

GOOD MANNERS (ADAB) BEFORE KNOWLEDGE: THE TRUE MARK OF EXCELLENCE

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at how being smart and having good manners (adab) are both important for students. Today, many students achieve high marks, but some still exhibit negative behavior such as rudeness and a lack of respect. This research aims to find out how students who excel academically but lack good manners often face challenges in communication, emotional regulation, and group work. The study shows that students should not only be intelligent in class but also possess strong character. A balance between knowledge and good behavior is essential to becoming a truly successful student in today's world. Additionally, this study emphasizes the importance of character education in schools, suggesting that academic excellence alone does not guarantee lifelong success. Students with strong adab are often more empathetic, responsible, and cooperative. These qualities help them build stronger relationships and contribute positively to their communities.

Keywords: *adab, student character, academic excellence, discipline, emotional intelligence.*

Introduction

In today's world, students are expected to succeed in school and get good grades. Many schools focus a lot on academic success. However, being smart is not the only thing that makes a student truly successful. Good manners, or "adab," are just as important. Adab means showing respect, being polite, and having good behavior. A student who is clever but not respectful can cause problems in class and in life. Teachers and parents have noticed that even smart students sometimes have trouble listening, helping others, or staying calm when things go wrong. This shows that intelligence must go hand in hand with good character.

This research wants to find out how important it is for students to be both smart and well-mannered. It also looks at the challenges teachers face when students are lacking in adab. The goal is to find ways to help students grow both in knowledge and in good values. Many recent studies show that building good character is just as important as getting good grades. Mawaddah et al. (2024) found that when schools run proper character education programs, students become more disciplined,

responsible, and better at getting along with others. This also helps them do well in school. Other research shows that small activities like reading good stories in class or helping in the community can help students become better leaders and improve their confidence and behavior. However, the results can be different depending on the school and the students.

Rif'an (2025) found that in Islamic schools, teachers have an important role in teaching good values like honesty and respect. This works better if the school has a good environment, helpful resources, and support from parents. If these are missing, students might not learn the values well. Some studies from countries like Indonesia, Turkey, and Japan show that teaching adab (good manners and respect) in schools leads to better student attitudes and success in learning. Ramatni et al. (2023) added that schools need to mix moral lessons with regular subjects and teachers should be good role models. Other programs that combine religious learning (like *tahfiz*), science, and manners have helped students become more responsible, ethical, and good at thinking critically. These programs help students grow in all areas such as mind, heart, and behavior.

Shafie and Zulkifli (2024) explain that the Pedagogy of Hikmah builds well-rounded education by combining academic success with moral values, showing that true excellence cannot exist without adab. In the same way, Jaapar et al. (2023) show that Malay poetry like pantun and gurindam teaches values of good manners and morality, passing down cultural wisdom that supports the Islamic idea that behavior should come before knowledge.

The Importance of Adab in Life and Its Impact on Academic Performance

Adab cultivates discipline and personal responsibility

Students who practice good manners such as punctuality, classroom etiquette, and respect for rules tend to develop strong self-discipline. This discipline helps them complete assignments on time, attend classes regularly, and stay focused during lessons. A strong sense of responsibility directly contributes to better academic outcomes.

Adab nurtures respect for knowledge and teachers

Respecting teachers and the learning process is a key component of academic success. Students with proper adab are more open to feedback, willing to accept corrections, and more engaged in the classroom. A respectful attitude fosters a positive teacher-student relationship, which enhances the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Adab improves collaboration and social interaction

Students who demonstrate good character are more likely to build positive relationships with peers. They know how to communicate politely, resolve conflicts peacefully, and work well in groups. These social skills are essential for group projects, discussions, and collaborative assignments, which are now a common part of modern education.

Adab reduces stress and supports emotional well-being

Well-mannered students tend to avoid unnecessary conflict and social pressure. This contributes to better emotional stability and mental health, allowing them to concentrate on their studies and face academic challenges calmly and confidently.

Adab instills noble values such as patience, sincerity, and perseverance

Values like patience and sincerity in the pursuit of knowledge are crucial for long-term academic success. Students with adab are less likely to give up when faced with failure. Instead, they are motivated to try again with genuine effort and a positive attitude, making their learning journey more meaningful and effective.

Examples of Good Manners (Adab) Students Should Practice Today

Respecting teachers

Students should always show respect to their teachers. This includes standing up when the teacher enters the class, greeting them politely, listening carefully during lessons, and not interrupting while they are speaking. A respectful student creates a better learning environment for everyone.

Speaking politely

Students must use kind and respectful words when talking to teachers, friends, and parents. They should avoid shouting, using bad language, or mocking others. Asking questions or giving opinions should be done respectfully, especially in class.

Being punctual

Coming to school and class on time shows discipline and responsibility. Submitting assignments before the deadline and preparing early for exams are also part of being punctual. It shows that the student values time—both theirs and others.

Keeping clean and neat

Students should wear clean and proper uniforms, keep their schoolbags tidy, and make sure their surroundings (like classrooms) are clean. Throwing rubbish in the bin and keeping the toilet clean are also part of this adab. Cleanliness reflects self-respect and care for the environment.

Being honest and trustworthy

Students must not cheat during exams or copy others' homework. They should complete their own tasks and keep promises made to teachers or group members. Honesty builds trust and being responsible with small tasks leads to bigger responsibilities in the future.

Being kind and respectful to classmates

Students should avoid bullying, teasing, or excluding others. They should help friends in need, share knowledge, and work well in group activities. This creates a positive, supportive, and safe learning space for everyone.

Praying and seeking blessings in learning

Students should begin and end their lessons with prayers, asking for knowledge that is useful and blessed. They should learn with good intentions not just for exams, but to become better people. Keeping a good relationship with God and others brings peace and success.

Table 1: Key Components of Good Manners (Adab) in Students

No.	Type of Adab	Description	Example Action
1	Adab with Teachers	Respecting and obeying teachers	Greeting teachers politely
2	Adab with Friends	Being honest and kind	Sharing, apologizing when wrong
3	Adab in Communication	Speaking with manners and listening well	Not interrupting, using kind words
4	Adab in Handling Emotions	Managing anger and disappointment	Staying calm during group work issues
5	Adab in Seeking Knowledge	Humility and sincerity when learning	Not boasting about grades

Table 1 highlights five essential types of adab that students should practice to become well-rounded individuals. These include adab with teachers, friends, communication, emotions, and

in seeking knowledge. Each type of adab plays a significant role in shaping a student's character and behavior in both academic and social settings.

Adab with teachers is fundamental, as it reflects a student's respect towards authority and willingness to learn. Simple actions like greeting teachers politely show humility and discipline. Adab with friends focuses on honesty and kindness, which are key to forming healthy relationships and building trust among peers. Adab in communication teaches students to speak with respect and listen attentively, which helps avoid misunderstandings and fosters a positive learning environment. Adab in handling emotions is critical in helping students stay calm and think rationally during challenging situations, such as group conflicts or academic pressure. Lastly, adab in seeking knowledge encourages students to remain humble despite their achievements and to learn sincerely, not just for grades.

The table illustrates that good manners are not limited to behavior, but are deeply connected to emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and learning attitudes. When students consistently practice these forms of adab, they not only become respectful individuals but also create a positive school culture that supports both personal growth and academic success.

Conclusion

This study concludes that manners are more important than knowledge in producing truly excellent students. Intelligence alone cannot build trust, respect, or leadership. Without manners, knowledge may even become dangerous or destructive. A student with both knowledge and adab is a true asset to society. Schools and families must work together to prioritize character development, ensuring that future generations are not only smart but also kind, responsible, and respectful. Investing in adab is investing in the future of a dignified and ethical society.

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