



QUR'ĀNIC GUIDELINES FOR GENERIC SKILLS:  
AN APPLIED STUDY OF IRK STUDENTS, IIUM

BY

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirement for the degree of Master in Islamic Revealed  
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## ABSTRACT

Universities play an important role to produce quality graduates who possess excellent skills in both academic and extra curricula activities to cater the need of the current job market. Employers prefer to recruit officials who are competent in interpersonal communication, leadership skill, team work, oral and written skills. They are reluctant to employ graduates lacking certain necessary skills. They prefer graduates who are flexible and take initiative to undertake different challenging tasks. This reveals the fact that there is a serious gap between the skills that are required by the employers and the skills that the graduates possess. Therefore, this research is conducted to examine students' perception and practice of generic skills and to evaluate the methods adopted to improve such skills at the university. The researcher focused on five aspects of generic skills namely; communication, team work, problem solving, lifelong learning and self-esteem. From Qur'ānic perspective, the same terms have been used except minor differences in using various terms. The thematic interpretation is used when discussing these aspects from the Qur'ān. The quantitative research involved 140 Islamic Revealed Knowledge undergraduate students, International Islamic University Malaysia. The instrument used is a set of questionnaire and the data are analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5. The data are presented in tables based on the frequencies and percentage. The findings showed that the students need generic skills to become successful graduates and they have to develop these skills during their period of study. They need to improve different skills through various in and out of classroom learning activities such as classroom discussions, group work, presentation and project assignment. These skills will turn them to be flexible in order to function effectively in a wide range of social and professional context.

## ملخص البحث

تؤدي الجامعات دوراً مهماً في تنمية خريجين ذوي كفاءة عالية في المجال الأكاديمي، ومتفوقين في المهارات المهنية، حتى تلبي حاجة سوق الوظائف في الوقت الحاضر. وفي أيامنا هذه، يميل أرباب العمل إلى تفضيل الموظفين المؤهلين في المهارات المتنوعة أمثال العلاقات الشخصية والمهارة القيادية، والعمل الجماعي، والمهارة الكلامية والكتابية. وهناك بعض أصحاب العمل ليست لهم رغبة في توظيف المتخرجين الذين ينقص لديهم بعض المهارات المركزية، بل هم يبحثون عن عمال متصفين بالمرونة، وروح المبادرة، والاستعداد لأداء مهام صعبة متنوعة. وهذا الاتجاه يوحي إلى أن ثمة تفاوتاً بين ما يتطلبه أصحاب العمل من المهارات والتي يمتلكها المتخرجون. وبناء على ذلك، أجري هذا البحث للفحص عن تصورات الطلاب عن المهارات الشاملة ومدى تدريبهم إياها، والوسائل المستخدمة لتحسين تلك المهارات في الجامعة. والباحث يركز على خمسة جوانب من المهارات الشاملة، وهي؛ التعامل مع الناس، والعمل الجماعي، وحل المشكلات، والتعلم المستمر مدى الحياة، واحترام الذات. ومن المنظور القرآني، يلاحظ أن تلك الجوانب عبر عنها القرآن الكريم بالتعبيرات نفسها ببعض الاختلافات البسيطة في المرادفات. وعند مناقشة تلك الجوانب من القرآن الكريم، اعتمدت على التفسير الموضوعي. والبحث الكمي يشمل ١٤٠ طالباً جامعياً من كلية معارف الوحي بالجامعة الإسلامية العالمية بماليزيا. والوسيلة المستخدمة هي مجموعة من الاستبيانات مع تحليل المعطيات بواسطة البرنامج الإحصائي للعلوم الاجتماعية، (SPSS) إصدار ١١,٥. والمعطيات قدمت على شكل جداول بناء على الترددات والنسبة المئوية. وأثبتت النتائج أن الطلاب بحاجة إلى مهارات شاملة كي يصبحوا خريجين ناجحين، وعليهم أن ينموا هذه المهارات في الفترة الدراسية. وعليهم أيضاً أن يحسنوا تلك المهارات من خلال الأنشطة المعرفية المتنوعة؛ داخل الفصل وخارجه، كالمناقشات في الفصل، والعمل الفتوي والتقديم ومشروع البحث. وهذه المهارات سوف تحولهم إلى أن يكونوا مرنين قادرين على العمل بشكل فعال في مجال واسع من وضع اجتماعي واحترافي.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (Qur'ān and Sunnah Studies).

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Che Omar Haji Awang  
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (Qur'ān and Sunnah Studies).

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Noor Mohammad Osmani  
Examiner

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Head, Department of Qur'ān and  
Sunnah Studies

This dissertation was submitted to the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences and is accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (Qur'ān and Sunnah Studies).

.....  
Badri Najib Zubir  
Dean, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed  
Knowledge and Human Sciences

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Siddig bin Ahmad

Signature: .....

Date: .....

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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AN APPLIED STUDY OF IRK STUDENTS, IIUM**

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## TRANSLITERATION

Table of the system of transliteration of Arabic words and names used by the  
International Islamic University Malaysia.

b	=	ب	z	=	ز	f	=	ف
t	=	ت	s	=	س	q	=	ق
th	=	ث	sh	=	ش	k	=	ك
j	=	ج	ṣ	=	ص	l	=	ل
ḥ	=	ح	ḍ	=	ض	m	=	م
kh	=	خ	ṭ	=	ط	n	=	ن
d	=	د	ẓ	=	ظ	h	=	ه
dh	=	ذ	‘	=	ع	w	=	و
r	=	ر	gh	=	غ	y	=	ي

Short vowels:      a = ا    i = ي    u = و

Long vowels:      ā = آ    ī = إ    ū = و

Diphthongs:      ay = اي      aw = او

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Generic skills are defined as a set of skills that are directly related and needed for the working environment.<sup>1</sup> This phrase was initially introduced by the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission to identify work behaviors that are fundamental to the performance of a wide range of occupations.<sup>2</sup> These skills are identified as an important issue globally, especially in the era where various new kinds of corporations and organizations need a dynamic and versatile team of human resources from universities who are capable of fitting in quickly to meet the challenges and demands of the workplace. In most developed countries, the mastery of generic skills is closely associated with learning as well as graduate's employability.

This statement above was supported by a research done by Majlis Tindakan Ekonomi Negara (MTEN) in Malaysia from 24 September 2005 until 7 October 2005. The research found that there were three major factors that caused unemployment among graduates. There are lack of English communication skill, lack of experience and having a qualification that is not suitable to jobs in the job market.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, the former Minister of Human Resources, Datuk Dr. Fong Chan Onn stated that more than 65% of female graduates in Malaysia were unemployed because they lack social and communication skills. In addition, they have a poor command of English and low self-confidence. He added that many female graduates

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<sup>1</sup> Berwyn Clayton, Kaaren Blom, David Meyers and Andrea Bateman, *Assessing and certifying generic skills*, (Australia: National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2003), 15.

<sup>2</sup> Raymond J. Corsini, *The dictionary of psychology*, (USA: Taylor & Francis, 1999), 951.

<sup>3</sup> Faizatul Farlin Farush Khan, "Usah pilih kerja," *Harian Metro*, 22 August, 2006, 17.

had achieved excellent standards academically but could not secure employment without the relevant skills required in the labour market. The number of unemployed female graduates was also much higher in comparison to male graduates.<sup>4</sup>

Obviously, generic skills are important to facilitate graduates to function in today's changing world. Course or discipline is no longer enough to guarantee a job on the day of graduation. Graduates need to be flexible and adaptable, to be able to solve problems, communicate effectively, think critically and creatively, be information literate and be able to operate as effective team members at the workplace.<sup>5</sup>

In relation to that, Allah (s.w.t) has provided guidance towards the development of humanities in the Qur'ān and has decreed men as His vicegerents to explore and fully utilize the natural world. In the Qur'ān, there are verses which mention the ways of communication, collective work, problem solving, lifelong learning and personality development. All these teachings can be applied not only in social activities or daily life, but also at the workplace and in any organizations. The Qur'ān also indicates the significance of both skill and trust as essential elements that Muslims have to acquire in order to be good workers. While both skill and trust are essential at work, the skill should have always prevailed.<sup>6</sup>

A university plays an important role in developing quality graduates who are excellent in academics and are equipped with the essential generic skills.<sup>7</sup> They are expected to have attributes such as critical thinking, ethical practice and

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<sup>4</sup> *The Star*, 15 May, 2005, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Gay Crebet, "Institutional research into generic skills and graduate attributes: constraints and dilemmas," Griffith University, <<http://lifelonglearning.cqu.edu.au/2002/papers/crebert.pdf>>, (accessed 25 July, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Naceur Jabnoun, *Basic concept of management in Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: Institute for Policy Research of Malaysia, 1985), 48. See also Qur'ān, al-Qaṣaṣ (28): 26.

<sup>7</sup> Nor Hartini Ismail, *Berita Harian*, July 7, 2006, 11.

communication skills. These non-discipline specific competencies are to be developed throughout the degree programmes.<sup>8</sup>

Parallel with the vision of Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (IRKHS), the institute is committed to be a center that produces students who can make humane decisions and possess key competencies in education, personal development, lifelong learning and basic workplace skills.<sup>9</sup> Generic skills can be developed through various ways such as in classroom learning activities through discussions, group work, brainstorming sessions and presentations. It can also be built *via* out of class activities such as project assignments and independent studies. Other than the above, students are also encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities, which may assist them in developing the required generic skills.

## 1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Employers nowadays favor competent workers who have generic competencies such as interpersonal skills, leadership skills, teamwork and oral and written skills.<sup>1</sup> According to Nor Hartini,<sup>1</sup> in Malaysia, private sectors today are not interested in recruiting local graduates because they lack several important skills such as the capacity to communicate well in English, possess Information and Communication Technology (ICT) proficiency and interpersonal skills. This scenario reveals that there is a gap between skills required by employers and skills the graduates have.

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<sup>8</sup> Mohd Lazim Abdullah and Abdullah Sani Kamaludin, "The perceptions of Malaysian undergraduate students about a set of generic skills," *Journal of Institutional Research South East Asia*, no.1 (2007): 5.

<sup>9</sup> IIUM Postgraduate Prospectus, 2006-2007.

<sup>1</sup> Mohd Lazim and Abdullah Sani, 6.

<sup>1</sup> Nor Hartini Saari, "Unemployed graduates: How can we address this situation?," Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia, <[http://www.ikim.gov.my/v5/index.php?lg=2&opt=com\\_article&grp=2&sec=&key=1482&cmd=resetal](http://www.ikim.gov.my/v5/index.php?lg=2&opt=com_article&grp=2&sec=&key=1482&cmd=resetal)>, (accessed 14 July, 2008).

According to the report of International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) graduate employability 2008,<sup>1</sup> only 43.3% of 353 graduates of IRK in the year 2008 are working, 40.2% are still searching for a job while others chose to further their studies. This figure of employed graduates is smaller than the other faculties such as Kulliyah of Medicine (91.7%), Kulliyah of Economic and Management Sciences (69.2%), Kulliyah of Information and Communication Technology (64.9%) and Kulliyah of Engineering (63.4%).

Hence, in this research, the researcher will attempt to examine Islamic Revealed Knowledge (IRK) students' perception and practice towards generic skills in the light of Qur'ānic guidelines. This research will also investigate the students' efforts in improving these skills in and out of classroom learning activities.

## **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions of this study are as follows:

- 1.2.1 What is the meaning and main aspects of generic skills?
- 1.2.2 Which aspects of generic skills are used in parallel with the Qur'ānic terms and what are its guidelines for those skills?
- 1.2.3 What are the IRK students' perceptions towards generic skills and their practice?
- 1.2.4 How do students improve themselves in applying generic skills in and out of classroom learning activities?

## **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The major objectives of this study are as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Saodah Wok et al. *Trace Study 2008 International Islamic University Malaysia*, (Kuala Lumpur: Alumni and Career Services Division, 2009), 101.

- 1.3.1 To define the meaning of generic skills and to identify its main aspects.
- 1.3.2 To examine the aspects of generic skills used in parallel with the Qur'ānic terms and to highlight the Qur'ānic guidelines for those skills.
- 1.3.3 To study the students' perception towards generic skills and their practice.
- 1.3.4 To investigate the students' efforts in improving their generic skills in and out of classroom learning activities.

#### **1.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study involves 140 undergraduate students in the first semester of the 2008/2009 session at the IRK Division, Kulliyah of IRKHS, IIUM as the sample. The study focuses on the students' perception and practice of generic skills. Besides that, it also tries to find out how the students improve themselves in applying generic skills in and out of classroom activities. Generic skills in this study focus on communication, team working, problem solving, lifelong learning and self esteem. The analysis, result and conclusion are thus specific only to the students in the Islamic Revealed Knowledge Division and cannot be generalized to all students in the IIUM.

#### **1.5 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS**

Some of the terms used in this study are defined as follows:

##### **1.5.1 Qur'ānic Guidelines**

Guidelines are general rules, principles or pieces of advice.<sup>1</sup> In this study, Qur'ānic<sup>3</sup> guidelines refer to regulations from the Qur'ān, about communication, collective work, problem solving, lifelong learning and personality development.

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<sup>1</sup> Sara Hawker, *The Oxford dictionary, thesaurus and wordpower guide*, (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2001), 569.

### **1.5.2 Generic Skills**

Generic skills refer to general competencies that can be deliberately groomed through the educational process such as communication, analysis and problem solving, social justice, social interaction and global perspectives.<sup>1</sup> In this study, the generic skills focused on are communication, team working, problem solving, lifelong learning and self-esteem.

### **1.5.3 IRK Students**

Students refer to those who are studying at a university or college.<sup>1</sup> In this study, IRK students refer to the undergraduates who are studying at the Islamic Revealed Knowledge Division, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, IIUM. The students come from four departments, i.e. Qur'ān and Sunnah Studies, Fiqh and Usūl Fiqh, Usūluddin and Comparative Religion, and Arabic Language and Literature.

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## **1.6 LITERATURE REVIEWS**

Generic skills are a set of skills that are directly related and needed for the working environment. Such skills enable a person to function and contribute effectively in solving problems, communicating effectively, thinking critically and creatively, and acting as an effective team member. Many of the studies conducted and many of the books and articles published discuss the importance of generic skills needed to develop quality graduates.

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<sup>1</sup> Mahamad Tayib, Rohana @ Norliza Yusof and Muzainah Mansor, *Students' selection criterion, factors influencing their choices of study and their generic skills: The case of accounting students in Malaysia*, (Kedah: Northern University of Malaysia, 2004), 3.

<sup>1</sup> Albert Sydney Hornby, *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 2005), 1470.

Ahmad Firdaus Mohd Noor<sup>1</sup> did a research on the relationship between students' generic skills and their academic achievement. This study was carried out at the Faculty of Education, Technological University of Malaysia (UTM). The results showed that communication skills, skills in using technology, leadership skills, problem solving skills, ethics and integrity, entrepreneurship skills, skills in working with other people and information skills are very important skills that can be applied in the future.

There was also a research done by Rozanis Mustapa on the importance of generic skills among teachers-to-be.<sup>1</sup> His research involved fourth year students of the Technical Vocational Education, Faculty of Education, UTM. The main finding showed that the respondents agreed 100 percent with the statement that generic skills are very important and should be equipped in all teachers. The researcher himself concluded that all educational institutions and the Ministry of Education should highlight the importance of generic skills to all teachers in order to enhance the educational profession.

Mohd Lazim and Abdullah Sani<sup>1</sup> conducted a research on the perceptions of Malaysian undergraduate students about a set of generic skills. This study identified five factors, which eventually became the most important skills perceived by Malaysian undergraduate students. These skills were conceptualized as personal development skills, thinking skills, work in team skills, computer skills, and ethics and tolerance skills.

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Firdaus Mohd Noor, "Hubungan di antara kemahiran generik dan pencapaian akademik pelajar tahun 4 pendidikan teknik kejuruteraan, Fakulti Pendidikan, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Skudai, Johor," (Degree dissertation, Technological University of Malaysia, 2007).

<sup>1</sup> Rozanis Mustapa, "Kepentingan kemahiran generik di kalangan bakal pendidik: Kajian kes pelajar tahun 4, pendidikan teknik vokasional, Fakulti Pendidikan, UTM," (Degree dissertation, Technological University of Malaysia, 2006).

<sup>1</sup> Mohd Lazim and Abdullah Sani.

Mahamad Tayib et al.<sup>1</sup> conducted a research on students' selection criterion, factors that influence their choice of study and generic skills among accounting students in Malaysia. This research recognized communication skills and computer literacy as the most significant generic skills. This is another area that all universities need to train in order for the students to acquire a high level of literacy by the time they graduate.

Another study focused on the importance of generic skills,<sup>2</sup> level of generic skills<sup>2</sup> and practice of generic<sup>1</sup> skills in the learning among students in the Faculty of Education, UTM.<sup>2</sup> Previous studies have<sup>2</sup> shown that no research has been done strictly on students' perception and practice of generic skills among undergraduates in the IRK Division, Kulliyah of IRKHS, IIUM. This is why the researcher is interested to investigate their perception and practice of generic skills and how they improve these skills throughout their period of study.

## 1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is based on quantitative and qualitative research. The details of these methods are discussed below:

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<sup>1</sup> Mahamad Tayib et. al. <sup>9</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Erdiana Timmong, "Satu kajian kes tahap kesedaran terhadap kepentingan kemahiran generik dalam usaha melahirkan graduan cemerlang di kalangan pelajar Fakulti Pendidikan, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia," (Degree dissertation, Technological University of Malaysia, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Manjula. a/p Anasamy, "Mengenalpasti tahap kemahiran generik di kalangan pelajar 5 STP (A / E / J)," (Degree dissertation, Technological University of Malaysia, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Siti Khatijah, "Amalan kemahiran generik dalam pembelajaran: Kajian terhadap pelajar Sarjana Muda Sains serta Pendidikan (Pengajian Islam), UTM," (Degree dissertation, Technological University of Malaysia, 2007).

### **1.7.1 Library Based Research**

Library based research will be used to study selected verses from the Qur'ān that concern the ways of communication, collective work, problem solving, lifelong learning and personality development. In explaining Qur'ānic teachings, the researcher will take support from the elaborations available in the *Sunnah* of the last Prophet (s.a.w). The Qur'ān and *Sunnah* indeed contain statements that provide guidelines to everything. Thus, the researcher intends to thoroughly bring together the guiding principles behind these instructions and concepts embedded in the Qur'ānic verses by using the method of thematic interpretation (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*). The researcher will therefore study the main references of *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* books, which will provide ideas and explanations about the selected verses used in this research.

### **1.7.2 Survey Research**

According to Creswell, quantitative research is a type of educational research in which the researcher decides what to study, asks specific, narrows questions, collects numeric data from participants, analyses these numbers using statistics and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased and objective manner.<sup>2</sup> The components of this<sup>3</sup> survey are as follow:

#### ***1.7.2.1 Survey Design***

In this study, the researcher uses survey design which is a popular design in education. Survey research design is a procedure in quantitative research in which the investigator administers a survey to a sample or to an entire population of people in order to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors or characteristics of the

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<sup>2</sup> John W. Creswell, *Educational research*, (New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 39.

population<sup>2</sup>. In this procedure, the researcher collects quantitative data using a questionnaire and statistically analyses the data to describe trends of response towards the research questions. In this study, the research is designed to collect information about students' perception and practice of generic skills and how they improve these skills during their period of study at the IRK Division, Kulliyah of IRKHS, IIUM.

### **1.7.2.2 Population and Sample**

Creswell defines 'population' as a group of individuals having one characteristic that distinguishes them from other groups while 'sample' is a group of participants in a study, selected from the target population from which the researcher generalizes to the target population.<sup>2</sup> For this study, there is a population of 691 undergraduate students of IRK Division, Kulliyah of IRKHS in the first semester of the 2008/2009 session. From this population, the researcher selected 140 students as samples based on sample size from Gay and Airasian.<sup>2</sup> They state that a sample of 10 to 20 percent of the population is adequate for descriptive studies. The researcher distributed these questionnaires to 140 IRK undergraduate students randomly with the permission and cooperation of the IRK Division lecturers. The researcher used simple random sampling in choosing individuals to represent the population. In simple random sampling, all the participants are given an equal probability of being selected from the population.

### **1.7.2.3 Instruments**

The researcher designed a questionnaire for data collection in order to examine students' perception and practice of generic skills and the way they improve these

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 4

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 359. 5

<sup>2</sup> L. R. Gay & Peter Airasian, *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications*, (New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall, 2003), 112.

skills. A questionnaire form is used in carrying out the survey. The participants would complete the form and return it to the researcher.<sup>2</sup> The researcher uses a questionnaire in this study because it requires less time and is inexpensive. The questions are standardized and so are more suitable to collect data from a larger group sampling. The questionnaire is divided into four sections.

Section 1, which consists of 8 items focuses on demographic information. Section 2 which examines students' perception towards generic skills consists of 10 items while Section 3 consists of 26 items which examine the students' practice of generic skills. The response to each item in Sections 2 and 3 is given in the form of a five-point Likert scale of "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Uncertain", "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree". Section 4 which consists of 10 items, was given in the form of a four-point Likert Scale of "Never", "Rarely", "Sometimes" and "Frequently". This section examines the way students improve their generic skills.

#### ***1.7.2.4 Validity and Reliability***

According to Neuman,<sup>2</sup> validity refers to how well the conceptual and operational definitions match each other. In this study, the researcher constructed the questionnaire and submitted it to the supervisor for review and comment. Then, the researcher revised some of the items, based on comments made by the supervisor before using them in the questionnaire.

In conducting a research, the aspect of reliability is very important and greatly emphasized. A test is reliable to the extent that it measures whatever it is measuring

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<sup>2</sup> Creswell, 360.

<sup>2</sup> W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*, (Boston: Pierson Education Inc., 2003), 201.

consistently.<sup>2</sup> In this study, the researcher will conduct a pilot test in order to establish the reliability of the research items. The researcher personally will carry out the pilot at the IRK Division on 15 students. The researcher will explain to them about generic skills before they answer the questionnaire because the majority of them might not be familiar with generic skills. The questionnaire is in English. Finally, the data will be analyzed and the reliability for each section will be obtained. If the reliability is acceptable, this research instrument can be used in this study.

#### ***1.7.2.5 Data Collection Procedures***

The researcher will request an official permission letter from the IRK Division, Kulliyah of IRKHS to conduct this study. The researcher will personally distribute 140 questionnaires and explain to the students the purpose of this study. The respondents will be informed that their answers would be treated as confidential. The questionnaires will be collected one by one in order to ensure that the questionnaires are promptly completed and returned.

#### ***1.7.2.6 Data Analysis***

All responses to the questionnaires will be tabulated in a numerical code before being analyzed. The data will be processed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 11.5. The data collected will be analyzed using descriptive statistics. All data will be reported in frequencies and percentage.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **GENERAL VIEW ON GENERIC SKILLS**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

Learning is a complex process and a change in disposition, a relatively permanent change in behaviours overtime and this is brought about by an experience. It therefore occurs as a result of incorporating newly acquired skills, knowledge, perceptions, facts and principles to the information that is already at hand.<sup>1</sup> The objective of education can be well achieved when the teaching and learning process is made through many ways and one of them is by integrating generic skills in education.

A curriculum-integrated approach offers students the opportunity to develop generic skills and knowledge within the process of learning the content of their chosen discipline. Through teaching methods employed by academic staff and assessment tasks set for students, a broad cross section of skills can be offered and often assessed.<sup>2</sup> Whilst integration is the most effective means of students acquiring generic skills, there will always be a need for development opportunities outside the formal curriculum such as workshops and seminars.

Team skills, attitudes and the development of a work ethics are acknowledged as being the most important generic skills for work readiness. Some people think that generic skills are underrated and that they can be improved through training. These

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<sup>1</sup> Haslina Hamzah, "A study of usage of instructional materials in teaching of Islamic Studies at IRKHS, IIUM," (Master dissertation, International Islamic University Malaysia, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Lynne Wright, "Integrating generic skills into the curriculum," University of Wollongong, <<http://cedir.uow.edu.au/CEDIR/overview/overviewv4n2/Wright.pdf>>, (accessed 20 July, 2008), 51.