



## **ISLAMIC SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP VALUES: APPLICATION AND AN EXPERIENCE OF AKADEMI BAKAT ABS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Muslims are encouraged by Islam to look after their Muslim community (brothers and sisters in Islam) by sharing and distributing their wealth among various levels of the community. A variety of mechanisms can be used to accomplish this goal including the application of zakat, waqaf and sadaqah (Islamic charity). The incorporation of Islamic values can groom the entrepreneur in social entrepreneurship through the application and education of Islamic values from a young age. In this context, this paper aims to achieve the main goal, which is to instil Islamic social entrepreneurship values in students' personalities, while they are in school such as assisting and cooperating with their peers while performing tasks. To achieve the objectives, the study will identify the application of how Akademi Bakat ABS nurture the students' inner self with the six values of entrepreneurship (i.e. social intelligence, integrity, altruism, creative and innovative, diplomacy, and righteousness), since pre-school and hence, leverage the mindset, behaviour, and subsequently the cultural value of social entrepreneurship among the students. With all the virtues it holds, the possibility to overcome the overwhelmed issue of graduates' unemployability and incompetency in human skill can be achieved in confronting the Industrial Revolution 4.0 agenda. Finally, with support from each segment of the society (students, teachers, parents, ministry, industries, etc.), Akademi Bakat ABS sees itself as an industrial player that can holistically benefit the Malaysian education eco-system.

**Keywords:** social entrepreneurship; Islamic values, sustainable, education, Akademi Bakat ABS

## INTRODUCTION

The Maria Montessori, who is an early childhood educator said “early childhood education is the key to the betterment of society”. From this quote, she emphasizes that investing in children's early childhood education to build a better society is vital. This system of education allows children to improve and develop their skills as well as their natural abilities through hands-on activities. In the twenty-first century, as the world becomes more competitive, education must be able to contribute to diverse learners with diverse ideas and talent to produce dynamic citizens.

In January 2011, an entrepreneurship education element was introduced by the Malaysian government through the Ministry of Education (MOE) as a part of a primary school curriculum (Abd Hamid, 2013). According to the new curriculum, all teachers must incorporate entrepreneurship education into most subjects and embed it using a cross-curricular approach. However, conventional entrepreneurship education is growing, and it is too general for all citizens. Hence, the application of Islamic social entrepreneurship values is critical for controlling the society's entrepreneurship behaviour.

Therefore, this paper will introduce some values of the Islamic social entrepreneurship framework and means of exposing students to its implementation following the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W

### **Akademi Bakat ABS Company Profile and Background**

Akademi Bakat ABS is located in Bangi, Selangor (Ihsan et al., 2020) and also known as NaturePreneur School due to its emphasis on sustainable living and entrepreneurship. It started with only 19 early adopters when the school opened its doors in 2016. In 2020, the school's enrolment increased to 50 students from 7 to 15 years old children with 6 teachers (Akademi Bakat ABS Follow), which indicates that the school is a non-traditional mainstream school, especially in the context of Malaysian education. Surprisingly, this school has started cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset since childhood beginning with Rangkaian Tadika ABS followed by Akademi Bakat ABS primary school as a place to polish entrepreneurial behaviour. The next education level is Akademi Bisnes ABS secondary school, where students' business talent is developed.

The principle of each segment of the school curriculum is based on the prophetic approach and Prophet Muhammad's acuity in managing and governing businesses especially for secondary school students. Ultimately, the model of Muhammad-Khadijah's partnership also underlies its vision and mission to

uphold the status of Entrepreneur School. Overall, the sirah (history) of Prophet Muhammad PBUH (peace be upon him) has been the pillar to the Akademi Bakat's direction in confronting the future education, especially when the nation is moving to the era of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0) or Digital Economy (Ihsan et al., 2020). Consequently, the Malaysian young generation will then be capable of competing in the future and global economic world.

The Akademi Bakat ABS was inspired by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH's business expertise. For this reason, there are six values of Islamic social entrepreneurship that have been the foundation for addressing future education and application in Akademi Bakat ABS school. There are namely taqwa, worship to Allah, trustworthy, philanthropist and shariah knowledge. The cultivation of these values can be found in the school's unique curriculum, approach and ecosystem. Akademi Bakat ABS believes that children can be successful, develop innovative ideas, and benefit the world if they are well educated from childhood, with teachers instilling in them various thinking skills and an entrepreneurial mindset.

### **Islamic Social Entrepreneurship (ISE)**

Based on the current economic condition, Islamic social entrepreneurship is an alternative to the Western social entrepreneurship. The concept of entrepreneurship is not new in Islam. It can be seen throughout Islamic history as a noble profession practiced by the Prophet (PBUH) and His companions. He was someone who added true value to the world around him, not just through his business but also through the way he managed it. Generally, people are knowledgeable of Islamic entrepreneurship, which has its roots in the guidelines recommended in the Quran, al-Hadis, Islamic scholars, or leaders (Abdul Razak, Kamal, 2017). It is also defined as entrepreneurship that is within Shari'ah's scope (*Aqidah, Fiqh, Akhlaq*) so that its activities do not deviate from Islamic obligations (Abdullah, M.A. and Azam, M.S.E, 2019).

From a perspective of *Maqasid Shariah*, Islam protects the right of property and several needs without interfering the good of community's '*maslahah*'. Muslims are asked to achieve their rights in Halal way. However, non-Muslims are not refrain from practising and applying the Islamic values, yet they have been encouraged to do so. Hence, entrepreneurs are guided by several Islamic values when making business decisions and carrying out various organizational tasks in a transparent manner.

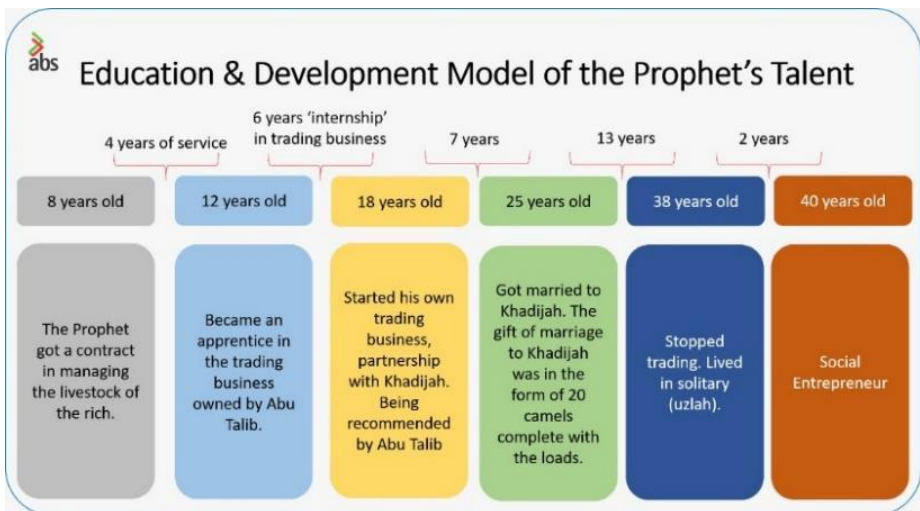
According to Kamaruddin et al. (2016), there is no specific definition for Islamic social entrepreneurship (ISE), but it can be defined based on the goal of the ISE's establishment and the types of institutions. The definition can be based on the type of primary social objective for the community purpose such as *zakat*,

*waqf*, or *sadaqah* without involving in any activity that can contribute to economic return. Nowadays, social entrepreneurs do not correctly distribute their wealth and profits to those who are entitled to them. Hence, this distribution was founded by Islam in order to reduce social problems and eradicate poverty in the communities. It also has been practised since the time of Prophet Muhammad and His companions.

$$\frac{\text{Rasulullah entrepreneurship values} + \text{6 values of entrepreneurship in BAKAS School}}{\text{Validation process}} = \text{(ISE)}$$

**Figure 1:** Model of Islamic Social Entrepreneurship (ISE)

The biography of Prophet Muhammad PBUH himself is an excellent example of a business model that should be followed and characterised. The formula above is a model that applies Prophet Muhammad PBUH's entrepreneurship values and six values of entrepreneurship in Akademi Bakat ABS that aims to achieve the Islamic Social Entrepreneurship (ISE) concept and values. The main goal of the academy is to instil the students' inner self with the six values of entrepreneurship, namely social intelligence, integrity, altruism, creativity and innovation, diplomacy, and righteousness, along with the Islamic objectives to serve a public interest and produce quality students and entrepreneurs. This value has become the central core of a school's education and syllabi, as these approaches produce good and excellent human beings with high morality and attitude (*akhlak*), and students should serve the needs of Muslims and humanity from what they benefit.



**Figure 2:** Education and Development Model of the Prophet's Talent

Figure 2 shows the Prophet PBUH's education and development model beginning from 8 years old until 40 years old. Akademi Bakat ABS focuses on children aged 7 to 18, which is the essential phase for their well-being development.

According to Ikhsan et al. (2020), as young as 8 years old, the Prophet managed to get a contract to manage the livestock of the rich and took four years of service working on this project until he reached 12 years old. Hence, this school applies this model in their curricula by implementing the 'learning-by-doing' module and rubric for the students at the level 1 (8 and 9 years old). Besides having the right mindset, the central six entrepreneurial values in line with the Islamic values might eventually be observed in these children's behaviour during their elementary school years. Activities in the learning process based on the rubric includes social intelligence such as the sense of empathy, cooperation and good communication with others.

Besides, Akademi Bakat ABS also applies the values of integrity, whereby students manage to fulfil their responsibilities as students, children and Muslims and differentiate good and bad behaviour. Moreover, the element of creative thinking can be cultivated, which is crucial for them being an independent thinker and problem solver starting from early years. And the development of universal skills and upgrading their executive skills, besides always practising a civilization knowledge (Ikhsan et al. 2020). They will be taught about manners at school and at home, such as throwing trash in the trash

can, washing the dishes after eating and calling the elders with respect, as acts of *Ibadah* (worship).

Furthermore, Level 2 (10 and 12 years old) of the Akademi Bakat ABS programme, students are trained towards practicing entrepreneurship activities in the real world. The *Sirah* said that the Prophet PBUH helped his uncle business (i.e. Abu Talib) at the age 12 and took 6 years of internship in trading business before being a business partnership with Khadijah Bint Khuwaylid. Through Akademi Bakat ABS, students are equipped with the values of social intelligence that helps students in school to guide and develop the sense of confidence to make the right decision without cheating or stealing, even if it is the hardest choice to make in life or the time of *darurah* (i.e. state of emergency). In addition, the other values instilled in Akademi Bakat ABS students are some Islamic values and etiquette, as shown by the prophet PBUH. The leadership of the prophet PBUH is reflected in his characteristics that are truthful (*Siddiq*), trustworthy (*Amanah*), intelligent (*Fathonah*), and deliver (*tabligh*) (Ajuna et al. 2017). The students' integrity shows the fundamental value of truth: always being honest and punctual. At the same time, trustworthiness can hold the manners with teachers and friends and maintain the personal principle of the truth. The value of intelligence is possessed by producing a skilful, good problem-solving strategy and financially wise. Students also manage to communicate effectively, give a good model and serve the community. Furthermore, according to the Akademi Bakat ABS guidelines, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and many of His close companions were trustworthy and led to successful entrepreneurs (Ikhsan et al., 2020).

The final level in Akademi Bakat ABS Programme is catering for students age of 13 and above. At this stage, the Prophet PBUH had begun his business partnership with Khadijah and started his own trading business using the capital in terms of trading goods supplied by Khadijah. This is the phase where students should use the values applied during their internship. Without these values, disaster in business and society could result. For instance, an organization cannot operate itself without trust among its people, and crimes like bribery, fraud and smuggling of goods will become increasingly prevalent.

All these values in their curricula and learning and teaching assessment ensure their great well-being within the value application that could positively impact and build Islamic Social Entrepreneurship (ISE) concept and value in Akademi Bakat ABS. ISE is essential to carry out Shari'a objectives in their operation. From the Islamic perspective, Shari'a objectives are known as *Maqasid al-Shari'ah*. This is to ensure the welfare of all human beings both in this world and hereafter and, at the same time, protect human rights and public interest from any disadvantages (*Maqasid Shariah*, n.d.). Furthermore, the *Maqasid al-*

*Shari'ah* protects the five central values of the human being, namely preservation of religion (*hifẓ din*), preservation of intellect (*hifẓ aql*), preservation of lineage (*hifẓ nash*), preservation of property (*hifẓ mal*), and preservation of life (*hifẓ nafs*). These ensure Muslim rights with Halal and hygienic food, products and services and preserve society's public good and welfare.

## **THE APPLICATION OF ISLAMIC SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP (ISE) VALUES IN AKADEMI BAKAT ABS**

### ***Ta'awanu alal birri wattaqwa* (Islamic cooperation)**

*Taqwa* is an Arabic word that means forbearance, fear and abstinence. In Islam, *Taqwa* has greater meaning as the fear of Allah SWT, which makes Muslims constantly aware of all their deeds and acts, believing Allah SWT is watching them, whether it is good or wrong (Importance of *Taqwa* in Islam and Its Benefits from Quran - Islamic Articles, 2018). The school has nurtured the value of *Taqwa* to students' inner self within the Shari'ah knowledge, ensuring that its activities adhere to Islamic principles. Hence, the attribute of students as Muslim entrepreneurs encourage them to do something honestly and beneficially to the community and to avoid any activities that are not permissible (*Haram*) in Islam. As Allah SWT saying in surah *al-Baqarah*, verse 168 about earn and consume from Halal only.

Besides, cooperation is the essential characteristic of Islamic Social Entrepreneurship (ISE), leading them to help each other and establish true cooperation in righteousness and piety. This concept is encouraged following the Quranic verses: *"O you who have believed, do not violate the rights of Allah or (the sanctity of) the sacred month or (neglect the marking of) the sacrificial animals and garlanding (them) or (violate the safety of) those coming to the Sacred House seeking bounty from their Lord and (His) approval. But when you come out of ibram, then (you may) hunt. And do not let the hatred of a people for having obstructed you from al-Masjid al-Haram lead you to transgress. And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty"*. [Al-Ma'idah 3:2] (Kamaruddin et al. 2019).

Thus, entrepreneurship is the primary source of economic growth and play a vital role in an aspect of people's life which is also inseparable from Islamic values. The reason is to ensure the actions of students with the ISE values contribute to the good and prosperity of society, the world and humanity.

### ***Amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (commanding the good and forbidding the evil)**

The Islamic Social Entrepreneurship (ISE) values in schools include spiritual and physical aspects, such as fulfilling the Muslim's responsibilities by performing prayers, reading al-Quran, fasting, help and respect for others, hard work, and



practicing a healthy lifestyle have had positive development among students. An essential value of students is commanding the good, namely (*ma'ruf*), which is a term that includes everything, both internal and external, which has been enjoined by Allah and the Prophets (Enjoining Right & Forbidding Wrong by Ibn Taymiyya). Therefore, the prophet PBUH is the most incredible role model for students to follow his undeniable wisdom in matters of business and act. These include good behaviour towards friends, teachers and parents, cooperation in all acts of righteousness, fairness and justice in speech and actions and more. On the other hand, the bad (*munkar*) is everything that Allah forbids and is the worst form of associating partners with Allah (Enjoining Right & Forbidding Wrong by Ibn Taymiyya). Under this value, Islamic Social Entrepreneurship (ISE) helps and abstain students from reprehensible acts due to their situations or less fortunate conditions because people with faith and blessing of his action are guaranteed ease and strength without losing hope by Allah SWT.

### ***Fastabiqul khairat* (to be competitive in doing good deeds)**

Another value imparted in Akademi Bakat ABS students is *Fastabiqul khairat*, which is compete or strive in performing good deeds. Students are encouraged to compete to be good Muslims by fulfilling their responsibilities as Muslims in line with *Shari'ah*. It is boosted based on the Quranic verse: “*And everyone has a direction to which he should turn, therefore hasten to (do) good works; wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together; surely Allah has power over all things*” [Al-Baqarah 2:148]. Righteousness is not limited to a particular practice; that means all good deeds are pleasing to Allah SWT and do not violate the Shari'a as it can be in any forms (i.e. physical and non-physical). For instance, generous donation made to the mosque and pray for other Muslims without their knowledge.

### ***Maslahah ummah* (public interest)**

Islamic Social Entrepreneurship (ISE) value is needed to ensure every action or decision made by the students for the sake of public interest or benefit at large (Kamaruddin et al. 2019). As Allah mentioned in surah *Al-Anbiya'* 21:107: “*And We have not set you, (O Muhammad), except as a mercy to the worlds*”. There is no reason for human creation except to be a Khalifah (leader) to themselves and others. So, business is one of the methods to benefit by making a profit to help and build society. This also trains students to avoid the behaviour of selfishness and greed. Still, they are recommended to contribute to the same community in return, by helping needy people and orphans and giving charity. Students also are taught about the obligation of Islam and being good Muslims, while being generous and successful entrepreneurs.



## CONCLUSION

Islam favourably invites all Muslims to do business and be entrepreneurs by establishing rules that all Muslims must follow in line with *al-Quran* and *al-Hadith*. This is one of the practices (*sunnah*) of the Prophet (PBUH), and numerous of his companions were involved in business and trade. Having Islamic values in entrepreneurship will give people the ability and capability to develop their characteristics based on Islamic needs. Islamic Social Entrepreneurship (ISE) is vital and need to be practiced by Muslims from early childhood until the end of life to obtain high achievement and be quality entrepreneurs. It can be concluded that ISE combines both social and economic objectives in accordance with Shari'a. Akademi Bakat ABS is one of the industrial players in the Malaysian education landscape, with the vision to create a quality entrepreneur from early years of human life as per inspired by the Prophet PBUH. Hence, a particular and organized learning method will eventually act as a stepping-stone for students to cultivate a decent entrepreneurial culture and behaviour. The discussion above concluded that because of these values and concept, Akademi Bakat ABS is in demand by the community and can effectively maintain the continuity of the school over time. The five values are then taught and introduced through various activities ranging from formal to non-formal teaching, as students need to carry out this daily. By virtue of this, students learn more about these values through benefiting activities, helping them to develop into someone aspired by the institution.

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