Islamic Education course is illustrated in Table 5.0. One variable of *akhlaq self-regulation* is shown to have significant relationship with academic performance in the Islamic Education course ($r = .137$, $p < 0.05$), however, the correlation is weak between these two variables. As the relationship is negative, it shows that the increase in the level of *akhlaq self-regulation* leads to a decrease in the academic performance in the Islamic Education course, and the decrease of *akhlaq self-regulation* leads to an increase in the academic performance in the Islamic Education course. Therefore, H₀₁ is rejected.

The correlation between *akhlaq* self-regulation and academic performance in the Islamic Education course is significant at 0.05 level. The rejection of the hypothesis at the significant level of 0.05 shows that the researcher is strongly confident that the hypothesis is false (DeFusco *et al.*, 2007). Of the three types of *akhlaq* self-regulation, only self-regulation in personal affairs is shown to have significant correlation with academic performance in the Islamic Education course. However, the correlation is positif, showing that the increase of *akhlaq* self-regulation leads to an increase in academic performance in the Islamic Education course. The correlation is also weak, and it shows that *akhlaq* self-regulation in personal affairs is not the definitive factor that might lead to the increase in the academic performance of the Islamic Education course. According to Martella *et al.* (2008), a weak correlation data, even though it is statistically significant, relatively precise assumption cannot be made.

CONCLUSION

When the study aims to understand the level of *akhlak* self-regulation, it refers to ability of the students to self-regulate behaviours according to the behaviour imposed in the *Quranic* verses with the purpose to attain the goals as a vicegerent of Allah S.W.T. According to Ab. Halim Tamuri (2007), *akhlak* refers to the behaviours which are internalized in the soul of a person and when good behaviours are executed it shows a person has performed good *akhlak*, and if the behaviours executed are bad behaviours it shows bad *akhlak*. Therefore, when the questions of the survey cover the students' behaviour, it concerns with the outcome of the Islamic Education throughout the studies in primary, secondary, and the tertiary education.

The continuation of Islamic Education after secondary schools should have become a solid foundation for the students to enter the pre-university and the university year of study. When Abdul Hafiz Mat Tuah *et al.* (2012) mention the significance of Islamic Education in moulding the *akhlak* of the Muslim Malay students, they refer to the function of Islamic Education course (as the students received during the secondary school years of study) as a mechanism to get the students ready for the global challenges when they leave the school. Therefore, teaching Islamic Education Course in polytechnic does not purposely to replicate the same curriculum they received in primary and secondary schools, but, given the polytechnic as an intermediary in between formal school education and entering the work environment, it will be able to strengthen the spiritual values as a Muslim student to cope with the new environment which is more challenging and perplexing.

The result of the descriptive analysis recognizes the level of *akhlak* self-regulation among premier polytechnic students as high. Even though the result is high, some of the *akhlak* should be taken into serious consideration, especially those pertaining to the negative *akhlak* as well as the good *akhlak* which are less frequently practiced by the students.

In a nutshell, the level of *akbblaq* self-regulation in personal, social and religious affairs of the premier polytechnic engineering students is appropriately high. The findings show that a series of formal primary, secondary and tertiary education in Malaysia is somehow able to support the development of self-regulation among premier polytechnic students. However, the findings also identify a number of serious problems that need serious consideration, such as watching porn movies, involving in illicit sex, drinking alcohol, and arguing the reliability of the Quran. Students have relatively self-regulated the *akbblaq* in social affairs, even with thoughtful contemplation upon the manner in speaking, yet they observe the *akbblaq* in public. They also highly self-regulate the *akbblaq* in religious affairs, however, there is a need to put much emphasis on praying, or *solah*, and the reliability of the Quran in modern world.

McCulloch and Willoughby (2009) believe that religion fosters self-regulation. In Islam, Muslims are expected to successfully self-regulate their life with the purpose of preparing for the Day of Judgement. The prophet p.b.u.h mentioned in a *hadith*:

Meaning: "The wisest man is a person who self-reflect and work for the time after death, and the weakest of all is someone who follows his lust and dreams of Allah S.W.T. (will treat him nicely without having to submit upon Him)."

(Al-Tarmidhi and Ibn Majah)

SUGGESTION

In addition to conducting studies related to *akbblaq* self-regulation, there are several considerations for future research. The longitudinal relationship between *akbblaq* self-regulation should be examined across different level of educational system. Particular attention should be made to the identification of early behaviour pattern and its contribution in academic achievement to prevent the behaviour from occurring and to foster the development of proactive *akbblaq* self-regulation.

Future research should also use multiple method of measuring *akbblaq* self-regulation and academic performance in the Islamic Education course. The study has used self-report questionnaire. Among suggested methods are think-aloud protocol, interview and diary entry. Multiple methods of assessment allow researchers to explore the dimension of self-regulation in-depth and detail. An alternative instrument should be developed to measure students' performance in the Islamic Education course.

The present study only examined the *akbblaq* in Islam. Other research should also focus on other religious aspects such as '*ibadah* or '*aqidah*. Furthermore, the study measured the aspects of *akbblaq* in general. If specific attention is given to particular sections of *akbblaq*, such as the act of spending, the research will be more focused and deep understanding derives from the research brings about future solution. The act of spending alone will be able to illustrate the acquirement of self-regulation skill. According to Sayette and Griffin (2011), lavish spending demonstrates the failure of self-regulation.

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