

# Intellectual Discourse

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# *Intellectual Discourse*

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Volume 32

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## Transliteration Table: Consonants

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
ب	b		ط	ṭ
ت	t		ظ	ẓ
ث	th		ع	‘
ج	j		غ	gh
ح	ḥ		ف	f
خ	kh		ق	q
د	d		ك	k
ذ	dh		ل	l
ر	r		م	m
ز	z		ن	n
س	s		ه	h
ش	sh		و	w
ص	ṣ		ء	’
ض	ḍ		ي	y

## Transliteration Table: Vowels and Diphthongs

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
اَ	a		أَ، آَ، إِيَّ	an
أُ	u		أُوَّ	un
إِ	i		إِيَّ	in
آَ، آِ، إِيَّ،	ā		أُوَّ	aw
أُوَّ	ū		إِيَّ	ay
إِيَّ	ī		أُوَّ	uww, ū (in final position)
			إِيَّ	iyy, ī (in final position)

*Source: ROTAS Transliteration Kit: <http://rotas.iium.edu.my>*



## **Note from the Editor**

In its Vol. 32, No. 1 (2024), *Intellectual Discourse* presents 17 research articles that cover various disciplines, ranging from philosophy, history, international relations, and Islamic studies, to law. Scholars from various higher education institutions from around the world—including Denmark, Indonesia and Turkiye—contributed their works to be shared with the wider academic communities.

The first article (‘Time’ in the Time of Empire: The Idea of Linear Time during the Era of Late Colonial-Capitalism from William Marsden to Munshi Abdullah), written by Farish A Noor, investigates an understudied dimension of colonial expansionism in Southeast Asia, which is “time.” The article examines how Western understanding of “time” as singular, linear, uni-directional and teleological, was brought to—and imposed on—the region by Western Colonialists and Orientalists. Through the works of William Marsden, Stamford Raffles and Munshi Abdullah, Noor also demonstrates how the imposition of this linear understanding of “time”—like the objectives of all other cultural projects—marginalised and erased local understandings of time, history, and chronology among native Southeast Asians.

Dietrich Jung, in the second article (A Theory of “Islamic Modernities:” Religion and Modernisation in Muslim History) observes that references to Islamic religious traditions became the dominant signifier in defining the authenticity of Muslim modernities. In answering to the question of how we should understand the observation of a relative hegemony of ideas of specifically Islamic modernities in the Muslim world, the article develops a theoretical argument concerning the role of religion in four steps. Firstly, by discussing Eisenstadt’s concept of multiple modernities. Secondly, by developing a conceptual dichotomy between modernity as a social macro structure and modernity as a multiplicity of cultural projects. Thirdly, by discussing notions of secularisation and their remaining relevance for theories of multiple modernity. Finally, by understanding the observable dominance of

specifically Islamic constructions of modernity in the Muslim world through the lenses of the concept of cultural hegemony.

In the third article (Shaykh Yūsuf of Makassar (d. 1111 AH/1699 CE): A Bio-bibliographical and Doctrinal Survey), Syamsuddin Arif examines the intellectual career and legacy of Shaykh Yūsuf, a scholar and Sufi warrior of Makassar. The article focuses on key concepts of Shaykh Yūsuf's teachings, such as the need to observe the Divine Law (*Sharī'ah*) as well as to attain the Truth (*Ḥaqīqah*) in order to draw near to God and become one of His "friends" (*awliyā'*), which can be achieved through constant liturgical remembrance of God (*dhikr Allāh*) as a means to attain the Truth. Exiled to Ceylon and later to South Africa for leading armed opposition against the Dutch colonial rule, his life embodied the values that are central to Sufism – relentless trust in God, unfading sincerity, and unabated sense of sacred duty.

The fourth article (Bibliometric Analysis on Islamic Spiritual Care with Special Reference to Prophetic Medicine or *al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*) is a collaborative work by Zunaidah binti Mohd Marzuki, Nurulhaniy binti Ahmad Fuad, Jamilah Hanum binti Abdul Khaiyom, Normala binti Mohd Adnan and Aida binti Mokhtar. Probably a pioneering bibliometric analysis in the field, it focuses on a bibliometric analysis that explores trends on Prophetic medicine (*al-ṭibb al-nabawī*) within Islamic spiritual care. Using Biblioshiny interface of the Bibliometrix R package on 56 selected titles, their study reveals a steady rise in Islamic spiritual care studies over the past decade, despite some notable fluctuations. The authors also note that the exploration of Prophetic medicine within the framework of spiritual care lacks sufficient emphasis, as indicated by the analysis of the 56 pertinent sources, particularly from the most frequent words and co-occurrence network map of authors' keywords.

In the fifth article (Sibling Sexual Abuse: Seeking Sharī'ah-based Solutions), Anke Iman Bouzenita and Feryad A. Hussain discuss the most common form of intra-familial abuse, i.e., sibling sexual abuse. This article highlights the psycho-social-legal challenges of survivors of sibling sexual abuse, and the dilemma they face in seeking justice. It also provides Islamic legal perspectives in addressing sibling sexual abuse. Based on Islamic teachings in the prevention of sexual crimes, the authors suggest some options for possible punishment of the

perpetrator/abuser, and ways of healing for the survivors of such abuse and their family.

The sixth article (Developing *Sharī'ah*-Compliant Asset Pricing Model in the Framework of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and Islamic Wealth Management) offers a conceptual framework of *Sharī'ah*-Compliant Asset Pricing Model (SCAPM) using the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and Islamic Wealth Management (IWM). Igo Febrianto, Norhayati Mohamed and Imbarine Bujang suggest a new perspective on finding Islamic financial benchmarks as an alternative to conventional benchmarks in the Islamic finance industry. In this new perspective, as a measure of the expected minimum rate of return in an asset pricing model, the authors propose the fulfilment of basic necessities (*darūriyyāt*) and zakāt rate as proxy for investors' required rate of return. The proposed framework will assist the Islamic finance industry in applying *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* when assessing the value of its assets.

Chellitda Farhana Gunaish, Mohd Firdaus Abdullah, Saifulazry Mokhtar, Norazilawati Abd Wahab and Azian Tahir examine the role of documentary films as a da'wah medium in the seventh article (Da'wah through Documentary Films Produced by Malayan Film Unit (MFU) and *Filem Negara Malaysia* (FNM), 1957-1970). The article suggests that, between 1957 and 1970, the Malaysian government strategically used films as a medium of da'wah, and this not only contributed to the proliferation of Islamic teachings in the media, but also underscored the importance of adapting traditional methods of da'wah to contemporary approaches for effective communication.

In the eighth article (The Role of the Principal-Agent-Client Model in Understanding Corruption in the Public Procurement Sector in Malaysia), Hairuzzaki bin Mohd Yusof, Danial bin Mohd Yusof and Normala binti Mohd Adnan explain corrupt practices in Malaysia by using the principal-agent-client model. The authors apply this model in analysing 18 selected cases investigated by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) from 2014 to 2019, all of which were brought to court, where the perpetrators were found guilty. The authors show that all the actors in the role of agent were public officials, while the actors in the role of client were from the private sector, and the actors in the role of principal were high-ranking government officials, their relatives, and politicians.

The ninth article (Exploring the Interdependence Model in Malaysia-Indonesia Relations: Insights from Sabah, Malaysia) by Ramli Dollah, Amrullah Maraining, Adi Jafar, Eko Prayitno Joko and Nordin Sakke examines the complex interdependence between Malaysia and Indonesia from the perspective of Sabah, one of the states in Malaysia. The article suggests that conflict is a minor element in the broader discourse of relations between the two countries, whereas cooperation – in the context of complex interdependence – is what truly explains the nature of their relations. Using Sabah as a case study, the authors focus on issues such as population and kinship ties, the reliance of the Sabah economic sector on the Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI), consumer goods and everyday necessities, interdependence in the security sector, and finally haze and environmental pollutions to outline the dynamics of interdependence between Sabah (Malaysia) and Indonesia. Despite facing contentious issues, the article argues that complex interdependence contributes to a harmonious relationship and conflict avoidance between the two countries.

Adha Shaleh and Md. Saidul Islam explore Islamic Environmental Ethics (IEE) in the tenth article (Averting the Existential Threat of the Planet: Islamic Environmental Ethics to Address the Contemporary Environmental Crisis). The article provides an overview of Islam and modern environmental discourse and offers a holistic perspective on IEE that encompasses Islamic faith, religious law, and ethics. The article uses an integrative literature review methodology to synthesise diverse theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and sociocultural and political developments. It also provides a moral framework and responsibility for humans to avert the existential threat to the planet, and concludes with three key suggestions: capacity building, good governance, and collaboration.

The eleventh article (Causes of Climate Change: A Neglected Dimension) also deals with the environment. Umar Adam Musa, Zainal Abidin bin Sanusi and Hassan bin Suleiman provide a cross-cultural comparison between the Islamic and Western scientific perspectives on the causes of climate change. Through extensive literature review, they find that both the Islamic and Western scientific perspectives are quite similar on the impacts of climate change. However, a dimension that is often neglected goes beyond scientific explanation, as the article suggests that the mischief and sins of human beings on earth should

also not be ignored as among the causes of climate change. The authors suggest that mitigation efforts should also consider the two neglected dimensions as causes of climate change that need to be addressed.

Tengku Siti Aisha Tengku Mohd Azzman Shariffadeen, Aini Maznina A. Manaf and Sharifah Sofiah Syed Zainudin, in the twelfth article (Do We Really Have to Talk about That? Avoiding COVID-19 Topics with Close Contacts), examine information avoidance on COVID-19 with close contacts among young adults from the perspective of the Theory of Motivated Information Management (TMIM). They explore factors influencing COVID-19 information avoidance, such as anxiety discrepancy, outcome expectancy and close contact's target efficacy among young adults. Their survey finds support for TMIM, except for two hypotheses: anxiety did not influence outcome expectancy, nor target efficacy. They also find that target efficacy mediated the relationship between outcome expectancy and information avoidance.

In the thirteenth article (Revisiting the Relevance of Religion in the Post-Covid-19 Pandemic: A Critical Analysis through the Lense of Religious Scholarship – Freud, James, and Dewey), Muhammad Syifa Amin Widigdo examines the rise of religious beliefs and attitudes that tend to deny scientific explanation of the COVID-19 pandemic and its rational coping. He also observes that there are scholars who maintain that religious values and experiences are useful to cope with the consequences of the pandemic. In this article, Widigdo examines the relevance of religion in terms of its relevance in coping with the pandemic and its ramifications through the scholarly works of Sigmund Freud, William James, and John Dewey.

The fourteenth article (International Islamic University Malaysia's (IIUM) Islamic Education Teacher Trainees' Self-Efficacy during Teaching Practicum) by Halim Ismail, Azam Othman, Sharifah Rohaniah Syed Mahmood, Hasniza Ibrahim and Noor Azizi Ismail apply the sequential exploratory mixed-methods study explores the self-efficacy (SE) of Islamic Education (ISED) teacher trainees in three domains (i.e., curriculum design and implementation, teaching and classroom assessment). From their survey and interviews, they find high levels of self-efficacy among the ISED teacher trainees, particularly in technology usage (89.3%) and collaborating with colleagues and administrators (85.7%). They also identify five broad areas of self-

efficacy improvement, namely: higher-order teaching, differentiating instruction, classroom management, learning assessment, and lesson evaluation.

In the fifteenth article (The Influence of Civil Society Organisations on Political Decision-Making in Iraqi Kurdistan), Jamal Mohammed Ameen Hussein and Abdulwahed Jalal Nori analyse the influence of civil society organisations (CSOs) on political determinations in Iraqi Kurdistan. They observe that CSOs play an important role in advancing the political and social interests of the communities in Iraqi Kurdistan, which are often neglected by the government. They argued that, as the third sector, the civil society has successfully lobbied the parliament to pass several laws that benefit the people of Iraqi Kurdistan despite increased competition from political parties.

Ceglar Ezikoglu examines economic voting behaviour in Turkish elections between 1980 and 2018 in the sixteenth article (The Collapse of Economic Voting Behaviour in Turkish Politics). In analysing the general elections that took place during the period, the article argues that the economic voting model was an important determinant of the electoral outcomes. However, following serious political changes in Turkey since 2008, factors such as ideology and strong leadership—together with other indicators—began to replace the economic voting model. Contrary to predictions that economic voting behaviour would end AKP's rule before the 2023 general elections, the article suggests that factors such as increased nationalism, negative perception of foreign powers as manipulated by the ruling party, and politics of polarisation have pushed the importance of economic crisis to the back of the voters' concerns.

In the seventeenth and final article (Challenges of *'Awwrah* Coverage for Muslim Women Athletes in Malaysia: A Qualitative Review), Ahmad Akram Mahmud Robbi and Saidatolakma Mohd Yunus explore the challenges related to *'awrah* faced by Muslim female athletes in Malaysia. The article discusses guidelines pertaining to dress code for women athletes as set by Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) and other states' religious authorities. While these guidelines help women athletes to comply with the *Shari'ah* requirements, Muslim women athletes still face challenges to compete in sports where the

specific sport authorities – such as gymnastics and swimming – impose strict dress code requirements.

Finally, the editorial team hopes that the articles in this edition will stimulate active academic discourse on the wide-ranging topics of interest in the Muslim World. The team also expresses its heartfelt appreciation to all the authors, as well as reviewers of the manuscripts, for their contributions in making the publication of this journal's edition a reality. Thank you.

**Tunku Mohar Mokhtar**  
**Editor**



# **‘Time’ in the Time of Empire: The Idea of Linear Time during the Era of Late Colonial-Capitalism from William Marsden to Munshi Abdullah**

**Farish A Noor\***

**Abstract:** Though many historical accounts of Western Imperialism and Colonialism have been written by now, most of these works have tended to focus upon the conquest of territorial space. This paper looks at another, under-studied, dimension of colonial expansionism in Southeast Asia, and will consider how ‘time’ was also a concern among Western colonialists of the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It will look at how a distinctly Western understanding of time – as something singular, linear, uni-directional and teleological – was brought to the region by Western colonialists and Orientalists, and how the imposition of this linear understanding of time effectively marginalised and erased local understandings of time, history and chronology among native Southeast Asians themselves.

**Keywords:** Colonialism, Orientalism, chronology, history, linear teleological history.

**Abstrak:** Walaupun banyak buku-buku tentang sejarah Imperialisme Barat dan Kolonialisme telah ditulis, kebanyakan karya-karya ini lebih cenderung memberi tumpuan kepada perebutan dan penaklukan ruang wilayah. Makalah ini menumpukan fokus kita kepada satu lagi dimensi yang kurang dikaji, dan ia akan mempertimbangkan bagaimana konsep/ide ‘masa’ telah juga menjadi tumpuan para penjajah Barat dari abad ke-18 hingga ke-20. Makalah ini akan menceritakan bagaimana pemahaman Barat tentang ‘masa’ – sebagai sesuatu yang tunggal, linear, dan teleologikal – telah dibawa ke rantau ini oleh para

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penjajah dan Orientalis Barat, dan bagaimana pengenaan konsep masa yang linear dan lurus itu telah juga meminggirkan ide-ide dan konsep-konsep tempatan, termasuklah pemahaman lokal tentang masa, sejarah dan kronologi di kalangan masyarakat asli Asia Tenggara sendiri.

**Kata kunci:** Kolonialisme, Orientalisme, kronologi, sejarah, sejarah teleologi linear.

### **Why Time Matters: The Contestation Over ‘Time’ During the Time of Empire**

The history and legacy of colonial-capitalism has been a subject studied and written at length by scores of historians the world over. Many of the works that have been written to date have focused on the manner through which vast swathes of the earth were brought under Western colonial rule from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and many of these works have focused in particular upon the manner in which terrestrial space was the battleground upon which the clash of empires occurred. That terrestrial space came to be seen as a thing that needed to be understood, tamed, controlled and brought into the order of knowledge and power is not something that surprises us today, considering how Western European understandings of geography were radically challenged by the innovations that were being made during the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, and as Grafton (1992) has shown the ‘discovery’ of the American continent had forced Europeans to question their own understanding of the world around them.

We have come to acknowledge and recognise the fact that disciplines such as geography and cartography were intimately involved in the process of empire-building, and how geographers and cartographers were often at the vanguard of Empire, despite the fact that many of them had never touched a pistol or rifle in their lives. As Matthew Graves and Elizabeth Rechniewski have noted:

“The function of cartography was to transform seized space into legible, ordered imperial territory. In the employ of the European colonial powers, the cartographers of empire carved up the ‘blanks’ and ‘empty quarters’ of the globe into easily assimilated geometrical figures, frequently along lines of longitude and latitude rather than the ethnic, religious, linguistic, or cultural contours of their indigenous

populations, even in defiance of geographical realities. In this context, the map of empire became an instrument of 'Geography Militant'" (2015: 4).

While it was and remains undeniable that much of the effort that went into empire-building was preoccupied with the question of terrestrial space and political territoriality, there was also another dimension to imperialism and colonial-capitalism that deserves equal attention, and that happens to be the dimension of *time*.

One might wonder aloud as to how time could have been a concern of Empire, for unlike terrestrial space – that can be measured quantitatively, demarcated, mapped and carved out – time somehow slips through our fingers and eludes arrest. Yet upon closer inspection it can be seen that many colonial functionaries, scholars and administrators were in fact concerned about time, and questions of time. Underlying their concerns was a particular understanding of time that was forever present in the colonial enterprise itself. Empire building was not only a time-consuming process, but also a process that took place against the backdrop of time-history. Virtually all of the proponents and advocates of Empire believed that modern colonial-capitalism marked the apogee of Western historical development, and in their writings on and about the lands and peoples they conquered they often fell back upon staid and stale notions of native backwardness and regression that framed the non-Western Other as a subject that was unable to keep up with time, had no regard for time, and were thus out of time. 'Time,' therefore, was a concept that was deeply embedded within the logic of racialised colonial-capitalism, yet it remains a topic that is somewhat under-researched in the field of critical historical studies of colonialism and imperialism.

This paper offers a modest contribution to the discussion about time during the time of Empire, and will look at how Western colonial understandings of time were instructive in the manner in which British colonial-capitalism was introduced and spread across Maritime Southeast Asia. I will look at how native understandings of time and temporality were challenged by the arrival of Western colonialism, particularly during the era of weaponised capitalism that was embodied by militarised commercial-mercantile entities such as the British East India Company. We will begin our enquiry at a time when 'Southeast Asia' was still seen as an extension to South Asia, and when some

colonial-era scholars worked with the assumption that the region was somehow bereft of an understanding of time that it could call its own. Into this ‘timeless’ void would be thrown in a number of theories about how and why time was never developed in Southeast Asia itself.

### **Time for Time: When ‘Time’ Became a Concern for the Advocates of Racialised Colonial-Capitalism in Southeast Asia**

It appears (that) the people of Siam, in the farther India, have borrowed their knowledge of astronomy from the Hindus (1790: 575).

**William Marsden,**  
*The Chronology of the Hindoos*

That Southeast Asia was widely regarded as an extension of the Indian subcontinent (and referred to as ‘Greater India’ or ‘*India Extra Gangem/India Beyond The Ganges*’) was a somewhat common conception among Europeans that dates back to the classical era and was frequently demonstrated in the early writings of European geographers, cartographers and historians such as Sebastian Munster (1488-1552). Southeast Asia was, in earlier times, seen as part of the Indian religio-cultural-historical world, and this was largely due to the long historical contact between these two parts of Asia, that was (and is) evident in the vocabularies and philosophies that circulated across the Indian Ocean, and which has been studied in considerable detail by the likes of Coedes (1968), Chaudhuri (1990) and Munoz (2006).

Though it is undeniable that the traces of India’s cultural imprint can be seen in Southeast Asia (until today), it is still important for us to remember that the movement, migration and sharing of ideas, vocabularies and epistemologies across the Indian Ocean was never a linear, uni-directional process as Chaudhuri has noted. It is also important to remember that the naming of Southeast Asia as a mere ‘extension’ of India is an instance of nominal-epistemic violence that Todorov (1984) has warned us about, for it adds little to our understanding of Southeast Asia while also reducing the differences and complexity of Asia to something fixed and essentialised. Noor (2016, 2018, 2020) has written about how the idea of Southeast Asia was discursively constructed by generations of Western colonial-era authors who ‘invented’ the concept Southeast Asia as part of their effort to identify, demarcate and eventually dominate the region;

while Kratoska, Nordholt and Ruben (2005) as well as Graves and Rechniewski (2015) have reminded us of the fact that the location of Southeast Asia - both in time and space - was never something that was naturally determined, but rather subjective and determined by historical-social-ideological variables too.

Notwithstanding the slew of caveats mentioned above, the fact remains that during the heyday of racialised colonial-capitalism in Southeast Asia there were a number of Western colonial functionaries and scholars who did indeed perpetuate the idea that the region was part of the wider Indian world. Among the most prominent among them was the Irish Orientalist and East India Company-man William Marsden (1754-1836), who had been posted to the British colonial outpost of Bencoolen (in Sumatra) and whose reputation was built upon his most famous work *The History of Sumatra - Containing an Account of the Government, Laws, Customs, and Manners of the Native Inhabitants, with a Description of the Natural Productions, and a Relation of the Ancient Political State of that Island* (1783). The publication of his *History of Sumatra* elevated Marsden to the heights of academic renown and respectability, and established his reputation as one of the first experts on Southeast Asia in British literary and academic circles. But it has to be remembered that Marsden was also widely regarded as one of the old 'India hands,' whose career had been based on his work for the British East India Company, and whose knowledge on Southeast Asia had been shaped by his study of India as well.

In the year 1790 Marsden – while in London – presented a paper before his peers at the Royal Society, entitled *On the Chronology of the Hindoos*. In several ways Marsden's paper was a path-breaking piece of writing, for it was one of the first to introduce the concept of *time* as a topic of serious academic discussion, and drew the attention of his audience to the possibility that there may be different understandings and experiences of time in the world.

At the outset of his paper, Marsden points out that he is primarily interested in the understanding of time among “the *Hindoos*, who profess in general the religion of *Brahma*, and are considered to be the indigenous inhabitants of India” (1790: 560). Marsden begins his account of the chronology of the people of India by making the somewhat disparaging observation that:

Unfortunately for the gratification of rational curiosity, history seems to have been, of all the branches of study, that which the Hindus cultivated with the least care, and we regret to find the periods marked by the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, of which other nations have availed themselves to ascertain and record the important events of human affairs, by them unprofitably applied to the dreams of their mythology (1790: 560-561).

Thus at the very beginning of his presentation Marsden has already set up an oppositional dichotomy between the West and the East, where Eastern knowledge (in this case the knowledge of India and Indians) has been relegated to the secondary register of myths and superstitions, as he notes how ‘the unremitting labour (of the Indians) has been devoted to perfecting the calculation of lunar motions, in which *their correctness is surpassed only by the European improvements of very modern times*; but, as a strange perversion, the accuracy thence acquired in their prediction of eclipses, appears to have no other object than that of administering to an idle superstition, which it ought to destroy’ (Marsden, 1790: 561). Western knowledge, for Marsden, was thus placed at the forefront of history and located during *modern times*, while Indian (and by extension, Asian) knowledge continued to lag behind in the murky domain of *idle superstition* instead.

Marsden’s criticism was directed towards Indian historiography in particular, which he regarded as being laced with elements of myth and superstition, all of which rendered their chronology ‘fabulous’ and/or ‘miraculous’, rather than factual and rational. To him, an accurate history of India could only be written by the hands of outsiders (specifically Westerners) for only they were able to accumulate facts and data that were correct. As he argued: “facts will accumulate by degrees, and acquire authority by mutually bearing on each other; and the Hindus, like many other nations of the world, may hereafter be indebted to strangers, more enlightened by philosophy than themselves, for a rational history of their own country” (Marsden, 1790: 561).

Owing to the fact that he felt that Indian chronology was wanting and faulty, Marsden argued that Indian history had to be re-calculated and re-dated according to the European Gregorian calendar. Here was an instance where one conception of time (namely the Indian) was being replaced by another (that is, the European); on the grounds that

the latter was more accurate and reliable than the former. Marsden did, however, concede that there was still one particular problem with the European understanding of time as Western history begins with the beginning of the Christian era, and “there occurs a difficulty which it is proper to consider apart. This arises from an ambiguity in our manner of recounting the years before Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

Though Marsden did admit that there existed a foundational glitch in Western understandings of time (that remained unresolved during his time), he did not hesitate to develop his argument that Indian history could be better documented and recorded if historians were to use a Western calendar instead. There was, for Marsden, a bigger difference between Western and Eastern understandings of time, and this difference lay in the manner in which time was *used*. For Marsden Asians in general were still at a stage in their history where their histories were laced by elements of the mythological, fantastic and supernatural, while Western history was thought to be grounded entirely on facts. This dismissal of Eastern understandings of time would be expanded later in his paper, where Marsden argued that Southeast Asians suffered from the same lack of understanding of the uses of time; and he would go even further by suggesting that Southeast Asians never had a conception of time of their own to begin with, and that Southeast Asian chronologies were derivative and imported from other, more advanced, Asian civilisations.

In the second part of his paper Marsden makes this claim as he wrote about the chronology of the Siamese, for “as it appears, the people of Siam, in the farther India, have borrowed their knowledge of astronomy from the Hindus, it will not be thought inconsistent with the subject I am treating, to add some account of the chronological eras in use among them” (1790: 575). Outlandish though it may seem, Marsden seems to

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1 Marsden notes that “it is most usual to pass immediately from the year *one after* to the year *one before* Christ, making the interval of time only one year; but some of the best chronologists pass from the year *one after* to the year *zero*, and from thence to the year *one before*; by which means the interval between any number of years before and after Christ is equal to the sum of those numbers.” (*Italics in the original*). Marsden accepted that there was still no concensus among Western chronologists at the time as to which calculation of time was correct (1790: 567.)

have argued that the people of Siam did not have a conception of time of their own, until they borrowed one from the Indians next door; and he concludes that ‘the astronomical era (of the Siamese) is founded immediately upon the tables and modes of calculation adopted from the Hindus’ (1790: 575).

Marsden added that Siamese understandings of time were not only derivative of Indian sources, but also taken from Chinese and Mongol chronologies as well, when he writes about how “the Siamese were also accustomed to make use of a cycle of fifty years, expressed by a repetition of twelve names of certain animals, which, I observe, are for the most part the same with those employed, for the same purpose, by the Chinese and Mogul Tartars, from which we may conclude it has been borrowed” (1790: 576, 577, 584 notes (y) and (z)).

Marsden’s writings on India and Southeast Asia would cast a long shadow long into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, where a number of British Orientalist scholars and colonial functionaries who were at the forefront of empire building and colonisation would write in the same vein. As British colonialism spread into Southeast Asia – thanks to the workings of racialised colonial-capitalism that was brought by militarised colonial companies – British colonial functionaries would also write at length about the lands and peoples they conquered. As they sallied forth, they would carry forward Marsden’s understanding of Asia – as a land that was vast, rich, but also backward and historically degenerate. In the next part of this paper, we will look at how Western understandings of linear time were brought to Southeast Asia by the likes of Stamford Raffles and John Crawfurd, and how in their writings they would introduce their understanding of linear singular time while also relegating the communities of Southeast Asia to the premodern past.

### **Empire’s Singular Time: Linear Temporality and History in the Writings of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Colonial Functionaries.**

The power to *define the nature of the past*, and establish priorities in the creation of a monumental record of a civilisation, and to propound canons of taste, are among the most significant instrumentalities of rulership (1996: 10).

**Bernard S. Cohn,**  
*Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*

The 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed two parallel and inter-related developments in colonial Southeast Asia: the expansion of Western European colonial power and influence across the region, and also a rise in the number of writings that were produced by a number of Western colonial administrators and functionaries who began to write in earnest about the lands and peoples who had come under their command and control. This included men like Thomas Stamford Bingley Raffles (1781-1826), John Crawfurd (1783-1868) and John Anderson (1795-1845), all of whom happened to have served the British East India Company and whose writings and views on and about Southeast Asia were influenced by the writings of William Marsden who we have looked at earlier.

Raffles' claim to fame came in the form of his two-volume work entitled *The History of Java* (1817), while Crawfurd's prolific output included his *History of the Indian Archipelago* (1820), the *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava* (1829), and his *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin-China* (1830). Not to be forgotten is John Anderson's *Mission to the East Coast of Sumatra in MDCCCXXIII, under the Direction of the Government of Prince of Wales Island* (1826). All of these works claimed to be serious studies of the culture, peoples, economies and history of Southeast Asia, though it has to be remembered that all of these books were also written at a time when the logic of racialised colonial-capitalism had saturated the elite strata of Western society, that was itself shaped and guided by the values of the modern Enlightenment.

Here it would be important for us to locate – historically – the logic of modern colonial-capitalism within the broader schema of Western European history, and to recognise that the ideology of colonial-capitalism was built upon the premises of the project of Modernity itself. With the creation of the world's first colonial-companies – that included the Dutch East Indies Company, the British East India Company, the French *Compagnie des Indes*, etc. – the world witnessed the development of something that was new: militarised and weaponised capitalism. Those who participated in the enterprise of modern colonial-capitalism were men who were very much persuaded by the charms and promises of the Enlightenment itself that pointed to the evolution of humankind towards the goal of rational and possessive individualism. From the

beginnings of this modern project, the modernity of colonial-capitalism was laid bare for all to see: it relied not solely on force and violence, or the use of arms and armies, but also upon what Cohn (1996) has dubbed the modalities of colonial governmentality and modern management. Unlike the empires of the past (such as the Roman or Mongol empires) that often relied upon brute force to achieve their goals, modern colonial-capitalism utilised the tools of modern administration and statecraft to create not only profitable colonies but also compliant and domesticated native societies where the colonised non-Western Other would be invited – via the introduction of contractual relations and the creation of a contractual society – to take part in the colonisation of themselves (as colonial labourers, clerks, teachers, soldiers and police personnel).

Modern colonial-capitalism, as it was introduced by the British and the Dutch to British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies, was driven and directed according to a linear understanding of time and historical progression, where colonial-capitalism was seen as the latest (and thus most advanced) form of socio-economic management. Its tenets and practice were secular (as religion was by then seen as outdated and redundant among many Enlightenment intellectuals), as well as bureaucratic, legal, and impersonal. Raffles, Crawfurd and Anderson were themselves true believers in the promises of colonial-capitalism, and were convinced of its transformative potential as a force of change that would bring about socio-economic transformation to the colonies they ruled.

Among the many colonial-era writers who worked in Southeast Asia and wrote about the region and its peoples, Stamford Raffles – whose rise to prominence was due in part to the patronage he received from Lord Minto (Gilbert Elliot Murray Kynynmound (1751-1814), Earl of Minto, Commander in Chief of the East India forces and Governor-General of India) – was perhaps the one whose writing demonstrated the workings of this linear conception of time and history the most. In his work *The History of Java*, Raffles attempted to justify Britain's acquisition and occupation of Java (that occurred during the Napoleonic Wars of Europe and which lasted from 1811 to 1816) on the grounds that the British – or rather, the British East India Company – was an agent of change that would bring progress and development to the land and people of Java.

A tinge of regret colours Raffles' *History of Java*, for he had completed his work shortly after the colony of Java was surrendered by the British back to the Dutch following the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe (1817, vol.1: 190). Raffles bitterly opposed this, for he felt that Java was truly the jewel in the crown of Southeast Asia, and had hoped that Britain would retain possession of the island for the sake of the East India Company (1817). His book bore the word 'history' in its title, so we should not be surprised that time features prominently in his discussion of the colony.

Raffles' understanding of linear historical progression rears its head from the beginning of the book. He wrote that "Java very early emerged from barbarism," and "an extensive Hindu empire once existed" there (1817, vol.1: 190). The narrative that he spun in his *History of Java* is the tale of a once-great civilisation that eventually collapsed into decrepitude and obsolescence, but one that also deserved to be recognised and redeemed by the Western world. For Raffles, Javanese civilisation was every bit as rich and complex as that of the ancient Egyptians and Indians- though the keyword here is '*ancient*,' for he also placed Javanese greatness far, far back into the past.

As far as the Javanese themselves were concerned, Raffles regarded them as a 'historically degenerate' but passive, docile and child-like race who were once civilised, but who had later fallen into a state of collective stupor, backwardness, and primitive superstition (1817, vol.1: 57, 61; vol.2: 6, 189). Raffles' lament in his writing stemmed from his belief that the greatness of Javanese culture and civilisation had been neglected by the Dutch and forgotten by the Javanese themselves.<sup>2</sup> It is here that Raffles' museological modality – to borrow Cohn's term – came into its own (Cohn, 1996: 9-10).

With the advantage of hindsight Raffles earnestly back-dated Javanese history as far as he could go. In his account of the development of Javanese art, architecture, and culture, he traced virtually everything

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<sup>2</sup> Raffles had a low opinion of Dutch scholarship on Java, and at one point he opined that 'the antiquities of Java, have not, until recently, excited much notice; nor have they been sufficiently explored. *The narrow policy of the Dutch denied to other nations the possibility of research; and their own devotion to the pursuits of commerce was too exclusive to allow of them to be much interested by the subject*' (1817, vol.2: 6. Emphasis mine).

back to the ‘extensive Hindu empire’ that was the wellspring from which much of Javanese culture later emerged. (Chapters 9, 10 and 11 of the book – *On Religion; The History of Java from the Earliest Traditions; The History of Java from the Establishment of Mohametanism till the Arrival of the British Forces in 1811* – give a broad account of Java’s past dating back to the Hindu-Buddhist era.) It is interesting to note that Raffles did not claim that Javanese-Hindu culture was wanting or deficient in any way, and on many occasions in his writings he praises the achievements of the ancient Javanese who he regarded as being culturally sophisticated and developed. Yet it is equally important to recognise that the praises that were showered by Raffles upon the Javanese people came with a caveat, and that was his argument that whatever greatness the Javanese may have possessed and achieved was also something of the *past*. Raffles may have genuinely wished to preserve what he regarded as a great Asian civilisation, but for him to do so he first had to locate that civilisation far back in the recesses of forgotten ancient history.

Here in his *History of Java* we see Raffles presenting his readers with not one, but two, portraits of the Javanese: on the one hand we have the sophisticated, cultivated and culturally developed Javanese of ancient times; and on the other hand, we also have the poorer, shallower, degenerated Javanese of the present, who does not know his own history and culture, and who cannot be counted upon to recount the greatness of days long gone. Into this gap steps in the Western colonial-capitalist scholar-functionary (being none other than Raffles, of course) who plays the timely and historical role as the saviour of Java’s former greatness and who is the only one who can redeem the reputation of Java as a civilisation that was once glorious. This, in effect, also places Raffles – and by extension the East India Company, the British government and the British nation as well – at the forefront of time and history as the latest (and most advanced) people on earth, who carry upon their shoulders the burden of the enlightened white man, sent out into the world to ‘preserve’ and ‘rescue’ the past of other fallen nations and civilisations, and to place them all in the archives of the modern colonial museum.

For Raffles and other Western colonial-capitalists of that era, it seemed as if there was only one path that time could take, and not multiple, parallel, or even alternative histories. The only universal

history they recognised was that which placed Western civilisation at the forefront of progress, while others were relegated to the background - as great, but fallen, civilisations whose time had passed. *The triumph of the West was always in the present tense, while the achievements of the non-Western world could only be recounted in the past tense.*

Raffles was certainly not the only Western coloniser-writer who believed in, and promoted, this understanding of singular, linear time in his writings. His contemporaries like John Crawfurd and John Anderson likewise adopted very similar temporal-historical schemas in their works, and Crawfurd (1820) in particular was explicit in the manner that he ranked the different communities of Southeast Asia according to a racial hierarchy that differentiated between different 'races', according to their historical-temporal location on a singular, universal historical path. There were, for Crawfurd, 'higher' and 'lower' races, and the positionality of each of these races was determined by where they stood on that same universal linear track of historical development and progress.

Today's readers may not be too surprised that these men – all of whom happened to be white, male, colonial-capitalists who served the same militarised colonial company – thought alike and shared the same understanding of singular, linear time. But what is equally important (and perhaps more interesting) is the question of the extent to which their Eurocentric and monological understanding of time may (or may not) have been accepted and internalised by those who became their native colonial subjects. To answer this question, we will now turn to one of the most prominent and influential native writer-intellectuals of the time, namely Munshi Abdullah Abdul Kadir.

### **Captive Time: The Acceptance of Linear Time in the Writings of Munshi Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir**

There was *almost no time* for native peoples to reorganise politically, redeploy socially, form wider alliances or develop more effective military tactics. (2008: 256)

**John Darwin,**  
*After Tamerlane*

Among the vernacular intellectuals who lived and worked under British colonial rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the figure of the Hadrami-Tamil-Malay

Jawi Peranakan writer and teacher Munshi Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir (1796-1854) looms large as one of the most prolific and thoughtful writers of his age. He is known for his works *Kisah Pelayaran ke Timur* (1838) and *Hikayat Munshi Abdullah* (1840), both of which were unprecedented in form and content. Here was a non-Western colonial subject writing about the socio-political realities of Empire from within, and it is crucial for us to remember that Abdullah's subject-position during that time was that of a colonial subject.

Abdullah lived at a time when the world about his was changing at an alarming rate, and he noted in his *Hikayat* that "*aku memikirkan maka sekian-lah lama-nya umur-ku yang telah lalu itu telah beberapa banyak ajaib dan beberapa peredaran dunia, dan adat, dan perkara yang tidak pernah didengar dan dilihat oleh nenek-moyangku, sekian itu telah ku lihat-lah*" ("I thought to myself that in all the years that I have lived there have been so many amazing events and changes in the world, in customs and in things that my ancestors had never heard of or seen that I had witnessed") (1947: 344). Abdullah lived and worked at a time of flux and change, and it is not surprising that his own understanding of time informed much of his writing.

The changes that were taking place in Malacca (and the rest of the Malay Peninsula soon after) was at a rate that grew incessantly, and would eventually leave many of the native polities of Southeast Asia behind. As Andaya put it:

What characterises this period is rather the *pace* of change, itself part of a global phenomenon [...] The Malay archipelago, always sensitive to the shifts of international trade, was now caught up by far-reaching economic and political forces which were drawing Europe and Asia ever closer (1982:114).

Abdullah was, and remains, a controversial and divisive figure until today due to the critique that he levelled against the native communities of Southeast Asia, whom he regarded as lethargic and unwilling to change according to the needs of the time. It was this that contributed in part to the manner in which latter-day scholars would dub him a colonial stooge and an example of the captive native mind (Alatas, 1977: 138). Yet in his works, he left behind a rare glimpse of life in the Malay-Muslim world of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, seen from the point of view of a Peranakan-Malay Muslim who was troubled by developments that were beyond his control.

To attempt a spirited defence of Abdullah is not my intention here, and would go beyond the scope of this paper. But it ought to be noted that notwithstanding his declared admiration for his employer-patrons Raffles and Lord Minto, Abdullah was not blind to the contradictions and hypocrisies that came in the train of colonial intervention into the Malay world.

His writings did indeed reveal that he was impressed by the spectacular achievements of Modernity that he saw all around him in the colonies: this included the creation of a *modern* code of law that was impersonal and universally enforced across the Empire by faceless bureaucrats, *modern* armies that could be mustered and transported across the globe and yet retained their cohesion and discipline as fighting units, *modern* systems of trade and communication that could bring together goods and services from all over the world, and of course *modern* technology that could build as well as destroy centuries of history in a matter of seconds. But Abdullah was not blind to the fact that the modern men he so admired like Raffles and Minto were also agents of a Western colonialism. A closer reading of his texts reveals that he was also aware of the many shortcomings of the Europeans, though his was the critical mind of a colonised native subject confined to a humdrum existence within the colonial bureaucracy (Abdullah, 1947: 46, 55-56, 89-91, 147). Abdullah never rejected the claims of Modernity and modernisation, for he saw in them a potential tool that could be used to help the Malays progress and prosper in times that were rapidly changing. Finally, Abdullah was also a *Muslim* subject who directed a religio-ethical critique against the injustices of his world. In this regard viewed the problems of his fellow colonised subjects in modern terms that were also tempered by Islamic sensibilities.

Munshi Abdullah's understanding of Modernity, progress and development was one that was founded upon the same understanding of linear time that was at work in the mind of his patron-employer Raffles. But there remains a very important difference between the worldviews of these two individuals.

Raffles, as we have seen earlier, viewed human history in terms of a linear progression from the primitive and pre-modern to the civilised and modern; and this linear time-flow was dotted with historical moments where different civilisations had developed and reached the peak of

their success. For Raffles history was a linear series of episodes, where different civilisations would be given their fifteen minutes of fame before they would be sidelined and superseded by other, more modern and developed civilisations. Thus, Raffles never denied the greatness of Indian, Javanese or Malay civilisation, though he did place these civilisations in the distant past, and by doing so permanently relegated them to the past-tense while placing Western culture and civilisation in the present-tense of human progress.

Abdullah seems to have accepted and internalised this linear conception of historical progress too, though he was not prepared to throw in the towel and concede defeat. The thrust of Abdullah's critique lay in his argument that Malay-Muslim civilisation was not doomed to remain forever in the past, but could be reactivated and brought back to the fore if Muslims were able and willing to learn the lessons of Modernity and to adjust to the reality of modern times. This made Abdullah a modernist-reformist Muslim thinker, though one whose reformist ideas were grounded in the belief in teleology and unidirectional historical progress. The difference between the reformist ideas of Abdullah and those of the Muslim reformers of previous centuries (such as Buhara al-Jauhari and Shiekh Nuruddin of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) was that his concerns were more urgent in nature, and located in the immediate present. While the latter seemed more concerned with purifying Southeast Asian Islam of its heterodox and deviationist elements, Abdullah was concerned about ensuring the political and economic survival of Muslims instead. Living as he did in colonial settlements like Malacca and Singapore where Malay-Muslim power had been eclipsed and erased by the British, Abdullah clearly saw and understood the magnitude of the problem that confronted the Malay community.

It is here, in his critique of his own Malay-Muslim community, that Abdullah's thoughts hovered around the problem of powerlessness over time. Abdullah's argument was that the decline of Malay-Muslim power was due to the fact that the Muslim world was no longer at the historical forefront of scientific and economic development, and were no longer the producers of science, but rather the passive consumers of it.

Abdullah's critique was also an ethical one, which saw in this climate of powerlessness the conditions that created a vicious cycle

of degradation, humiliation, and moral decline. Consequently, his critique was both descriptive as well as prescriptive: his attitude to Modernity was thoroughly modern in that he saw it as the instruments for liberation of his own people. His goal, however, remained Islamic in character. The fact that it is the *Taj-us Salatin* of Buchara al-Jauhari that he prescribes as a solution to the corruption of the Malay rulers is significant in this respect (Abdullah, 1961: 88). What Abdullah wanted the Malays to do was to learn the lessons of Modernity so that they could once again return to the path of development and develop themselves as progressive, confident Muslims.<sup>3</sup> This entails not a rejection of linear temporality, but rather the acceptance of the idea that time is indeed linear.

The upshot of Abdullah's argument was that weak and backward societies *can* get ahead in the race of history if they were to smarten up to the realities of the modern world and learn how to develop in a modern way. Only then could weaker societies get ahead in time, and be at the forefront of Modernity and progress. The tragedy that befell Abdullah and his people was that time was precisely the one thing that the natives of Southeast Asia did *not* have and did *not* control, for as Andaya has noted "transition to the changed political and economic environment of the nineteenth century *required time, and it was one of the ironies of history that this was precisely what Western imperialism could least afford to give*" (Andaya, 1982: 113).

### **Time Over Time: The Ascendancy of Eurocentric Understandings of Time and the Demise of Other Knowledge-Systems**

Living as we do in a world that has grown as increasingly 'flat' and homogeneous thanks to the process of capital-driven globalisation, scholars and cultural activists the world over have lamented the loss of so many indigenous knowledge and belief-systems. In the past few decades, the world has witnessed not only the extinction of hundreds of species of plant and animal life, but also human cultures and languages.

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<sup>3</sup> For this reason Abdullah should not be thought of as a 'modernising' Muslim, as he was not trying to 'modernise' or 'reform' Islam into something modern, in the same way that many of the reformist Muslim thinkers of the next century would. Abdullah did not propose any program of secularisation that was predicated upon a secular notion of humanism, which regarded the individual autonomous human agent as the final goal of progress.

Some have opined that the rapid demise of so many cultures is due to the rampant commercialisation that we see in the world today, made worse by the workings of a popular global media that trivialises and reduces radical difference and plurality to the level of banal sameness. Yet others have also noted that the languages and cultures that have disappeared from the face of the earth are *mostly from the developing South*, and not the developed North; and have thus come to the painful conclusion that what we are in fact witnessing is nothing less than *epistemicide* (the systematic and deliberate extermination of knowledge-systems) on a global scale, that is the result of the power and economic differentials that we see today, which are in turn part of the longer and older legacy of Empire and colonialism.

As different, alternative understandings of time and space are slowly but surely pushed to the margins and nudged into oblivion, we are left with an increasingly singular understanding of time that is universal. Humanity is moving to the beat of a singular drum, and this unanimity of pace and purpose has undoubtedly served the interests of global capital more than anything else. A singular universal understanding of time is one of the prerequisites of a singular global market: online *Zoom* meetings can begin right on time, precious cargoes are delivered on schedule, trains and planes land exactly when they are expected to. But there is also an attendant cost to this increased efficiency and singularity, and that cost has been the subject of this paper.

Though time may not be something that can be thought of in terms of territoriality or space, it was an idea that was contested during the era of late colonial-capitalism in Southeast Asia. What I have tried to show in this paper is that during the era of colonial intervention into local politics and society in Southeast Asia there was not only a concerted and sustained attempt to map out the geography of native societies that would later come under Western colonial rule, but to also challenge local understandings of time and temporality, and to introduce a decidedly Western and Eurocentric understanding of time – as linear, determined, and teleological.

This process began in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, when colonial-era scholars and the advocates of Western colonial-capitalism like William Marsden put forth the notion that the communities of Southeast Asia lacked an understanding of time, and that Southeast Asian notions

of time were in fact imported from abroad, namely from the Indian subcontinent. This claim was accompanied by the related notion that much of Southeast Asian culture was derivative and imported, and that the civilisation and culture of Southeast Asia were inherited from earlier periods of external influence and intervention from India. By claiming thus, two things were achieved simultaneously: the denial of the existence of local knowledge (about time and temporality) and also the assertion that 'cultural colonialism' (that was sometimes also labelled as 'Indianisation') had already taken place long before the advent of Western colonialism.

From the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century British colonialism was consolidated across what was then referred to as 'British Malaya.' As Tarling (1969) has shown, the arrival and consolidation of British rule in the Malay Peninsula would eventually alter practically all aspects of native political-economic life, and this transformation was brought about through the use of a number of modern tools of statecraft and colony-making, that included the colonial census, colonial mapping, the re-writing of local history and the economic transformation of the colony. So deep and extensive were the changes that took place that by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century colonial administrators like Swettenham (1908) were already boasting that they had re-made the country, and created an entirely new socio-political order that was developed along the lines of a particular Western understanding of historical development and progress.

But among the many tools of Empire and colony-building that were used in the socio-economic and socio-political transformation of Malaya, there was also one that has thus far received scant attention: the colonial timetable and colonial understanding of linear time. Scott (1985), in his study of modes of everyday peasant resistance to colonial and postcolonial law or governance is among the few who have noted that the 'myth of the lazy native' that was once so prevalent among colonial writers and administrators, fails to take into account that 'laziness' was perhaps one of the few modes of resistance left to those colonial subjects who did not wish to be subjected to the regime of colonial time and the colonial timetable. In his analysis Scott has noted that modes of peasant resistance – that included not working on time, not coming on time, wasting time, etc. – were all indicative of an attempt to resist the imposition of a singular temporal schema or framework that tried to reduce colonial subjects to the status of productive native labour;

and as such ‘laziness’ did not only demonstrate apathy towards time and timetables, but was in effect a mode of active resistance against the hegemony of a singular temporal order.

This paper was an attempt to bring considerations of time back on to the table, and aims to initiate a serious discussion about how time ought to be considered an important variable in our understanding of the workings of modern colonial-capitalism and imperialism. Much more work needs to be done by historians of Empire, to critically understand and explain just how and why the contestation over time and understandings of time was every bit as important as our discussions about geography and colonial territorial expansionism. We hope that this was a timely intervention in itself, and that others will follow suit; though only time will tell if the question of time will ever be taken up seriously in the future.

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# A Theory of “Islamic Modernities:” Religion and Modernisation in Muslim History

**Dietrich Jung\***

**Abstract:** This article takes its point of departure from the observation that references to Islamic religious traditions became the dominant signifier in defining the authenticity of Muslim modernities. How should we understand this observation of a relative hegemony of ideas of specifically Islamic modernities in the Muslim world? The article wants to answer this question in developing a theoretical argument concerning the role of religion in modernity in four steps. The first section presents a critical discussion of Eisenstadt’s concept of multiple modernities. Then, I develop a conceptual dichotomy between modernity as a social macro structure and modernity as a multiplicity of cultural projects. In the third step, the article briefly discusses notions of secularisation and their remaining relevance for theories of multiple modernity. Finally, I suggest understanding the observable dominance of specifically Islamic constructions of modernity in the Muslim world through the lenses of the concept of cultural hegemony. The article concludes with four short suggestions to answer the question as to how my argumentation relates to some core tenets of classical modernisation theory.

**Keywords:** Modernity, Modernisation Theory, Multiple Modernities, Islamic Reform, Cultural Hegemony

**Abstrak:** Makalah ini bertitik-tolak dengan pemerhatian bahawa rujukan-rujukan tradisi keagamaan Islam telah menjadi penanda dominan dalam menentukan kesahihan konsep kemodenan Muslim. Bagaimana patut kita fahami tentang pemerhatian terhadap hegemoni idea yang relatif tentang kemodenan Islam di Dunia Islam ini? Makalah ini akan menjawab soalan

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ini dengan membangunkan hujah teoretikal berkenaan peranan agama dalam kemodenan dengan empat langkah. Langkah pertama membentangkan diskusi kritikal mengenai konsep pelbagai kemodenan yang diperkenalkan Eisenstadt. Langkah kedua membangunkan dikotomi konseptual di antara kemodenan sebagai struktur sosial makro dan kemodenan sebagai satu kepelbagaian projek-projek sosial. Dalam langkah ketiga, makalah ini membincangkan secara ringkas tanggapan-tanggapan sekularisasi dan perkaitan lain mereka dengan teori pelbagai kemodenan. Langkah terakhir mencadangkan pemahaman terhadap penguasaan yang dapat diperhatikan dalam pembinaan kemodenan Islam secara khusus menerusi lensa konsep hegemoni budaya. Makalah ini menyimpulkan empat cadangan pendek dalam menjawab persoalan-persoalan ini bagi menunjukkan bagaimana hujah-hujah yang disampaikan ini berkait dengan beberapa pegangan teras teori modernisasi klasikal.

**Kata kunci:** Kemodenan, Teori Modernisasi, Pelbagai Kemodenan, Reformasi Islam, Hegemoni Budaya

The irresistible power of the evolution of human society (...) is merciless to laws even of divine origin and transfers them, when their time is come, from the treasury of everlasting goods to a museum of antiquities (C. S. Hurgronje 1916).

## Introduction

Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936), a Dutch orientalist scholar and founding father of modern Islamic studies, perceived religion as “the most conservative factor in human life” (Hurgronje, 1916b, p. 138). For him, to be a Muslim and to be modern were not necessarily contradictions, but a modern Muslim had to get rid of Islamic traditions, in particular in as much as they are systemised in Sunni orthodoxy and its canons of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Publishing his *Lectures on Islam* in the early twentieth century, Hurgronje was convinced that the historical process of modernisation would inevitably render the normative system of Islam obsolete. His work both as a colonial advisor in Dutch East India (1889–1906) and later as a professor at University of Leiden (1906-1936) was predicated on the classical sociological assumption of a zero-sum relationship between religion and modernity. However, in stark contrast to Hurgronje’s expectation of a gradual disappearance of Islam, the aspirations of many contemporary political movements in Muslim countries tend to build on versions of a specifically Islamic form of modernity.

The relevance of Islamic traditions for contemporary Muslims has not withered away. On the contrary, historical developments in the twentieth century seemingly have proven Hurgonje's conviction wrong in both theoretical and empirical terms. Theoretically, the idea of a linear, all-encompassing, and universal social development subsequently replacing traditional by modern social norms and institutions – the classical meaning of "modernisation" – has lost most of its scholarly credit. The world has witnessed diverse forms of modernity alternative to this "Western" ideal type. Modernisation, if we still apply this term, can no longer be equated with Westernisation. Looking at Islamic discourses, we can observe the hegemonic idea that modern authenticity only is granted by a specifically Islamic type of modernity. Yet, the legitimate form of this Islamic modernity is highly contested from within.<sup>1</sup>

The relative hegemony of these specifically Islamic imaginations of modern life has deeper historical roots. We can trace back the idea of an Islamic modernity to the Islamic reform movement of the nineteenth century. Leading representatives of this movement such as Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905), Namik Kemal (1840–1888), and Syed Ahmed Khan (1817–1898) launched an intellectual discourse that has been grounded in the more general idea that authentic forms of modernity must be closely linked to Islamic religious traditions. This "Islamic modernism" advocated educational, political, legal, and economic reforms in specifically Islamic frameworks. In the twentieth century, then, these references to religion in constructing modern social imaginaries have gradually assumed a hegemonic status. At the beginning of the new millennium, references to "Islam" became the dominant signifier in defining the authenticity of Muslim modernities. Yet what kind of references to Islam? The observer is confronted with a broad range of Islamic political movements from various rights advocacy groups to militant Jihadist organisations all claiming Islamic legitimacy for their worldviews and actions.

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<sup>1</sup> This idea also has been contested by non-religious and even secularist projects of modernity. Good examples are the Kemalist Turkish Republic or Tunisia under its first President Habib Bourgiba (1957-1987). However, these secular alternatives to Islamic projects of modernity will not be considered in this article.

In combining modernity with Islamic traditions, the Islamic reform movement somehow “anticipated” the more recent revision of classical concepts of modernisation in social theory. These classical modernisation theories once built their conceptual apparatus on the fundamental dichotomy between tradition and modernity, a dichotomy in which tradition largely, but not exclusively, was understood in terms of religion. In line with the quote from Hurgronje above, classical modernisation theories conceptualised the rise of modern society in terms of an inevitable “passing of traditional society” (Lerner, 1958). They claimed to observe a social transformation toward one general model of modernity on a global scale. The conceptual revision of this universal model inherent to classical modernisation theories finds one of its most pronounced contemporary expressions in theories of multiple modernities. Originally coined by the late sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt (Eisenstadt, 2000a; 2000b), the concept of multiple modernities tries to make sense of the multiple faces in which modernity historically has appeared. Even more important, Eisenstadt assigned religious traditions a prominent role in shaping these different forms of modernity. Instead of disappearing, one of Eisenstadt’s core arguments, religious traditions have played a key role in the construction of historically observable varieties of modern social orders.

In this article, I engage in several contemporary discussions of social theory, making an empirically informed yet fundamentally theoretical argument that concerns the role of religion in modern society. I am doing so with specific reference to Muslim history. Thereby my argument is intimately linked to the question about the ongoing relevance or irrelevance of some of the core tenets of classical modernisation theories. To be sure, I am going to paint a picture with a very broad brush. The endeavour here is not to go into particularities, but to link different theoretical assumptions and historical observations in making a more general argument on the relationship of religion and modernity. Given the ever-increasing specialisation of social enquiry, contemporary research in the social sciences and humanities tends to justify itself in rather microscopic perspectives. Consequently, the highly specialised findings of these studies are often not anymore mutually intelligible, they tend to not speaking to each other any longer. The purpose of this article is going deliberately against this tendency, aiming at a more holistic picture of social enquiry.

I first take up Eisenstadt's claim concerning the role of traditions in shaping multiple modernities. I briefly discuss his theory with respect to some of the basic assumptions of classical modernisation theory as represented in Lerner's once so prominent book on the Middle East. I argue that the concepts of modernity and multiple modernities are mutually dependent, that they logically cannot exist apart from each other. In the second step, I present the dichotomy between modernity as an abstract social macro structure and as a cultural project. This dichotomy allows me to put theories of modernity in the singular and pluralistic theories of modernity in a relationship. The third section reflects upon the role of religion in modernity. I critically revise the paradigm of secularisation without throwing this concept into the dustbin of conceptual history. Finally, I investigate the historical course in which the idea to combine modern authenticity with Islamic traditions has assumed its relative hegemony in the construction of Islamic modernities. In this section, I utilise theories of cultural hegemony in order to answer the question why the connection to Islamic traditions became so important in granting modern authenticity to Muslim imaginations of modern life.

### **From Modernity to Multiple Modernities**

The cover of Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society* features some mosques in the foreground overshadowed by the drilling towers of an oil field. This image contains some of the core assumptions of classical modernisation theories in a stereotypical Middle Eastern representation. According to them, economic growth and industrialisation will bring about political changes toward secular, participatory, and eventually liberal democratic societies on a global scale. In Lerner's theoretical framework, modern society is first and foremost a "participant society" in which religion gradually loses its societal relevance. Through urbanisation, literacy, and media participation, modern people acquire new lifestyles that fundamentally distinguish them from the non-participant forms of "traditional" life. Structural changes in the social fabric of society go hand in hand with a specific moulding of the personal character of the modern subject. The macro and micro levels of society undergo systemic transformations of a specific kind according to which "secular enlightenment," the spirit of rationalism and positivism, gradually replaces "sacred revelation in the guidance of human affairs" (Lerner, 1958, p. 43). Lerner juxtaposed the autonomous, mobile, and empathic personality of modernity to the constrictive selves of traditional

society with its approved personal styles and lack of any awareness of alternatives (1958, p. 73). To be sure, in doing so, he conceded that the concrete paths of modernisation can take very different forms (1958, p. 65). Yet despite all observable historical differences, Lerner nevertheless claimed that in the Middle East a similar process of modernisation as in the “West” was under way (1958, p. 44).

Daniel Lerner’s book is a paradigmatic example for studies based on the application of some core tenets of classical modernisation theory to non-Western contexts that dominated sociology in the 1950s and 1960s. Lerner perceived modernisation in terms of a systemic relationship between economic growth, democratic participation, and religious decline. The pretension of the grand theories of modernisation, explaining social change through one “scientific” model, meanwhile has been replaced by a radical historicisation of the discourse of modernity in a variety of ways. Today, social theorists produce a growing number of pluralistic theories of modernity such as alternative, entangled, or successive modernities. The theoretical move in this direction was not due to intrinsic developments in social theory alone. While postcolonial, poststructuralist, and postmodern authors have visibly changed the field, it was, at the same time, empirical observations that made these new approaches of social theory so fashionable. Considering the Islamic revolution in Iran, the global rise of Islamist discourses, the capitalist achievements of non-democratic countries such as China, or the resilience of religion in American society itself, the linear model of social convergence almost entirely lost its scholarly credibility. Yet does this mean that all of the assumptions of classical modernisation theory were wrong? What is the conceptual relationship of pluralistic theories of modernity to classical modernisation theory?

For answers to these questions, Eisenstadt’s theory of multiple modernities seems to be a good starting point. To a certain extent, he maintained the assumption of a more generic process of modernisation behind the rise of multiple modernities. Eisenstadt claimed that a “cultural programme” of modernity has spread from Europe over the globe. This programme, however, has not led to a convergence of historical societies. On the contrary, in Eisenstadt’s reading, different “civilisational complexes” have reacted to this generic programme in very different and path-dependent ways. Eisenstadt defined these civilisational complexes with reference to the ongoing discussion about

the "Axial Age" theory (Jaspers, 1956). The civilisations of the Axial Age, a period roughly comprising five centuries around the middle of the last millennium before Christ, "elaborated new models of order, based on contrasts and connections between transcendental foundations and mundane life worlds" (Arnason et al., 2005, p. 2). Eisenstadt reformulated this concept in a historical-sociological perspective and assigned religious traditions a significant role. He broke radically with one of the axiomatic principles of classical modernisation theories, the dichotomy between tradition (speak: religion) and modernity (Eisenstadt, 2000a; 2000b; 2001).

Eisenstadt's approach attempted to combine unity and difference, a universal programme of modernity with a multiplicity of forms in which this cultural programme has been turned into historical reality. Therefore, Eisenstadt's approach does not serve the purposes of those postcolonial and postmodern proponents of pluralistic theories of modernity, who promote a form of arbitrariness in their claims to the diversity of modernities. In those theories, modernity in the singular represents nothing more than the shallow concept for an epoch. The almost random application of Eisenstadt's term of multiple modernities in contemporary scholarship, however, has turned it into an academic buzzword losing its conceptual substance (Thomasen 2010). Therefore, it is important to emphasise again the core claim of Eisenstadt that it was traditions that bestowed a generic meaning in modernity with its various cultural expressions. Yet, what is then modernity in the singular in Eisenstadt's work?

In his pilot essay on multiple modernities, Eisenstadt characterised the modern cultural programme by ideas such as human autonomy, reflexivity, mastery of nature, and the loss of legitimacy of previously taken-for-granted social orders. His theory of multiple modernities emphasises the role of human agency in the constitution of political orders and, quite similar to Daniel Lerner, Eisenstadt too considered modern society as defined by participation (2000, p. 5). In Eisenstadt's participant society, however, we can observe an ongoing struggle about the definition of the political realm, and he does not equate this realm with liberal democracy. According to Eisenstadt, modernity is "beset by internal antinomies and contradictions and a tension between totalising and pluralistic visions" (2001, pp. 325–26). While democracy certainly remains an option, this kind of political order has been challenged

by fundamentalist movements of a Jacobin nature aiming at a “total reconstruction of personality and society” (2000, p. 19). Multiple forms of modernity share this ambiguity as well as the adoption of the nation-state model with its social features of bureaucratisation and routinisation (2000, p. 8). Evidently, Eisenstadt’s theoretical design maintains some of the defining elements of classical modernisation theories and revokes others.

The theory of multiple modernities has been criticised for two shortcomings when it comes to an understanding of the varieties of modern social orders.<sup>2</sup> First of all, there is Eisenstadt’s conceptualisation of the cultural programme of modernity, modernity in the singular, that remains relatively vague. This applies to both questions about the very conceptual definition of modernity and whether modernity represents a civilisation in its own right or not (Arnason, 2003, pp. 30–35). Secondly, in Eisenstadt’s approach, civilisations/religions almost appear like hermetically demarcated cultural complexes, as coherent and bounded “cultural containers” (Wagner, 2008, p. 12). Consequently, his theory focuses on differences between religions, yet it does not tell us much about multiple modernities within religions. In this respect, the broad range of different Islamic imaginations of modernity is telling. Muslim intellectuals have understood Islamic modernity in rather different ways. The educational projects of the Islamic modernists of the nineteenth century, for instance, were of a rather elitist nature. The foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, then, marked a fundamental change. Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) brought the Muslim masses in, making Islamic reform the purpose of a broad social movement. During the twenty-first century, however, the collectivist organisational model of the Muslim Brotherhood has increasingly been challenged by alternative forms of more individualised imaginations of modern Islamic life. In short, there exist competing visions about Islamic modernities within Islam. In the following two sections, I will address the shortcomings of Eisenstadt’s theory of multiple modernities. I start with a conceptual clarification regarding the relationship of modernity in the singular with the concept of multiple modernities and then move on to a discussion

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<sup>2</sup> Personally, I would add a third critique regarding Eisenstadt’s insistence on that the programme of modernity has its temporal and spatial origin in Europe. For my argumentation against this view, see: Jung, 2023.

of the role of religious traditions in modern life shaping multiple modernities within "civilisational complexes."

### **Modernity as Macrostructure and as a Project**

The German sociologist Hartmut Rosa defined modernisation as a progressing social process associated with both "cultural promises" and "structural constraints" (Rosa, 2014). In conceptual terms, Rosa explained this "double nature" of modernity with reference to the theories of the German sociologists Jürgen Habermas and Niklas Luhmann. On the occasion of receiving the Adorno award from the City of Frankfurt in September 1980, Habermas defined cultural modernity as a "project of modernity" once put forward by the eighteenth-century philosophers of the Enlightenment. This normative-cultural project consisted "in the relentless development of the objectivating sciences, of the universalistic foundations of morality and law, and of autonomous art, all in accord with their own immanent logic" (Habermas, 1997, p. 45). In *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, then, Habermas criticised the representatives of the classical modernisation theories of the 1950s such as Lerner for inventing the evolutionary and highly abstract concept of modernisation that detached modernity from its European cultural and philosophical origins. Habermas stated a farewell from modernity by neoconservative forces who accepted that modernity as a cultural project had been made obsolete by the self-contained ongoing process of social modernisation (Habermas, 1996, pp. 10–12). In Habermas' own words, the autonomous dynamics of modern economic and administrative systems have colonised people's life worlds (Habermas, 1987).

Niklas Luhmann was one of those sociologists who defined modernity exclusively in terms of this self-contained systemic process. For Luhmann, modernity represented a highly abstract macro structure fully devoid of any purpose in a normative sense. According to him, the global progression of modern society has been a self-referential process of the production and re-production of social structures through communication. While modern society as world society represents a whole at the global level, it is internally subdivided by functionally differentiated social subsystems such as the arts, economics, law, politics, religion, and science. These subsystems of modern society constitute themselves through a sharp distinction between system and environment, each following its own binary communicative code. The

legal system, for instance, operates based on the code legal/illegal, while the scientific system applies the code true/not true. In defining modern society as an all-encompassing global system of self-referential communications, Luhmann excludes the modern individual from the social realm. In his theory, the modern subject appears as a psychical system that is separated from society through its own operational modus of consciousness. In Luhmann's theoretical edifice, modernisation represents an "empty process" of sociocultural evolution. This process no longer knows agency, and its self-referential mechanism of functional differentiation gradually has superseded other forms of social differentiation such as segmentation or social stratification. While these latter modes of social differentiation coexist with functional differentiation in modernity, they are nevertheless entirely subordinated to the communicative structure of a functionally differentiated world society (Luhmann 1987; 1990).

Based on these two different theoretical perspectives on modernity, Hartmut Rosa interpreted modernisation as a conflictual interplay between modernity as a cultural project and modernity as an empty structural process. Yet, while we can differentiate between the project and the process of modernity in logical and analytical ways, these two natures of modernity are empirically enmeshed, and we, therefore, can observe modernisation in historically and regionally different ways (Rosa, 2014, pp. 133–34). In Rosa's analysis, and here apparently resonate Jürgen Habermas' thoughts, in early modernity, a mutually stimulating relationship characterised the project and process of modernity, whereas in contemporary "high modernity" project and process have separated from each other and the structural advancement undermines its previous normative-cultural foundations (2014, p. 137).

In taking my theoretical inspiration from Rosa's dichotomy, I would suggest defining modernity in the singular as this self-contained social process at the macro level, the increasing formation of social relations through functional differentiation. The concept of multiple modernities, by contrast, tries to grasp the historically varied ways in which social actors, whether individuals or collectivities, have attempted to make sense of this structural transformation. The before-mentioned Islamic reform movement is just one example of this sense making in a Muslim context. In this way, multiple modernities represent different projects of modernity in whose normative-cultural

constructions, as Eisenstadt showed, religious traditions may play a role or not. When we talk about modernity in the singular and in the plural, we are apparently referring to two different levels of social reality (Jung, 2017, chapter 3). And it is at the level of social actors where we observe the formative struggles about identity, knowledge, and worldview in giving global modernity its historically different meanings. From this perspective, however, there is not one project of modernity, but many projects of modernity that have developed from historical struggles with both modernisation as an empty structural process and with the promises of the Enlightenment.

In the *Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia* (2007), Cemil Aydin analysed this construction of multiple projects of modernity via the shift in the visions of world order in Islamic and Asian thought during the era of high imperialism. In his analysis, Muslim and Asian intellectuals often subscribed to the major ideas of the European Enlightenment discourse. "Pro-Western liberal civilisationalism" marked the dominant reformist discourse among both Islamic intellectuals and intellectuals in East Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century (Aydin, 2007, p. 31). The idea of a "universal West" was initially at the heart of the Islamic reform movement. "One major characteristic of the predominantly Islamic discourse of modernity was its insistence on the essential compatibility between fundamental teachings of Islam and the qualities of universal progress and science" (2007, p. 47). For major protagonists of Islamic modernism such as the aforementioned Muhammad Abduh, Namik Kemal, and Syed Ahmed Khan, the promises of the Enlightenment and the normative idea of a universal modern civilisation were core features of their reformist thoughts. The first generation of Islamic modernists aimed at participating in this universal normative framework through the synthesis of Islamic values with the ideas of the Enlightenment (Jung, 2011, p. 224). With the subsequent political domination of Muslim regions by European colonial powers, however, these intellectuals were faced with a severe dilemma: "under the impact of imperialist politics Europe could not be embraced, but because of its advances in science and its political and intellectual liberties, it could not easily be rejected" (Jung, 2011, p. 228). Facing this dilemma, Islamic reformists blamed the imperialist Europeans for violating their own universal standards and developed an alternative vision of modernity (Aydin, 2007, p. 192). They fused Islamic traditions with some of the ideals of

the Enlightenment, initiating an ongoing discourse about a specifically Islamic project of modernity.

Eisenstadt emphasised this role of religious traditions in shaping culturally different projects of modernity. However, the historical path of the discourse of Islamic modernity clearly shows that religious traditions contributed to very different modern projects within Islam. This applies with respect to both intellectual and everyday imaginations of Islamic modernities. Farzin Vahdat, for instance, examined nine very different Muslim thinkers with South Asian, Iranian, and Arab backgrounds. In his reading they all “grappled with modernity and its relation to the Islamic world” (Vahdat, 2013, p. xx). However, these thinkers did so in utterly different ways. While the Indian Abu al-A’la al-Mawdudi (1903-1979) and the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) invoked romanticist ideas in constructing new forms of a holistic Islamic society, the Moroccan sociologist Fatima Mernissi (1940-2015) and her French colleague Muhammad Arkoun (1928-2010) imagined Islamic modernities as pluralistic societies in feminist and liberal democratic ways. Vahdat claimed that these very different modernities within Islam revolve around the idea of a new Islamic person predicated on the specifically modern notion of human subjectivity. They all, according to Vahdat, imagine the modern Muslim as an empowered subject with human agency, though some of them, such as Qutb, did so while morally condemning this core feature of modernity at the same time (2013, p. 265).

In our study of young activists in Islamic charities, welfare organisations, and youth movements, we could make similar observations. In our fieldwork, we were confronted with a remarkable variety in which these activists combined the notion of the engaged modern subject with their adherence to Islamic traditions. For some of them, Islam was more a convenient facilitator for achieving employment, social status, and friendship, whereas for others doing volunteer work in an Islamic charity was a pious endeavour. However, those “following the path of God” in their social engagement did so in different ways. They differed in their orientations toward ideals such as the neoliberal Muslim professional, the Islamic advocate of human rights, the peer-group oriented follower of the Muslim Brotherhood or the Islamist activist engaged in changing society (Jung et al., 2014). In short, within a hegemonic discourse of Islamic modernity we observed very different

forms of collective and individual religious identifications. This finding calls for a closer examination of the ways in which we can understand religion in the context of modernity.

### **Religion in Modernity**

There is no scholarly consensus on the role of religion in the modern world. On the contrary, when we turn to the discipline of religious studies, we find leading scholars in the field who even reject the existence of a clearly definable social phenomenon such as religion. Russel McCutcheon, for instance, considered religion to be a mere conceptual tool without any ontological quality (McCutcheon, 1997). In Talal Asad's eyes, the origin of the modern concept of religion in the West rules out its universal validity (Asad, 1993, p. 30). In a similar way, several scholars oppose definitions of religion as belief systems because of the strong references to Christianity that underpin this definition (Matthes, 1993). Timothy Fitzgerald, finally, considered the notion of religion as a specific domain of human agency as nothing other than a myth (Fitzgerald, 2007: 9). In light of this ongoing conceptual debate about religion, Peter Beyer once suggested understanding modern religion as a global system of a specific form of communication (2006). With reference to Niklas Luhmann's modern systems theory, Beyer defined modern religion at the macro level as a global and self-referential subsystem of world society. The religious system achieved its operational closure through boundary demarcations with other functional systems such as economics, law, politics, or science. The concept of modern religion has emerged in this historical process in basing the recursive and self-referential communication of religion on the binary code of being "blessed or cursed" (2006, p. 85). Consequently, religious communication was conceptualised as faith, as the individually experienced belief in and contact with supernatural forces. In empirical terms, then, religions represent relatively stable patterns of religious communication, referring to specific sets of textual, symbolic, and ritual traditions – Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, etc. – ultimately defining what a particular religion is (2006, p. 89). Beyer shows the way in which cultural traditions have been reinterpreted in terms of modern religions, as likewise described in Tomoko Masuzawa's book *The Invention of World Religions* (2005). And it was Shmuel Eisenstadt for whom these world religions played a central role in the construction of multiple modernities.

Adopting this perspective, we can treat religion as a historically contingent social phenomenon whose conceptualisation has a temporarily limited yet in its modern meaning nevertheless universal applicability. Consequently, we are not dealing with a transhistorical concept of religion. The emergence of the above-described understanding of traditions as religions is inseparably embedded in the structural context of modernity. The universal applicability of this concept of religion is a matter of general recognition and not of its specific origin. The application of abstract definitions does not claim to capture the essence of things but is merely a provisional procedure to transparently organise thoughts (Lincoln, 2003, p. 2). In short, we refer to a specifically modern understanding of religion resulting from boundary formations among functionally separated subsystems of communication. As such, the conflictual border negotiations between religion and other systems of communication remain an ongoing process. This is observable, for example, in contemporary European disputes about the Muslim headscarf or the status of religion in public education. In these cases, it is the courts whose legal rulings can hardly avoid deriving from and applying publicly acknowledged definitions of religion (Reuter, 2014). In these public disputes, social actors translate the abstract communicative structures of society's macro level into applicable semantics of everyday life.

In sharp contrast to the discipline of religious studies, in the semantic practices of everyday life, people apply without hesitation a definition of religion which is based on those stabilised patterns of communication with the transcendental realm outlined in Beyer's study. In the empirical chapters of his book, Beyer shows in a number of case studies how intellectuals in China, India, and in predominantly Muslim countries reconstructed and reinvented their traditions in light of this new social model of modern religion. We can identify the conflict-prone process of modern religious reconstruction in the course of the Islamic reform movement throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Consequently, the emergence of a global system of religion has provided the communicative environment in which we are able to identify corpuses of traditions with religious belief systems. How does this modern emergence of religion, however, relate to the assertion of modernity being a secular project?

Under the impact of theories of secularisation that considered the relationship of religion and modernity as a zero-sum game, the functional reduction of traditions to specifically religious forms of communication has been interpreted as a decline of religion in modern society. In lumping together various historical developments, the term of "secularisation," however, has encompassed very different meanings. William Barbieri, for example, suggested distinguishing at least among three of these different meanings concomitant with secularisation (Barbieri, 2015).

In terms of a historical process, firstly, secularisation describes the social transformation through which religion became just one realm among other functionally differentiated subsystems of modern society. This process has been visible, for instance, in border demarcation between religion, education, and science, in which eventually each domain has developed its own specific institutions. The adjective "secular," by contrast, defines specific social conditions and institutions under which religious communication does not play a role. Applying this second meaning, we speak about secular constitutions, secular courts, or secular schools and universities. To be sure, modern institutions in this sense may be secular or they may not be. The label "secular" does not entail being modern as such. Secularism, finally, represents an ideology according to which religion ought to disappear from the public sphere. It is this "secularist secularity" that, to a certain extent, has occupied a dominant position among European intellectuals' imagination of modernity during most of the twentieth century (Casanova, 2015, p. 17). In this sense the project of "Western modernity" was governed by secularist ideologies.

This secularist project of modernity, however, was a historical reality – if at all – only in some parts of Western Europe.<sup>3</sup> In order to understand the relationship between religion and modernity more generally, we therefore need to turn our attention to other parts of the world and in particular to the "global South" (Okeja, 2015). In Muslim social contexts, for instance, religious traditions have played a much

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<sup>3</sup> Yet this does not mean that Europe has not experienced alternatives to this secularist narrative. In Germany, for instance, specifically Catholic projects of modernity played a visible role in the consolidation of the German state from its foundational phase until the end of the Weimar Republic (Weiss, 2014).

more visible role in shaping projects of modernity. As already mentioned, it was the Islamic reform movement that originally constructed the model for an Islamic modernity. In the idea of a socially active, well-educated, and religiously conscious modern Muslim, two of the most influential founding fathers of Islamic reform, Muhammad Abduh and Syed Ahmed Khan, constructed a religious modern Muslim subject in combining religious traditions with the global model of the modern subject as an agentic actor (Jung, 2011, pp. 242–46). In an anthology on intercultural discourses about modernity, to take a contemporary example, two Arab contributors point to this specific role of religion in constructing modern identities in Arab and other Muslim countries. While both authors agree upon the inherently Islamic character of many Arab projects of modernity, they utterly disagree with regard to the relationship between these projects of modernity and the idea of modernity as a universal condition. With his strongly anti-Imperialist jargon, the Egyptian Hasan Hanafi rejects outright the applicability of the very term “modern” to Arab imaginations of contemporary social life because of the term’s “Western” connotations in the Arab cultural settings. For the Tunisian Moncef Ben Abdeljelil, however, Islamic and Arab projects of modernity indisputably subscribe to the universalistic ideas of the Enlightenment in aiming at the improvement of the living conditions of humankind. Yet, they do so, according to Abdeljelil, in a multiplicity of different local and Islamic kinds (Ben Abdeljelil, 2012; Hanafi, 2012).

This observable dominance of references to Islamic traditions in the construction of the multiplicity of Muslim projects of modernity, however, does not exclude the combination of Islamist ideologies with processes of secularisation in its first meaning. This becomes apparent in the example of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Katajun Amirpur, for instance, argues that the Islamisation of politics in Iran has been accompanied by an increasing secularisation of the political attitudes among the Iranian population. The establishment of Islamic governance in Iran has resulted in a loss of confidence in religious institutions. Today, Amirpur argues, many Iranians would advocate the institutional separation of the spheres of religion, politics, and law (Amirpur, 2015, p. 11). This process of secularisation in terms of a functional differentiation between religious and political institutions has been clearly visible in the change of thought of previously prominent supporters of the Islamic

revolution. Already in the late 1990s, Abdolkarim Soroush and Ayatollah Montazeri openly advocated the institutional separation of religion, law, and politics by calling "for the full implementation of popular instead of divine sovereignty, an independent judiciary, freedom of expression, and the restriction of the religious establishment to matters of religious and moral guidance" (Jung, 2007, p. 27).

In conclusion, from the perspective of modern systems theory, religion plays an important but restricted role in modernity. Our understanding of religion has been moulded by the ongoing structural process of modernity, by the increasing dominance of functional differentiation relegating religion to a specific field of communication with the transcendental realm. While this structural development may be labelled as secularisation, this social process does not exclude the role of religion in constructing cultural projects of modernity at the same time. Individual and collective imaginations of modern life may incorporate religious communication, or they may not. There are religious and secular modernities, and this applies to both the so-called West and to Muslim regions of the world. The historical difference, however, lies in the forms of modernity which have achieved a relative hegemony in these different cultural settings. For more than a century, in Europe, this hegemony has been represented by varieties of secularist ideologies. Among Muslims, in contradistinction to Europe, the twentieth century has experienced a more pronounced struggle between secularist and Islamist imaginations in which the construction of authentic Muslim modernities increasingly was associated with Islamic traditions. It is the rise of this form of "religious hegemony" in Muslim projects of modernity to which I will turn in the final section of this article.

### **The Hegemony of Islamic Modernities**

In the early twentieth century, for the German Orientalist Martin Hartmann (1851–1918), the modernisation of Islam could only progress successfully if the regional "national awakenings" would follow the "European" path. In line with his Dutch colleague Snouck Hurgronje, for Hartmann, the modernisation of Muslim countries was synonymous with getting rid of the impact of religious (Islamic) traditions (Hartmann, 1909b). Hartmann was a typical representative of Germany's anti-clerical intellectual elite whose ideological worldview closely resembled what Casanova labelled as "secularist secularism."

Born as the son of a Mennonite preacher in Wroclaw (Breslau) in 1851, Hartmann lived in Istanbul and Beirut before taking up the position of Lecturer in Arabic at the newly founded Seminar for Oriental Languages in Berlin in 1887. In his then widely read book *Der Islam: Geschichte – Glaube – Recht* (Islam: History – Belief – Law), Hartmann conveyed to the general reader the image of Islam as another example for the anachronistic resistance of religion against social progress (Hartmann, 1909a). Based on this opinion vis-à-vis religion, Hartmann eventually made the decision to leave the Protestant Church at the age of 53 in 1904 (Hanisch, 2000, p. xx). In Hartmann's eyes, similar to Snouck Hurgronje, a term such as "Islamic modernity" would have been an oxymoron.

To be sure, in the early twentieth century, secularist worldviews found their confirmation among Muslims too, although with a certain rather non-religious Islamic-cultural component due to their resistance against the colonial West (Sharabi, 1970, pp. 87–104). In the nineteenth century, the Islamic modernists had to compete with both secularist and traditionalist worldviews. In his book on the political and legal thought of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, Malcom Kerr came to the conclusion that in this competition, their "attempts to reform the Muslim world by returning to the pristine teachings of the early 'Golden Age' of Islam had failed in political and intellectual terms" (Jung, 2011, p. 235; Kerr, 1966). This alleged failure of the Islamic reform movement seemed to be confirmed after the end of the First World War. In particular, the foundation of the laicist Turkish Republic appeared to be a kind of proof for the secularist worldview of Martin Hartmann. The abolition of the Ottoman Sultanate (1922) and the Islamic Caliphate (1924) by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk resonated around the globe. As part of his iconoclast cultural revolution, Atatürk removed the article declaring Islam to be the state religion from the Turkish constitution in 1928, eventually turning the country into a secularist republic (Jung and Piccoli, 2001, pp. 60-61). In the same year, however, the Egyptian Hasan al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood and reinvigorated the ideas of Islamic reform by creating a populist religious mass movement. The Muslim Brotherhood continued Abduh's and Rida's transformation of the language of Islamic traditions into the semantics of an authentically modern social project with the help of organisational tools typical for the mass movements of the interwar period (Jung and Zalaf, 2019).

Founded as a benevolent religious society, the Muslim Brotherhood soon turned into a religio-political movement with national branches in various Muslim countries. Hasan al-Banna, a schoolteacher with a provincial social background, adopted the idea of the role of Islamic traditions in shaping an authentic modern Islamic order from the nineteenth-century Islamic reform movement. However, he shifted the discourse of Islamic modernity from an emphasis on morality and education toward the idea of an Islamic legal and social order. In Hasan al-Banna's populist discourse, Islamic law (*Shari'ah*) appeared as the core symbol of cultural authenticity and national independence (Krämer, 2010, p. 114). This nationalist-religious discourse attracted substantial parts of the emerging Egyptian middle class, the *effendiyya*, with their nationalist and anti-European sentiments (Eppel, 2009; Ryzova, 2014). The Muslim Brotherhood continued to spread the message of Islamic reform according to which the return to the exemplary order of early Islam would provide the aspired solution to the social and political crisis of modern Muslim countries. The authenticity of a modern Islamic present was therewith legitimated through its anchorage in the religious traditions of an ideal past. In the course of the twentieth century, this message achieved a certain discursive hegemony in the imagination of authentic forms of Islamic modernities among many Muslims.

With the concept of hegemony, or "methods of organising consent," Antonio Gramsci addressed the nexus between power and knowledge long before this became a core theme of poststructuralist and postcolonial thinking. Political negotiations and intellectual persuasion, according to Gramsci, construct hegemonic structures of knowledge (Hoare & Sperber, 2016, p. 125). These structures constitute a kind of "common sense" that expresses the cultural reality of a certain historical epoch (2016, p. 87). It is in this Gramscian sense that the ideas of Islamic reform have informed the construction of a specifically Islamic discourse of modernity. With this discourse, Muslim intellectuals dealt with the general modern experiences of alienation and anomie in their historically specific forms. They bestowed their imagination of modern forms of the good life with authenticity in relating them to Islamic traditions.

This specific discourse of Islamic modernity comprises linguistic and non-linguistic practices that represent a totality of what can be considered to be "authentically" modern. In the words of Ernesto Laclau

and Chantal Mouffe, the discourse of Islamic modernity represents a “totalising horizon” whose hegemony evolved through a historical process of “negativity, division and antagonism” (2001, p. 144). The historical evolution of this antagonism, today’s juxtaposition of Islam and the West, has partly been analysed in the previously mentioned book by Cemal Aydin (2007). It became its historical confirmation through a chain of events such as the First World War, the mandate period, the Second World War, the foundation of the state of Israel, and the subsequent series of Arab–Israeli wars. Throughout the twentieth century, we can observe the way in which some of the core ideas of Islamic reform contributed to the construction of a fundamental antagonism between “Islam and the West.” Referring again to the vocabulary of Laclau and Mouffe, we can observe the increasingly total negation of two projects of modernity based on the ideologies of “Islamic authenticity” and “secularist secularism,” the latter for a long time the hegemonic expression of European modernity.

### **Conclusions**

The starting and ending point for this article was the significance that references to Islamic traditions have assumed in granting modernising projects authenticity in Muslim parts of the world. This observation of religion performing a core role as a modern identity marker in Muslim cultural settings contradicts both the expectations of the founding fathers of Islamic studies such as Snouck Hurgronje and Martin Hartmann, as well as some of the theoretical tenets of classical modernisation theory. I presented a theoretical way to tackle this puzzle in four steps. I first developed the conceptual dichotomy between modernity as a macro structure and modernity as a cultural project, linked to a critical appraisal of Eisenstadt’s theory of multiple modernities. In light of this dichotomy, then, I argued that we may still use the concepts of modernisation and secularisation in describing concomitant social processes. Yet, in doing so, we must distinguish between secularisation as an inherent part of social differentiation, in Luhmann’s theory of modernity as an empty structural process, and secularisation as an element of secularist projects of modernity according to which religion ought to, and eventually will, disappear from the modern public sphere. The precise role that religious traditions may play in concrete imaginations of modernity is then due to historical hegemonies which specific projects of modernity can achieve in ongoing cultural struggles and contestations. From

this theoretical perspective, the rise of Islamic modernities to cultural hegemony is therefore not an intrinsic result of Islamic culture, but the consequence of a historical process of discursive representations and self-representations in a chain of historical events between "Islam and the West."

How does this argumentation relate to the core tenets of classical modernisation theories? I conclude with four brief answers to this question. First of all, it confirms the critique against them perceiving modernisation as a linearly progressing process of social convergence toward a single model of social order. Historically, modernity has developed in ruptures, breaks, and contestations of the hegemonic aspirations of competing cultural projects. Second, religious traditions may or may not play a part in the constructions of these modern projects. A certain process of secularisation takes place in structural terms, but it should not be confused with the disappearance of religion from any social level. Third, modernity has increasingly been established as a "participatory society" at least in the sense of an inclusion of the masses in modern social orders. However, the inclusionary mechanisms of liberal democracy are only one form of participation and does not represent the modern blueprint as such. In European history, Stalinism and Fascism represent totalitarian ways of this inclusion of modern mass society in collectivist political projects. Different imaginations of Islamic governance add further varieties to this general idea of modern participatory societies in both liberal and authoritarian variants. Finally, as a structural social process modernity is and remains a global condition. This global nature of modernity, then, largely confirms one of the basic assumptions of classical modernisation theory. In this, multiple modernities represent historically different actualisations of human engagement with these global structural conditions that thus are both the result of non-intended outcomes of and the constraints for intended social actions.

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# Shaykh Yūsuf of Makassar (d. 1111 AH/1699 CE): A Bio-bibliographical and Doctrinal Survey

Syamsuddin Arif\*

**Abstract:** Compared to the pre-modern Arab and Persianate worlds, relatively little is known about the intellectual life of the Malay-Islamic world between the 13th and 19th centuries, and even less is known about its individual figures and their contribution to different fields of learning. This article seeks to redress this scholarly neglect by introducing Shaykh Yūsuf (d. 1111 AH/ 1699 CE), a scholar and Sufi warrior of Makassar, who led the armed opposition against the Dutch colonial forces, for which he was captured and exiled to Ceylon and later to South Africa, where he breathed his last. In this article, we examine his intellectual career and legacy, focusing on the key concepts in his teachings such as the need to observe the Divine Law (*Sharī'ah*) as well as to attain the Truth (*Ḥaqīqah*) in order to draw near to God and become one of His “friends” (*awliyā'*), which can be achieved through constant liturgical remembrance of God (*dhikr Allāh*) as a means to attain the Truth. This study uses the historical-critical approach to investigate Shaykh Yusuf’s ideas on Sufism, which may explain his political activism and resistance against colonial rule. Drawing upon the extant manuscripts of his treatises that are now preserved in the National Library of Indonesia in Jakarta, this study concludes that Shaykh Yūsuf’s life embodied the values central to Sufism, i.e., relentless trust in God, unfading sincerity, and unabated sense of sacred duty.

**Keywords:** Shaykh Yūsuf; al-Makassari; Sufism; Malay world; Buginese

**Abstrak:** Dibandingkan dengan kawasan Arab dan Persia pra-modern, hanya sedikit yang diketahui orang mengenai kehidupan ilmiah di alam Melayu-

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Islam antara abad ke-13 dan ke-19, dan bahkan lebih sedikit lagi yang diketahui tentang tokoh-tokohnya serta sumbangannya terhadap berbagai bidang ilmu keIslaman. Artikel ini berupaya untuk memperbaiki keadaan ini dengan memperkenalkan Syekh Yūsuf (w. 1111 H/ 1699 M), seorang ulama dan pejuang sufi dari Makassar, yang memimpin perlawanan bersenjata melawan pasukan kolonial Belanda, ditangkap dan diasingkan ke Srilanka dan kemudian ke Afrika Selatan, tempat beliau berjuang sehingga wafat. Dalam artikel ini, kita mengkaji karir intelektual dan warisannya, dengan fokus pada konsep-konsep kunci dalam ajarannya seperti perlunya menaati Hukum Ilahi (Syarī'ah) serta untuk mencapai Kebenaran (Ḥaḳīqah) agar bisa mendekat kepada Tuhan dan menjadi salah seorang “sahabat”-Nya (awliyā’) yang dapat dicapai melalui amalan terus-menerus mengingat Tuhan (dzikir) sebagai sarana untuk mencapai Kebenaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan historis-kritis untuk menyelidiki gagasan Syekh Yusuf tentang tasawuf, yang mungkin menjelaskan aktivisme politik dan perlawanannya terhadap pemerintahan kolonial. Berdasarkan manuskrip-manuskrip risalahnya yang masih ada dan kini disimpan di Perpustakaan Nasional Jakarta Indonesia, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahawa kehidupan Syekh Yūsuf mengandung nilai-nilai inti tasawuf, yakni rasa percaya yang tiada henti kepada Tuhan, keikhlasan yang tiada henti, dan rasa tanggung jawab suci yang tiada henti.

**Kata kunci:** Syekh Yusuf, al-Maqassari, Tasawuf Nusantara, ulama Bugis

## Introduction

Few figures in modern Islamic history were as politically active and intellectually prolific as Shaykh Yūsuf of Makassar. Contrary to the stereotypical images of Sufis as ascetics and quietists who prefer to withdraw from worldly life, sit in isolation and occupy themselves with contemplation and devotion to God, Shaykh Yūsuf took on politically active roles in the Sultanate of Banten. His being a spiritual master of several Sufi orders (*tariqahs*), and an important transmitter and interpreter of mystical tradition reaching back to Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 637/1240) and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), did not deter him from leading a guerilla resistance movement against Dutch colonialism. In the wake of growing interest in Shaykh Yūsuf and his intellectual legacy in recent decades – thanks to *inter alia* the works of the late Azyumardi Azra<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII-XVIII* (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), esp. 87-108. This was originally a PhD dissertation submitted in 1992 to Columbia University entitled “The

Nabilah Lubis<sup>2</sup> – that have stimulated further studies in the academia,<sup>3</sup> the present article attempts to provide a clear account of Shaykh Yusuf's life and legacy, and shed light on his major teachings which are still followed to this day.

### **Biography and Political Activism**

Shaykh Yūsuf was born in Gowa in 1037 AH/1627 CE, about two decades after the local kingdom of Gowa officially adopted Islam in 1603.<sup>4</sup> His full name was Yūsuf bin 'Abdillāh bin Abī al-Khayr al-Jāwī al-Maqāsarī al-Manjalawī Abū al-Mahāsīn al-Tāj al-Khalwatī, also known in his native land as *Tuanta Salamaka ri Gowa* (Our Gracious Master from Gowa).<sup>5</sup> While the two affiliations al-Jāwī ('of Java') and

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Transmissions of Islamic Reformism to Indonesia: Networks of Middle Eastern and Malay-Indonesian Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", later published as *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay- Indonesian and Middle Eastern Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Honolulu: The Asian Studies Association of Australia in association with Allen & Unwin and University of Hawai'i Press, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Nabilah Lubis, "Studi Naskah *Zubdat al-Asrar fi Tahqiq Ba'd Masyarib al-Akhyar* Karya Syekh Yusuf al-Taj: Studi Kajian Filologi," PhD diss. IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 1992; later published as *Menyingkap Segala Rahasia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Abu Hamid, *Syekh Yusuf: Seorang Ulama, Suft dan Pejuang* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1994); Tudjimah, *Syekh Yusuf Makasar: Riwayat dan Ajarannya* (Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia, 1997); and Syamsul Bahri Andi Galigo, *Pemikiran Tasawuf Syekh Abu Mahasin Yusuf al-Taj* (Kuala Lumpur: Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia, KUIM, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> According to the historical records of the Buginese and Makassarese, although a small number of Muslim merchants might have already settled in the city port of Makassar sometime earlier, the conversion of the king and his subjects to Islam occurred after the arrival of three preachers from Minangkabau by the name Dato' Tiro, Datu Ri Bandang, and Datu Patimang. See Andi Rasdiyanah Amir (ed.), *Bugis-Makassar dalam Peta Islamisasi Indonesia* (Ujung Pandang: IAIN Alauddin, 1982), 23; Christian Pelras, "Religion, Tradition and the Dynamics of Islamization in South Sulawesi," *Archipel* 29 (1985): 107–135, also published in *Indonesia*, 57 (April 1994), 133–154; and Mattulada, *Menyusuri Jejak Kehadiran Makassar dalam Sejarah* (Ujung Pandang: Hasanuddin University Press, 1991), 39–46.

<sup>5</sup> Kamaruddin *et al.*, *Lontarak Bilang Raja Gowa dan Tallo* (Ujung Pandang:

al-Maqāṣarī (‘of Makassar’) are obvious, the third one al-Manjalawī turns out to be the Arabicised form of toponymic Moncongloë, which is the name of his home town in Maros, South Sulawesi. The epithet Abū al-Maḥāsin is common among the learned Muslims since medieval times (cf. Abū al-Ma‘ālī al-Juwaynī), whereas his honorific title al-Tāj al-Khalwatī (the Khalwatī Crown) indicates the high status he has achieved within the Khalwatiyya Sufi order.

The historical situation in which Shaykh Yūsuf lived is worth noting. It was a time of European imperial growth and conquest of Asia where the Muslim sultanates were facing military challenges from Western colonial powers. First, the Portuguese conquered Malacca in 1511 and then the Dutch arrived in 1596 and soon managed to establish their hegemony by cleverly employing *divide et impera* strategy, i.e. playing one kingdom against one another and encroaching upon the Muslim-controlled territories from Aceh to Ternate. As far as the local population is concerned, the majority were still Hindus, Buddhists or pagans, although conversion to Islam was already underway, thanks to the Sufi missionaries arriving from the Arabian Peninsula, Persia, Iraq, northern India, and Central Asia who not only provided spiritual guidance and care for the natives but also served as political advisors to the local rulers (sultans). Shaykh Yūsuf fit perfectly into this *milieu*, as if he was not only born in it but for it.

Shaykh Yūsuf’s life can be roughly divided into three periods; the first covering his early years and education, both in Makassar (Celebes), Banten, Aceh, Yemen, and the Holy cities of Mecca and Medina, as well as a brief visit to Constantinople, up until the age of 40; the second period was when he returned to Banten and began his intellectual career and political activities; and the third, when he was exiled to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) for several years and later to Cape Town (South Africa), where he became a virtual recluse and spent the rest of his life teaching and writing.

According to Abu Hamid, local legend has it that Shaykh Yūsuf’s father, of whom little is known, reportedly had supernatural abilities such

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Proyek Penelitian dan Pengkajian Kebudayaan Sulawesi Selatan La Galigo, 1985/1986), 10, and the anonymous *Riwayakna Tuanta Salamaka ri Gowa*, *passim* as quoted by Abu Hamid, *Syekh Yusuf*, 79.

as walking off the ground and is even said to be the mysterious Prophet Khidr, whereas his mother was Sitti Aminah, daughter of *Gallarang* (Prince of) Moncongloë (whence Shaykh Yūsuf's eponym (*nisba*) in the colophon of the manuscript: "al-Manjalāwī"). She is claimed to have been pregnant before she was divorced and later married to the 14<sup>th</sup> King of Gowa, namely Tumenanga ri Gaukanna I Manga'rangi Daeng Manrabbia, who upon his conversion to Islam assumed the title "Sultan Alauddin." It was in the royal palace of I Malingkaan Daeng Manyonri (also known as Sulṭān Awwalu'l-Islām], the King of Tallo, who was in fact the uncle of the King of Gowa, that Shaykh Yūsuf was purportedly born and raised. Textual information from the colophon of a manuscript, however, indicates that Shaykh Yūsuf's father was 'Abdullāh ibn Abī al-Khayr, identified by local sources such as *Lontarak Riwayakna Tuanta Salamaka ri Gowa* (according to Tallo version) as the *Gallarang* (Prince of) Moncongloë and the brother of the then King of Gowa known as I Manga'rangi Daeng Manrabbia Sultan Alauddin (Abu Hamid, 2005, quoting Magassing, 1993).

In his early years of life, Shaykh Yūsuf was educated according to the Islamic tradition. Having learned to read the Qur'an under local teacher Daeng ri Tasammang and acquired basic knowledge of Arabic, jurisprudence, theology and Sufism from Sayyid Bā'alawī ibn 'Abdillāh al-Tāhir and Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn al-Aydid, two wandering preachers who settled in Bontoala and Cikoang, respectively, Shaykh Yūsuf left his homeland for Arabia in Rajab 1054 AH/ September 1644 CE with the intention of undertaking further studies (Dangor, 1983). He first arrived in Banten, then one of the most important Muslim kingdoms in Java, where he managed to establish a close personal relationship with the Sultanate's elite. In 1649, he received permission from the Sultan Abū al-Mafākhir Maḥmūd 'Abd al-Qādir (the grandfather of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa) to leave for Mecca.

Following the ship route, he made a stop in Aceh and, after a brief stay there, sailed to Gujarat, India where he took instruction from the famous Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī as well as the latter's teacher, 'Umar ibn 'Abd Allāh Bāshaybān. The young Shaykh Yūsuf continued his journey to the Middle East and first arrived in Yemen, where he went to Zabīd and studied with Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Bāqī al-Mizjājī al-Naqshabandī (d. 1664), Sayyid 'Alī al-Zabīdī, and Muḥammad ibn al-Wajīh al-Sa'dī al-Yamanī (Azra, 1995; 2004). After several years of sojourn in Yemen,

he finally reached Arabia. In the Holy City of Mecca, he married a daughter of a Shāfi'ī ulama and studied theology, Sufism, and several schools of jurisprudence (fiqh), which explains his open-mindedness and predilection for *ijtihād* (independent position) over strict adherence to any of the particular schools of Islamic law (Kemper, 2019).

Among his teachers in the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, the most important were Aḥmad al-Qushāshī (d. 1661), Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1690), Ḥasan al-'Ajamī (d. 1701) and 'Abd al-Karīm al-Lāhūrī (van Bruinessen, 1995). It is worth noting that in almost every place he visited, the young Shaykh Yūsuf was initiated into Sufi orders (*ṭarīqahs*) directly by their masters. During his stay in Aceh he was initiated into the Qādiriyya order, in Yemen into the Bā'alawiyya and the Naqshabandiyya, in Medina into the Shaṭṭāriyya, and finally in Damascus into the Khalwatiyya order (van Bruinessen, 1995, pp. 287-9).

Probably due to the encouragement of his teachers, the young Shaykh Yūsuf continued his travel from Medina to Damascus, to study with one of its leading scholars, Ayyūb ibn Aḥmad ibn Ayyūb al-Dimashqī al-Khalwatī (d. 1071/1661). Being a close friend of Aḥmad al-Qushāshī, Ayyūb al-Khalwatī was a renowned Sufi, jurist and ḥadīth scholar of Syria, about whom al-Ḥamawī and al-Muḥibbī say nobody else in Damascus was as learned as he was during his time (Azra, 2004; Abu Hamid, 2005). It was this Damascene scholar who later awarded Shaykh Yūsuf the honorific title *al-Tāj al-Khalwatī* (Crown of the Khalwati Order). Shaykh Yūsuf also reportedly travelled to Istanbul (*Negeri Rūm*) before his return to the archipelago in 1083 AH/1672 CE (Hamka, 1963 and Tudjimah, 1987). Despite its disputability, if this date of his return is correct, it means that Shaykh Yūsuf must have spent about 28 years traveling in search for knowledge.

Historical sources disagree, however, whether Shaykh Yūsuf directly returned to his homeland Makassar or went to Banten instead. Nevertheless, one thing is certain; upon his return from Mecca, he was appointed as a magistrate (*qādī*) and legal expert (*mufīṭ*) under Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa (1651–1683), a position stabilised by his second marriage to the daughter of the Sultan, whom he had known personally before he left for Arabia. Indeed, the socio-political and religious situation in Banten, then a famous port and an important centre of

international trade in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, was favourable for Shaykh Yūsuf to remain there. Soon, he became one of the most influential members of the Sultan's advisory council and played a vital role not only in religious matters but also in political affairs (Dangor, 1983).

Meanwhile, the Sultan of Gowa, having heard the news about Shaykh Yūsuf's influence and position in Banten, requested that the latter return to Makassar to accelerate the process of Islamisation in the region. Shaykh Yūsuf, however, declined the invitation and sent home, instead, his disciple 'Abd al-Baṣīr al-Ḍarīr (the blind). Few years later, when conflict arose between the Sultan of Banten and his Dutch-friendly son, 'Abd al-Qahhār, Shaykh Yūsuf chose to take the side of the father, Sultan Ageng. With support and conspiracy of the Dutch, the crown-prince 'Abd al-Qahhār declared the abdication of his father from the throne in 1680 and claimed it for himself – a decision soon followed by a civil war that broke in early 1682. The capture of Sultan Ageng a year later did not put an end to the armed conflict. Shaykh Yūsuf continued the Banten war nearly independently by leading approximately 2000 Buginese, Makasar, and Bantenese troops (including one of the sultan's sons) through mud, forests, and mountains with hostile forces on his trail. The guerilla warfare waged by Shaykh Yūsuf proved difficult to subdue. Employing the familiar trickery, however, the Dutch ensnared Shaykh Yūsuf and held him in captive on 14 December 1683 with which the Banten war was ended (Abu Hamid, 2005). The war-worn sheikh finally surrendered after one of his daughters was held hostage by the Dutch.

In September 1684, nearly a year after his capture, Shaykh Yūsuf was evicted to Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) together with his two wives, several children, twelve disciples and a number of maids (Dangor, 1983). Despite the perils and misfortune that he had to incur, the banishment turned out to be a blessing in disguise; for it is during his life in exile that Shaykh Yūsuf was able to return entirely to the intellectual world and produce a substantial number of scholarly works – an activity that he had abandoned when he was in Banten. However, no sooner had he settled in Ceylon than the Dutch came to realise that the banishment had failed to cut him off from the outside world. Far from being trapped in solitary confinement, Shaykh Yūsuf instead managed to establish contact not only with scholars of India but also

with the Moghul ruler, Aurangzeb (1659-1707) (Azra, 2004). Even more disturbing to the Dutch was the fact that Shaykh Yūsuf continued to have contact with, and influence upon, his fellow compatriots in the archipelago, which was made possible through the Malay-Indonesians pilgrims and traders who made Ceylon their transit points on their way to and back from Mecca (Abu Hamid, 2005).

In 1693 the Dutch, for fear of further political and religious repercussions, decided to banish Shaykh Yūsuf—then already 68 years old—even farther away to South Africa. Along with his retinue of 49 people, the Shaykh was transported to Zandvliet, a farm village in the Cape, so that, as one author writes, “he would not be in touch with any adherents of the old regime” (Jeffreys, 1939, quoted by Azra, 2004). In spite of an attempt to isolate him, Shaykh Yūsuf once again became the rallying point for the Malay-Indonesians there, though for this time not to rise up against the Dutch but to intensify their religious faith and practices. With such activities, Shaykh Yūsuf was able not only to preserve the Islamic belief of his fellow exiles – against the Christianising effort – but also to gain numerous new converts to Islam.<sup>6</sup> Shaykh Yūsuf died at the Cape at the age of seventy-three on May 23, 1699 (23 Dhū al-Qa‘da 1110 AH).

### Scholarly Output

Shaykh Yūsuf’s works revolve around Sufism and theology. Having studied for more than two decades in the Middle East, he wrote mostly in Arabic, although there exist several works attributed to him that are

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<sup>6</sup> For the earliest references to Shaykh Yūsuf in South Africa, see Francois Valentyn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, Dordrecht and Amsterdam, 1724-1726, III: 208-209; K. Scherzer, *Narrative of the Circumnavigation of the Globe by the Austrian Frigate Novara in the Years 1857, 1858 and 1859* (London, 1861), 1: 245-8. For a detailed description his role and Muslim activities in the Cape, see A. van Selms, “Yussuf (Joseph), Sheikh” in W. J. de Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African Biographies* (Capetown, 1968), 893; I.D. du Plessis, *The Cape Malays: History, Religion, Traditions, Folk Tales of the Malay Quarter*; Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1972. For the latest study, see Jappie, Saarah, “Many Makassars: Tracing an Africa-Southeast Asian Narrative of Shaykh Yusuf Taj al-Khalwati al-Maqassari,” in *Migration and Agency in a Globalizing World: Afro-Asian Encounters*, ed. Scarlett Cornelissen and Yoichi Mine (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

written in vernacular (Buginese) language using Lontara script.<sup>7</sup> In writing his treatises, Shaykh Yūsuf apparently used many sources. We can classify his sources into three: (a) the works of previous scholars; (b) the works of his contemporaries or that of his own masters; (c) and finally the oral sources from several masters with whom he studied. There is not the faintest doubt that he was influenced mostly by his Sufi teachers who defended Ibn ‘Arabī and his school of thought.

A closer look at his various writings reveals three major themes discussed by Shaykh Yūsuf: (a) the need to observe the Divine Law (*Sharī‘a*) and to attain the Truth (*Ḥaqīqa*) concerning God and His relation to human being; (b) the need to understand the requirement of drawing near to God and how to become one of His “friends” (*awliyā’*), which includes positive thinking about the Creator and His creatures, having a good moral character, and following the guidance of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings upon him); and (c) the need to perform the liturgical remembrance of God (*dhikr Allāh*) as a means to attain the Truth.

Like his predecessors Nur al-Din al-Rānīrī and ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Sinkilī, Shaykh Yūsuf, who was fluent in several languages, frequently cites Sufi key-terms and concepts in Arabic, accompanied by the Malay equivalent. He often refers to Junayd al-Baghdādī, Abu Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Arabī, ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, and Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh in order to anchor his discourse with the sayings of authorities in the field. Most of Shaykh Yūsuf’s writings can be found in the manuscript collections preserved at the National Library of Indonesia (PNRI) in Jakarta, i.e., MS A101 (dated 1186 AH/1772 CE, comprising 104 folios/193 pages), MS A108 (comprising 303 folios/606 pages), MS A45 (383 pages), and at the University of Leiden Library in the Netherlands, i.e., MS Or. 7025 (46 pages) and MS Or. 5706 (Voorhoeve, 1957, p. 341). We provide a synoptical description of his extant works that have been critically edited and published as well as those which are still in manuscript form:

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<sup>7</sup> The Lontara script (ᨆᨇᨅᨆ) or *Urupu Sulapa’ Eppa’* (four-cornered letters) is one of Indonesia’s traditional scripts developed in the South Sulawesi and West Sulawesi region. The script is primarily used to write the Buginese language, followed by Makassarese and Mandar. See Everson (2003) and Tol (2015).

1. *Al-Barakāt al-Saylāniyya* ('The Ceylonese Blessings'). A manuscript copy of this work is preserved in the National Library of Indonesia in Jakarta, MS A108, fols. 34v.– 40r. = pp. 67-79. A philological study of this work was carried out by Ali Saputra under the supervision of Professor Nabilah Lubis entitled *al-Barakāt al-Saylāniyyah ta'līf al-Shaykh Yūsuf al-Makāsarī (1627-1699): Dirāsah wa Taḥqīq wa Tarjamah* (Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 1429/2008), which offered a critical edition as well as translation into Indonesian. In this treatise, Shaykh Yūsuf explains the steps to purify one's heart through remembrance of God and the threefold method for getting closer to God, namely, by using meditation or "staying vigilant" through the heart (*murāqabāt al-qalb*), by using meditation through the spirit (*murāqabāt al-rūh*), and by using meditation through the inner self (*murāqabāt al-sirr*).
2. *Al-Fawā'ih al-Yūsufiyya fī Bayān Taḥqīq al-Ṣūfiyya* (The Josephic Fragrances on the Essence of Sufism). Along with the previous work, this treatise is found in the above-mentioned compilation (MS A108 of the National Library of Indonesia), folios 40v.– 45v = pp. 80-91. No academic study has been conducted on this relatively short work. In this treatise, Shaykh Yūsuf discusses two important elements of human nature, the outer side and the inner side. The former is tackled by the *Sharī'ah*, while the latter by the *Tarīqah*, i.e. the Sufi path leading to the Truth (*Ḥaqīqah*). Those who walk in the way of Sufism must maintain good conduct and sincere heart. Shaykh Yūsuf also remarks that observing the *Sharī'ah* rules without achieving the *Ḥaqīqah* is incomplete, whereas attaining the *Ḥaqīqah* without following the *Sharī'ah* is incorrect.
3. *Al-Nafḥah al-Saylāniyya* (The Ceylonese Breeze). A critical edition of this text is provided by Andi Syamsul Bahri Galigo in his doctoral dissertation titled "Syeikh Yusuf Makassar dan Pemikiran Tasawwufnya: Satu Kajian atas *Risālah al-Nafḥah al-Saylāniyyah*" (Shaykh Yūsuf of Makassar and his Sufi thought: A study of the Ceylone Breeze epistle). Submitted to the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in 1998, it was based on the manuscript of the National Library of Indonesia MS A101 folios 1r.–15v. In this work, Shaykh Yūsuf explains the need for

- a spiritual guide in order to reach God. A person who embarks on a journey to God is advised to find a mentor (*shaykh*), to follow and obey him unconditionally without questioning his actions.
4. *Sirr al-Asrār* (The Secret of Secrets). This treatise was edited and translated into English by Suleman Essop Dangor in a monograph entitled *Sirr al-Asrār: The Secret of Secrets* by Shaykh Yūsuf (Durban: Centre for Research in Islamic Studies, University of Durban-Westville, 1995). Dangor relied on a manuscript copy in the University of Leiden Library Collection Or. 7025, fols. 34v.–52v. At the National Library of Indonesia, there is another handwritten copy of the text within the MS A108, folios 63v.–71r. In this work, Shaykh Yūsuf advises the seekers of truth to constantly remember God, to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet and to conform to the Divine Law (Sharī‘ah).
  5. *Tuḥfat al-Ṭālib al-Mubtadī wa Minḥat al-Sālik al-Muhtadī* (A Present for the New Seeker and a Gift for the Guided Traveller). The text of this work survives in a manuscript copy dated 1221 AH which is now preserved in the National Library of Indonesia, MS A45, pp. 3–126. Baharuddin Abd Rahman studied this text and together with a critical edition of it in a small book entitled *Penampakan Diri Tuhan: Al Makassari dan Martabat Tujuh* (God’s Self-Disclosure: al-Makassari and the Seven Degrees of Existence), published by the Qaf Academy, Jakarta, 1437/2016. In this work, Shaykh Yūsuf elucidates the meaning of Divine oneness, the so-called “permanent archetypes” (*al-a’yān al-thābitah*), and the world in relation to its Creator.
  6. *Maṭālib al-Sālikīn li-man Qaṣada Rabb al-‘Ālamīn* (The Goals of those Who Walk in order to Reach the Lord of the Universe). We can find the manuscript copy of this work in the Indonesian National Library Collection in Jakarta (MS A101, fol. 43v.–45v and MS A108 fols. 26v.-31r. = pp. 52-61). In this brief treatise, Shaykh Yūsuf elucidates the significance of affirming God’s oneness (*tawḥīd*) as well as the importance of knowing God (*ma‘rifat Allāh*), and the true meaning of devotional worship (*‘ibādah*). These three concepts, symbolised by the branches of a tree, its bark, and its fruit, are, according to Shaykh Yūsuf, the most salient factors in understanding God and drawing near

to Him. The tree symbolises the Oneness of God, while the branches and the bark symbolise knowledge of God (*ma'rifah*), and the fruit symbolises worship (*'ibādah*).

7. *Zubdat al-Asrār fi Taḥqīq ba'd Mashārib al-Akhyār* (The Core Secrets concerning Some Essential Goblets of Excellent People). There are three extant copies of this text, one being preserved in the Leiden University Library (MS Or. 7025, fols. 10v.-33r.) and two others in the National Library of Indonesia (MS A101 fols. 16r.-25v and MS A108 fols. 286v.-300v. = pp. 570-707 as shown in Figure 1 below). Nabilah Lubis studied, edited and translated it for the doctoral dissertation she submitted to the University of Indonesia, a revised version of which later appeared as *Menyingkap Intisari Segala Rahasia: Syekh Yusuf al-Taj al-Makasari* (Unveiling the Core Secrets: Shaykh Yūsuf al-Tāj al-Makassarī), published by Mizan, Jakarta 1996. In this treatise, the Shaykh not only expounds the essential articles of Islamic belief, and the role of remembering God to repent of all one's sins, but he also explains the Sufi notion of the "perfect man" (*al-insān al-kāmil*).
8. *Ḥabl al-Warīd li-Sa'adat al-Murīd* (The Jugular Vein for the Joy of the Novice). Written in 1687, this work is found in the collection of Syekh Sahib Sultan Karaeng Nompo of the Tarekat Khalwatiyya Yūsuf and Mu'tabarah Nahdliyyin of Makassar. According to Simon Kemper (2019), it was written by Shaykh Yūsuf in response to requests from his followers left on both Java and South Sulawesi. The treatise implicitly urges the Shaykh's followers to wait for his return or seek a new shaykh, likely his main deputy (*khalīfah*) 'Abd al-Baṣīr. Real believers are told to respect their shaykh like a father and obey him because he holds spiritual authority and serves as the Prophet's caliph too. Sultans and lords should not be ignored, but in dire straits, the shaykh is to take the lead.
9. *Qawā'id al-'Aqā'id* (The Pillars of the Creed). This is one of the theological treatises that Shaykh Yūsuf is believed to have written in his native tongue, Buginese. Indeed, it was not uncommon for Muslim scholars of Southeast Asia to compose their works in Malay, Acehnese, Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, etc. using

Arabic (Jawi) script and put their titles in Arabic. The text of *Qawā'id al-'Aqā'id* is found in a manuscript copy preserved at the National Library of Indonesia, Bugis collection, MS PNRI Jakarta VT-23, pp. 177-193. Despite some doubt regarding its authenticity, this work bears witness to Shaykh Yūsuf's attention to those who do not understand Arabic.

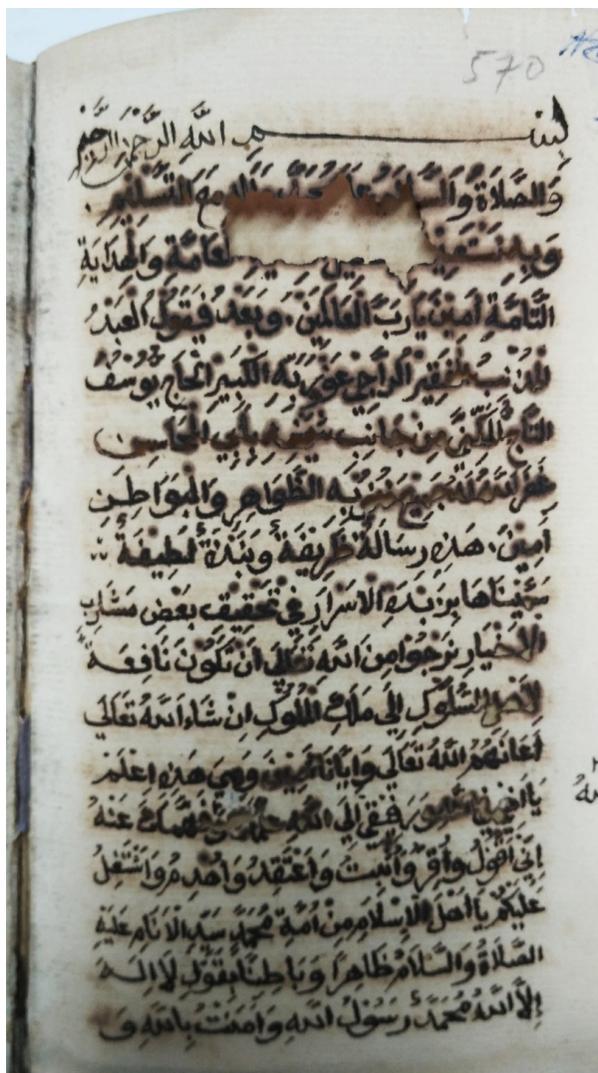


Figure 1. First page of *Zubdat al-Asrār*  
(MS A108 folio no. 286 verso/page 570)

10. *Al-Tawhīd al-Khālīṣ* (The Pure Affirmation of Divine Oneness) is another treatise attributed to Shaykh Yūsuf that is written in Buginese language and script. Extant in a manuscript copy preserved at the National Library of Indonesia, Bugis collection, MS PNRI Jakarta VT-23, pp. 230-244, this important text deals with Sufi metaphysics and ontology, explaining the degrees of existence or hierarchy of beings in relation to the theory of emanation.

In addition to these works, there exist around 20 short treatises attributed to Shaykh Yūsuf, most of which are still in manuscript. They include: *Qurrat al-‘Ayn* (Solace of the Eyes), *Shurūṭ al-‘Ārif al-Muḥaqqiq* (Requirements of the True Gnostic), *Tāj al-Asrār* (The Crown of Secrets), *Tuḥfat al-Amr fī Faḍīlat al-Dhikr* (The Gift of Command on the Benefit of Remembrance), *Maṭalib al-Sālikīn li-man Qaṣada Rabb al-‘Ālamīn* (The Goals of Travellers for those who Wish to Reach the Lord of the Universe), *Tuḥfat al-Abrār li-Ahl al-Asrār* (The Gift for the Good People from the Possessors of Secrets), *Mir‘āt al-Muḥaqqiqīn* (‘The Mirror of the Verifiers’), *Risālah fī Tahqīq al-‘Ulūm wa Tadqīq al-Fuhūm* (A Treatise on Verifying the Sciences and Investigating Comprehension), *Risālah fī Ghāyat al-Ikhtīṣār Nāf‘ah li-Dhawī al-Absār* (A Treatise in the Utmost Brevity and the Ultimate Vision). The doubts concerning their authenticity notwithstanding (Misbachul Islam, 2019), the prevailing opinion among scholars including Syamsul Bahri Andi Galigo (1998), Keraan and Haron (2008), Lukmanul Hakim Darusman (2008), Abdul Kadir Assegaf (2008), and Subhan Hariadi Putra (2009), is that the doctrines espoused in these works bear traces of Shaykh Yūsuf’s views in one form or another.

### Theological Views

Central to Shaykh Yūsuf’s teachings are the concept of the purification of belief (*‘aqīdah*) and the affirmation of God’s oneness (*tawhīd*), through which he attempts to explain the transcendence of God over His creation. Referring to *sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* (chapter 112 of the Holy Qur’an) and verse 11 of chapter 42, which states that “nothing can be compared with Him,” Shaykh Yūsuf holds that *tawhīd* is infinite and absolute since it is the essential component in Islam; one who does not accept it is considered an unbeliever (*kāfir*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥa*, p. 2). He further compares the immaculate *tawhīd* with a leafy tree: gnostic knowledge

(*ma'rifah*) is its branches and leaves, and devotional services (*'ibādāt*) are its fruits. One who does not possess knowledge (*ma'rifah*) of God is ignorant and one who does not perform rituals is sinful (*fāsiq*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Maṭālib*, p. 81-2).

Shaykh Yūsuf discusses the nature of Divine oneness in his discourse on existence (*al-wujūd*). According to him, existence can be seen in two categories: the first is the Real-True existence (*al-wujūd al-ḥaqq*) and the second is the created existence (*wujūd al-khalq*). The first is absolute existence (*muṭlaq*), independent (*qā'im bi-nafsih*), beginningless (*qadīm*) and eternal (*bāqī*), while the second is relative existence (*idāfī*) and figurative (*majāzī*). It is so called precisely because its existence is conditioned by and “borrowed” (*mu'ār*) from something else, that is, derived from the existence of the Real-True one. In other words, the existence of a creature is caused by, and contingent upon, something other than itself (*qā'im bi-ghayrih*), whereas the existence of the Creator (God) is necessary (*wājib al-wujūd*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Tuḥfa*, p. 64).

Even though he affirms the transcendence of God, Shaykh Yūsuf maintains that God is All-Encompassing and Omnipresent (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥā*, p. 23; id., *Maṭālib*, p. 81; and id., *Sirr*, p. 86). This notion of God being All-Encompassing (*iḥāṭah*) and Omnipresent (*al-ma'iyah*) reminds us of the doctrine of ontological monism (*wahdat al-wujūd*) espoused by the famous Andalusian master Ibn 'Arabī (d. 637/1240). Shaykh Yūsuf, however, has taken great care not to associate himself with or let his readers accuse him of being pantheistic by saying that although God is Omnipresent, it does not necessarily mean that the creation is God Himself; nor are they in any way identical, for all creatures are only metaphorically existent (*al-mawjūd al-majāzī*) in contradistinction to God, who alone is the Real Existent (*al-mawjūd al-ḥaqqīqī*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥā*, p. 22 and id., *Zubda*, p. 32). Thus, in his view, the existence of creation (*makhlūq*) is to that of God like the existence of a shadow (*ẓill*) to that of its object.

Having introduced the concept of Divine Omnipresence through two key-terms *iḥāṭah* (being all-encompassing) and *ma'iyah* (being together with), Shaykh Yūsuf declares that God descends (*tanazzala*) while man ascends (*taraqqā*), a spiritual process that would bring the two closer. According to him, however, this process will not take its form in the ultimate unity between man and God, nor will the latter

ever incarnate or reside in the former. Although the two may be coming closely associated, in the final analysis, nevertheless, man remains man and God is God. With this position, Shaykh Yūsuf seems to be trying to disengage himself from the controversial doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabi’s *waḥdat al-wujūd* and to have rejected al-Ḥallāj’s notorious doctrine of *ḥulūl* (incarnation), arguing that the manifestation of God in His creations is not His physical presence in them since in his opinion, nothing is identical or comparable to God (al-Qur’ān 42: 11). It is this spiritual process of *taraqqī* that will transform a person into a perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*); for he who has achieved this stage of perfection stripes his allegorical existence (*al-wujūd al-majāzī*) and enters true nothingness (*al-‘adam al-haqīqī*). In this way, Shaykh Yūsuf explains, man’s nothingness is taken by God as a mirror of the latter. Further, God reveals or manifests (*tajallā*) Himself in the servant (*‘abd*). Once absorbed (*fanā*) in the existence of God, the servant is not only exposed to the secrets of his Master (*Rabbih*), but also capable of seeing through His Sight, hearing with His Hearing, reaching with His Hands, walking with His Feet, and speaking with His Word and thinking with His Mind (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Zubda*, 36-9).

Shaykh Yūsuf does not delve into the long and heated controversy over *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of being) and *ḥulūl* (incarnation) doctrine, to which many have fallen prey. He maintains that even though a person can reach the existence of God, the person will nevertheless remain a human being, whereas God remains God—that is, *al-‘abd ‘abdun wa in taraqqā wa al-rabb rabbun wa in tanazzal* (See Lubis (1994), p. 172). It is worth noting that, as far as theology is concerned, Shaykh Yūsuf strictly adheres to the Ash‘arite doctrines. Thus, he stresses the total commitment to all six articles of belief (*arkān al-īmān*) i.e. belief in the existence one God, angels, revealed books, prophets, resurrection, and in the decree of God. Furthermore, in connection with impeccable belief in these articles of faith, Shaykh Yūsuf asks his fellow Muslims to fully accept the ambiguous meanings of the obscure verses in the Qur’an (*al-āyāt al-mutashābihāt*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥa*, p. 2). According to him, trying to look for or questioning the real meanings of such intriguing verses is simply an indication of not believing in God since only with total acceptance of such verses can a traveller (*sālik*) on God’s path be able to obtain the Divine blessings and mercy (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥa*, p. 28 and id., *Qurra*, pp. 54-5).

Like his fellow Ash'arites, Shaykh Yūsuf too emphasises human predestination vis-à-vis the will of God. Accepting this notion, he repeatedly appeals to Muslims to sincerely embrace their fate and God's decree (*al-qaḍā' wa al-qadar*), whether good or bad (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Fawā'ih*, pp. 80-1 and id., *Nafḥa*, pp. 8-9). Shaykh Yūsuf, however, insists that men must not simply surrender to them, and of particular importance, men cannot blame God for their bad deeds, because they must not simply claim those actions as their fate. Instead, they must make ceaseless efforts to eliminate sinful behaviour and improve their humanity by positive thinking about the creation and doing good deeds. This action, Shaykh Yūsuf contends, will enable people to create a better life in this world and the next. More importantly, by so doing, they will be able to attain the level of unrestricted adoration (*al-'ubūdiyyah al-muṭlaqah*), that is the highest stage a servant of God can achieve (Lubis, 1996, p. 172).

Shaykh Yūsuf also seeks to solve one of the most perplexing theological problems, trying to reconcile all God's attributes, which may appear to the lay people to contradict one another. Indeed, seemingly contradictory verses are found throughout the Qur'an where God is described, for instance, as the Exterior (*al-Zāhir*) and the Interior (*al-Bāṭin*); the one who guides (*al-Hādī*) and the one who leads human beings astray (*al-Muḍill*); the one who expands his gift (*al-Bāsiṭ*) and the one who prevents it (*al-Māni'*). According to Shaykh Yūsuf, all these seemingly conflicting attributes of God should be understood in accordance with the principle of God's oneness (*tawḥīd*). Otherwise, emphasising only certain attributes, while ignoring or rejecting the others will lead to disbelief. Furthermore, Shaykh Yūsuf asserts that the realities of God are the unity of pairs of His conflicting attributes, but none is capable of understanding their secrets except those who possess knowledge and discernment which God has bestowed upon them (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Tāj*, 76-7).

### **Sufi Doctrines**

Let us turn now to Shaykh Yūsuf's views and teachings, particularly concerning the Sufi path or order (*tarīqah*). Sufis are generally Muslims who wish to practice their religion in an expressive way. They believe in divine love and the rewards of moral purity and seek direct contact with God, rather than occupying themselves with the legalism and

intellectualism of the orthodox approach to Islam propounded by the jurists (*fuqahā'*), philosophers and theologians (*mutakallimūn*). Although many Sufis pursued their quest of God in solitude, sometimes becoming hermits, soon they began to establish fraternities, or orders (*ṭarīqah*), and laid down elaborate rules for members recruitment, spiritual training, and ritual services. The Sufi liturgy, for example, is designed to assist the disciple to achieve a spiritual state (*ḥāl*) in which the body loses all sensation and the soul experiences God. To achieve this state, a particular formula of *dhikr* is uttered repeatedly or incessantly until the words themselves no longer make any impression on the senses. In more extremist orders, such as the *Rifā'īyyah* the recitation of the *dhikr* may be accompanied by music, violent rhythmic jerkings, or piercing of cheeks, throat and other parts of the body with sharp instruments without any resultant bleeding or visible wounds (Hoffman, 2003).

Shaykh Yūsuf reserves *taṣawwuf* for the elites among the elites (*khawāṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*) and calls his Sufism by the familiar name *al-ṭarīqah al-Muḥammadiyah* or *al-ṭarīqah al-Aḥmadiyah*—so as to associate it with Prophet Muḥammad, which, according to him, constitutes the right path (*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Fawā'ih*, p. 83; id., *Qurra*, p. 52; and id., *Sirr*, p. 94.). Throughout his writings Shaykh Yūsuf makes it clear that the mystical way can only be trod through a total commitment both outwardly and inwardly to the legal doctrines of Islam (*Sharī'ah*). He maintains that committing oneself simply to the *Sharī'ah* is better than practising *taṣawwuf* while ignoring legal precepts (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Zubda*, p. 37). He even goes so far as to call those who believe or claim that they will be able to get closer to God without performing such rituals as daily prayer and fasting as misbeliever (*zindīq*) and heretic (*mulḥid*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Zubda*, p. 42).

Sufism has two goals, according to Shaykh Yūsuf. The first goal is to focus the aim on God only and the last goal is to imitate the noble characteristics of God (*awwal taṣawwuf huwa tajrīd al-qaṣd ilā Allāh ta'ālā, wa ākhiruhū al-takhalluq bi-akhlāq Allāh*). He quotes 'Alī's saying that the first goal of Sufism is thus to have knowledge about God, the second is to do good deeds, and the third is to receive a gift [of knowledge from God]: *awwal taṣawwuf 'ilm wa awṣaṭuhū 'amal wa ākhiruhū mawhibah*. For Shaykh Yūsuf, it is also incumbent upon those

walking in the path of God to believe in God's destiny that is to believe in what God has decreed, willed and provided in the past, the present and the future. This does not mean that Sufism teaches fatalism in life; in contrast, this concept drives its followers to be active in worldly life for the sake of the Hereafter since God has given human beings the choice to do their best before everything is destined. It is this effort that God will judge in people. The second goal is the importance of performing the outer and the inner aspects of *Sharī'ah*.

In his attempt to reconcile the exoteric with esoteric aspects of Islam, Shaykh Yūsuf frequently quotes statements of unnamed authorities who classify as sinful (*fāsiq*) those who stick only to the *Sharī'ah* without the esoteric truth (*ḥaqīqah*), and regard those who practice *taṣawwuf* but neglect the legal precepts as heretic (*zindiq*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Fawā'ih*, p. 82; *Nafḥa*, p. 4; *Tāj*, pp. 73–4). According to Shaykh Yusuf, the best that can be done is to harmonise the two: “let it be known, my dear fellows, exoteric devotion without esoteric understanding is like a body without soul and vice-versa” (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥa*, p. 4; *Tāj*, p. 74). Thus, he insists that everyone who wishes to embark on a spiritual journey to God should practise all the precepts of the *Sharī'ah* before he enters Sufism (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Maṭālib*, 85). He then lists down the ways to get closer to God. First is the way of righteous folk (*al-akhyār*), that is by performing numerous prayers (*ṣalāh*), reading the Qur'an and Ḥadith, striving in the way of God and other exoteric devotions. The second way is that of the people who strive (*mujāhid*) against hardship through rigorous training to give up bad habits and to purify the mind and soul. The last one is the way of the people of remembrance (*ahl al-dhikr*) who love God both outwardly and inwardly and pay attention to both exoteric and esoteric kinds of devotion (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥa*, pp. 23–4).

Nevertheless, Shaykh Yūsuf discourages the traveller on the path of God (*sālik*) from treading his own way in seeking truth; for it will only lead him astray because Satan will become his master. Therefore, he should look for a trusted and well-experienced Sufi master (*shaykh*), even if he, as a consequence, must travel to distant places, leaving his family and homeland behind. Moreover, only with the guidance of a trustworthy Sufi master will he be able to get closer to God; because the master will show him the correct way to achieve spiritual progress. More than that, the true Sufi masters are successors of the Prophet, and

are his representatives both outwardly and inwardly (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafha*, pp. 2 and 24-5). Evidently, Shaykh Yūsuf accords Sufi masters such high a position that once a disciple is initiated to a Sufi order and pledges allegiance to his master, he must obey the master and never question his instruction, even if the master does something mundane that does not necessarily lead to a closer communion with God or appears contrary to the legal precepts. In accordance with the traditional way, a disciple should behave towards his master like a dead body in the hands of its washer. In support of his view, Shaykh Yūsuf cites Ibn ‘Arabī who maintained that while the Sufi masters are not infallible, just like some prophets who also made mistakes (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafha*, pp. 2 and 24-5), the disciple should keep up his practise of good deeds and never imitate his master’s peculiar acts (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Tuhfa*, cited in Tudjimah, 1987, p 114).

With regard to the nature of human beings, Shaykh Yūsuf, like most Sufis, also holds a positive view. According to him, every individual has an innate disposition (*fiṭrah*) or natural inclination to believe in God, and those who are closest to Him are the ones who can nurture that inborn disposition in the right way (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Sirr*, 95). For this reason, Shaykh Yūsuf appeals to his fellow believers not to scorn or look down upon those who do not believe in God and those who live a sinful life. The faithful must always maintain a good opinion (*ḥusn al-zann*) about the unbelievers and should get rid of all sorts of negative thoughts (*sū’ al-zann*) about others. Citing the famous Sufi master Abū Madyan al-Tilimsānī, Shaykh Yūsuf reminds the believers that the flaws of the infidel might be better than the pitfalls of the faithful (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafha*, p. 12). With such a view, it is not surprising that nowhere in his works does Shaykh Yūsuf ever express contempt for the Dutch, even though they had inflicted a great misery upon his life.

Moreover, Shaykh Yūsuf classifies the believers into four categories. First, those who simply utter the statement of faith (*shahādah*) without believing; they are the hypocrites (*al-munāfiq*). The second group is those who do not only utter the *shahādah* but also implant it deep into their souls; they are called the common faithful (*al-mu’min al-awāmm*). The third category is the group of faithful who fully manifest the inward and outward meaning or implication of their statement of faith in their daily life. These are the people of the elite (*ahl al-khawāṣṣ*). Finally, we have the highest category of the faithful, who surpass the third group by

intensifying their statement of faith mainly by practising Sufism to get closer to God. Accordingly, they are called the elect of the elect (*khāṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*), whom Shaykh Yūsuf regard as the true Sufis (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Barakāt*, p. 71 and id., *Nafḥa*, pp. 4-5).

Another important doctrine espoused by Shaykh Yūsuf is the idea of “perfect man” (*al-insān al-kāmil*). As ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī made clear, it refers to the servant of God who is elevated and fortified by Him, having established himself after his extinction or absorption (*fanā’*) in the state of subsistence (*baqā’*), so that God will answer whatever he asks” (al-Jīlī, 1983, pp. 39, 45 and 48). According to Shaykh Yūsuf, in order to attain the level of “perfect man,” a person must perform all the religious duties with sincere intention for the sake of God alone, follow all the Prophetic teachings, outwardly and inwardly, and most importantly be in constant awareness of God’s presence and omniscience in such a way that all these good deeds become habits. Only then can s/he be called *al-insān al-kāmil* (perfect man). In his words: “one is not a true follower of him [i.e. the Prophet]—may God bless and grant him peace—unless he obeys the divine law (*Sharī’ah*) outwardly and conforms to the truth (*ḥaqīqah*) inwardly. Only then can the person be worthy of the name “perfect man” (*insān kāmil*), considering his achievement in actually following him [i.e. the Prophet]—may God bless and grant him peace—treading his path outwardly as well as inwardly” (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Sirr*, p. 93; Ali (2016).

It is obvious that Shaykh Yūsuf’s conception of “perfect man” is not only based on al-Jīlī’s treatise on the subject, but also inspired by the works of prominent Sufi scholars including al-Ghazālī and Ibn ‘Arabī. In *al-Fawā’ih al-Yūsufīyah*, he stresses the need to maintain a balance between the outer aspect and the inner aspect of *Sharī’ah* that will allow a person to attain perfection (*kamāl*) by combining commitment to the Divine law (*Sharī’ah*) with knowledge of reality (*ḥaqīqah*). What underlies this notion of “perfect man” is the idea that human beings have the potential to bring all divine attributes into play in the fullness of human actuality and, conversely, at all times the divine presence may manifest itself through, or in certain individuals, who become the human embodiment of divine qualities, and whose purpose is to be a shepherd, guide, and guardian of mankind, directing it towards the good and keeping it from what is wrong.

## Conclusion

Shaykh Yūsuf was no doubt a remarkable scholar. Even though he was primarily a Sufi, with respect to his career and teachings, he may be included among the few, most important renewers (*mujaddidūn*) of Islam in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. His turbulent life, as we have recounted, makes it clear that Sufism did not keep him away from being engaged in worldly (socio-political) affairs. Thus, unlike other Sufis who exhibit strong tendencies to shun—if not neglect worldly life, Shaykh Yūsuf’s teachings and practices shows a full range of activism. Indeed, he is what people in France would describe as a true intellectual—in contrast to the so-called “ivory-tower intellectuals.” He fought in the colonial war, was evicted to Sri Lanka and at last to South Africa. During his exile, however, he penned treatises explaining Islamic doctrines and the role of religious leadership during peace and warfare. In many respects, the life and thought of Shaykh Yūsuf exemplify the ways in which Sufi scholars sought to synthesise their fidelity to Shari’a with their commitment to the metaphysical ideas espoused by thinkers such as Ibn ‘Arabī and al-Jīlī.

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# **Bibliometric Analysis on Islamic Spiritual Care with Special Reference to Prophetic Medicine or *al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī***

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**Abstract:** This study focuses on a bibliometric analysis that explores trends on Prophetic medicine (*al-ṭibb al-nabawī*) within Islamic spiritual care. Due to the scarcity of literature, it utilised “Islamic Spiritual Care” as a search term on Dimensions.ai, rather than “Prophetic Medicine” or “Ḥadīth.” Initially, 325

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titles were identified, with 56 of them meeting the criteria for analysis. The data was then analysed using the Biblioshiny interface of the Bibliometrix R package. The results reveal a steady rise in Islamic spiritual care studies over the past decade, despite notable fluctuations. The exploration of Prophetic medicine within the framework of spiritual care lacks sufficient emphasis, as indicated by the analysis of the 56 pertinent sources, particularly from the most frequent words and co-occurrence network map of authors' keywords. This research, to the knowledge of the authors, is a pioneering bibliometric analysis in the field.

**Keywords:** Bibliometric analysis, Prophetic medicine, Islamic spiritual care, *Ḥadīth*, Dimensions.ai, Bibliometrix R package

**Abstrak:** Kajian ini menggunakan analisis bibliometrik untuk meneliti trend penyelidikan ilmiah perubatan Nabi (*al-ṭibb al-nabawī*) dalam konteks penjagaan kerohanian Islam. Memandangkan terdapat kekurangan literatur berkenaan perubatan Nabi mahupun hadis secara spesifik, kajian ini menggunakan “Penjagaan Kerohanian Islam” sebagai istilah carian di Dimensions.ai. Hasilnya, sebanyak 325 tajuk telah dapat dikenal pasti, dengan 56 daripadanya memenuhi kriteria untuk penelitian lanjut. Data ini kemudiannya dianalisis menggunakan perisian Biblioshiny dalam pakej Bibliometrix R. Dapatan kajian memperlihatkan peningkatan yang berterusan dalam penjagaan kerohanian Islam di sepanjang dekad yang lalu, meskipun trendnya berubah-ubah. Bagaimanapun, dapatan ini juga memperlihatkan eksplorasi perubatan Nabi dalam kerangka penjagaan kerohanian masih kurang mendapat perhatian yang sewajarnya oleh para ilmuwan. Hal ini seperti yang ditunjukkan oleh data kajian, di mana hanya 56 sumber yang relevan didapati daripada kata kunci paling kerap selain peta rangkaian perkongsian penulis. Sungguhpun begitu, kajian bibliometrik ini menurut pandangan kumpulan penulis merupakan kajian rintis dalam bidang ini.

**Kata kunci:** Analisis Bibliometrik, perubatan Nabi, penjagaan kerohanian Islam, hadis, Dimensions.ai, pakej Bibliometrix R.

## Introduction

Spirituality and healthcare have always been intricately intertwined since the early emergence of hospitals, known as Bimaristans, during the Abbasid era (Javed, 2019). However, in modern times, the noble pursuit of intellectual pleasures has been obscured by an overly empirical and positivistic worldview, leading to a dualistic perspective on health. Despite the World Health Organisation's post-World Wars

redefinition of health as “a sane mind in a sound body” (Larson, 1996, p. 181), highlighting the importance of mental health, spirituality appears to remain marginalised, contrary to Islamic beliefs. Nevertheless, as health and illness are closely connected to issues of suffering and meaning, spirituality is recognised as fundamental to human well-being (Singh & Ajinkya, 2012), albeit frequently perceived as a secondary component to physical health.

In recent years, the discussion on sustainable development has broadened to include not only the traditional pillars of economic, environmental, and social dimensions, but also the essential aspects of spirituality, values, and culture. Institutions like the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) have played a significant role in promoting a more comprehensive approach to sustainable development. Emerging from this wider perspective is Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 18 (Abdul Razak, 2023) which highlights the inherent link between humanising sustainable development and fostering a harmonious relationship between ecological and human civilisations within our increasingly complex global society. In the seminal publication *SDG 18 Spirituality, Values, and Culture for Humanising Sustainable Development: A Future Worldview*, Berghout and Ahmad (2023) emphasise the urgent need to acknowledge and incorporate spirituality, values, and culture into the essence of sustainable development. This necessity stems from the recognition that human beings are multifaceted entities, encompassing not only physical and psychological dimensions but also spiritual, emotional, social, and cultural ones. It is within the fusion of these diverse elements that the potential for balanced growth and holistic well-being lies.

The domain of spiritual or pastoral care reflects the enduring influence of Christianity on Western society, where, akin to Islam, it emphasises the importance of the soul over the physical body (West, 2009). This foundation has fostered an environment within the field that is receptive to embracing other belief systems that recognise the interconnectedness of spirituality. However, recent advancements in this field have introduced novel approaches such as nonreligious/humanistic chaplaincy. In this model, individuals seeking chaplain services may request support from those who do not adhere to a specific religious faith or belief in a higher power, highlighting the influence of secularism even at the individual level (Lawton et al, 2023).

Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that the core of spiritual or pastoral care, viewed through the lens of practical theology, resonates universally among diverse religious traditions. This standpoint, as elucidated by Mol (2021), centres on nurturing faith, facilitating the construction of existential meaning, as well as advancing the mental well-being and ethical development of individual adherents. Major religions place a strong emphasis on spiritual care for their followers, as evidenced by scholarly works such as *Spirituality in Medicine* within Judaism (Lapsley, 2021), Buddhism (Livingston, 2021), and Hinduism (Lapsley, 2021). Nonetheless, it is apparent from various sources such as Baig and Isgandarova (2023), Christensen et al. (2020), Schroer (2023) that, apart from Islam, Christianity stands out as the most prominent faith traditionally emphasising spiritual or pastoral care.

The term “spiritual care,” as perceived by certain Christians, denotes a secular outlook, as they assert that the originally utilised terms were chaplaincy and pastoral care (Kerlin, 2014). It is noted that despite the Muslim heritage being credited with the establishment of the first hospitals that adopted a holistic approach to human health, there is a lack of a specific designation for spiritual caregivers. Long and Ansari (2018) posit that the fundamental concept itself is not novel, but rather the professionalisation of this domain is a recent development. This could explain why Baig and Isgandarova (2023) emphasise that within Islamic academic circles, the field of Islamic spiritual care is still in its early stages compared to its Christian counterpart. Recognising this, efforts have been made to devise a suitable term by elucidating the fundamental philosophy of Islamic spiritual care. One such proposal is *al-ri'āyah al-rūhiyyah* through the concept of *naṣīḥah* where not only is *naṣīḥah* understood as a mere verbal advice, but as “the *raison d'être* of Islam” (Jamil, 2021, p. 22). Given that spiritual care is considered an integral component of the healthcare system, the discourse on Islamic medicine becomes pertinent. One aspect is Prophetic medicine or *al-ṭibb al-nabawī*. *Al-ṭibb al-nabawī*, categorised within *Ḥadīth* literature, is commonly perceived to primarily address nutritional and physical healing aspects, although its scope extends beyond these dimensions. Texts on it have also delved into illnesses necessitating spiritual interventions (Ibn Qayyim, 1990), showcasing a comprehensive medical approach. The essence of *al-ṭibb al-nabawī* lies in its foundation on *Ḥadīth*-based healing principles (Perho, 1995), prompting this study to

explore the convergence between it/Prophetic medicine and spiritual care.

**Methodology: Materials and Methods**

This study used Bibliometrix in conjunction with the R package to conduct a quantitative analysis of 56 documents extracted from a pool of 325 titles, using the search engine Dimensions.ai. The primary keyword was “Islamic Spiritual Care” which yielded the highest number of results compared to other keywords like “Prophetic Medication,” “*Ṭibb Nabawī*,” or “*Ḥadīth*,” which produced minimal to no more than twenty results. The sources considered were not restricted to academic journals but also book chapters and monographs. The timeframe of the publications was unspecified. The screening process involved the manual selection of sources directly related to Islamic spiritual care, specifically those containing keywords like the *Qur’ān*, *Qur’ānic*, and *Ḥadīth*. Sources lacking direct relevance were excluded. The final set of data included for the bibliometric analysis comprised 56 documents from 37 different sources. Limitations of this study arise from the scarcity of sources, resulting in a small sample size as the database could not include materials in the Arabic language or classical sources. Manual scrutiny was also applied to catalogue all 56 documents along with their sources and authors as it was observed that the preliminary analyses conducted by Dimensions.ai had omitted certain details, rendering the mapping carried out by Biblioshiny incomplete. Through this manual examination, undisclosed sources (NA) were successfully identified, as elaborated in the description of Table 5.

**Analysis, Results, and Findings**

**Main information**

The main information in the dataset containing 56 documents from 37 sources, is presented in detail in Table 1.

Table 1: Main information of Islamic Spiritual care studies dataset

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	2011:2023
Sources (journals, books, etc.)	37
Documents	56

DOCUMENT TYPES	
Articles	46
Chapters	8
Monographs	2

The table above also shows that the materials consist of articles (46), chapters (8), and monographs (2). The documents collected were from 2011 to 2023, despite unspecified timeframe.

Regarding the types of documents, the researchers manually compiled two monographs and eight book chapters (See Table 2). To maintain conciseness, 46 articles are excluded as all 56 titles are listed in affiliation contexts.

Table 2: List of monograph and book chapter

Type	Total	Author (Year). Title
Monograph	2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Isgandarova (2018). <i>Muslim Women, Domestic Violence, and Psychotherapy, Theological and Clinical Issues.</i></li> <li>2. Rassool (2015). <i>Islamic Counselling: An Introduction to Theory and Practice.</i></li> </ol>
Book Chapter		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Isgandarova (2022). Female voices in Islamic Spiritual Care: Tensions and achievements. In: <i>Complexities of Spiritual Care in Plural Societies.</i></li> <li>2. Liefbroer, A. et al (2022). Spiritual Care in an Interfaith Context: Implications for Buddhist, Muslim, and Hindu Spiritual Care in The Netherlands. In: <i>Complexities of Spiritual Care in Plural Societies: Education, Praxis and Concepts.</i></li> <li>3. Baig (2022). The Islamic Theology Behind Spiritual Care and Hospital Chaplaincy.</li> <li>4. Schroer (2023). Development of Muslim spiritual Care (<i>Seelsorge</i>) in Germany Challenges and Perspectives. In: <i>Complexities of Spiritual Care in Plural Societies: Education, Praxis and Concepts.</i></li> </ol>

8	<p>5. Laird, L. D et al (2021). Muslim Healthcare Chaplaincy in North America and Europe. In: <i>The Routledge Handbook of Religion, Medicine, and Health</i>.</p> <p>6. Ajouaou &amp; Bernts (2015). The Effects of Religious Diversity on Spiritual Care: Reflections from the Dutch Correction Facilities. In: <i>Religious Diversity in European Prisons</i>.</p> <p>7. Christensen, H. R. et al (2020). Christianity and Islam in Prisons -A Case of Secular Professionalisation of Chaplaincy. In: <i>Religion and Prison: An Overview of Contemporary Europe</i>.</p> <p>8. Jamieson et al (2023). Religious Reflections on Medical Assistance in Dying. In: <i>Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID)</i>.</p>
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### Most Relevant Affiliations

The ten most relevant affiliations related to the theme of Islamic spiritual care are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Top 10 Affiliations (According to Article Authors)

No.	Affiliation	Total
1	Emmanuel College of Victoria University, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada	10
2	Department of Theological Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada	6
3	Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Aisyiyah Bandung, Indonesia	5
4	Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	4
5	Department of Psychology, Universitas Islam Indonesia, Yogyakarta, Indonesia	4
6	Institute of Policy Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam	4
7	Universitas Padjadjaran, Sumedang, Indonesia	4
8	Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia	4

9	Anaesthesiology Research Centre, Anaesthesia and Critical Care Department, Loghman Hakim Hospital, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran	3
10	UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia	3

It is crucial to highlight that the total number of affiliations corresponds to the number of authors associated with an article and may not necessarily indicate the total number of articles. However, in cases where a single author from an institution produces a single-authored article, it accurately reflects the total number of articles. For instance, at Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Isgandarova, as the sole author affiliated with this institution, contributed 10 articles. Additionally, three more articles attribute her affiliation to Spiritual and Religious Care, Ontario Multifaith Center, Toronto, Canada where she is the coordinator. Consequently, her overall contribution totals 13 articles, as depicted in the most relevant author (see Table 7) and outlined in the subsequent compilation list (Table 4).

The subsequent compendium, meticulously done manually, encompasses 56 titles categorised based on the primary or lead author's institutional affiliation by country. Each listing contains the authors' names along with their corresponding affiliations. The total number of authors tallies up to 107. Remarkably, Canada could claim to having the most significant presence with 14 publications, followed by Indonesia (11), and the USA (7). Countries with multiple contributions consist of the Netherlands with 5, Iran (4), and Norway (3). Furthermore, each Malaysia, Australia, and Germany provides 2 publications. There is also representation from Jordan, Switzerland, Denmark, Scotland, the United Kingdom, and Brunei, with each contributing 1 publication.

### **List of Papers According to Countries and Affiliations of Main Authors**

The following table (Table 4) compiles the affiliation of 56 main authors according to their country together with the title of the literature. It is important to note that an author may publish different articles within a year, as can be seen in the case of Isgandarova.

Table 4: List of 56 Papers According to Countries and Affiliations of Main Authors

<b>Country: Total Papers</b>	<b>Affiliation of the Main Author (based on the article title)</b>
Canada: 14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Isgandarova, N. (2011). The Concept of Effective Islamic Spiritual Care. <i>The Journal of Rotterdam Islamic and Social Sciences</i>, 2(1), 1-17. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/jriss-2013-0021">http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/jriss-2013-0021</a>. (Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto).</li> <li>2. Isgandarova, N., &amp; O'Connor, T. St. J. (2012). A Redefinition and Model of Canadian Islamic Spiritual Care. <i>Journal of Pastoral Care &amp; Counselling</i>, 66(2), 1-8. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/154230501206600207">https://doi.org/10.1177/154230501206600207</a>. (Spiritual and Religious Care Coordinator Ontario Multifaith Centre, Toronto).</li> <li>3. Isgandarova, N. (2012). Effectiveness of Islamic Spiritual Care: Foundations and Practices of Muslim Spiritual Care Givers. <i>Journal of Pastoral Care &amp; Counselling</i>, 66(3), 1-16. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/154230501206600304Isg">https://doi.org/10.1177/154230501206600304Isg</a>. (Spiritual and Religious Care Coordinator Ontario Multifaith Centre).</li> <li>4. Isgandarova, N. (2014). Canadian Licensing Changes and the Anticipated Impact on Islamic Spiritual Care and Counselling Practice in Ontario. <i>Journal of Pastoral Care &amp; Counselling</i>. 68(3), 1-9. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/154230501406800307">https://doi.org/10.1177/154230501406800307</a>. (Spiritual and Religious Care Coordinator Ontario Multifaith Centre).</li> </ol>

5. Isgandarova, N. (2014). The Evolution of Islamic Spiritual Care and Counselling in Ontario in the Context of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario. *Journal of Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 4(3), 1-6. (Emmanuel College of Victoria University).
6. Isgandarova, N. (2014). The Role of Practice-Based Education in Islamic Spiritual Care: The Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Training. *The Muslim World*, 108(2), 349-363. <https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12244>. (Emmanuel College of Victoria).
7. Isgandarova N. (2015). Physician-Assisted Suicide and Other Forms of Euthanasia in Islamic Spiritual Care. *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counselling: JPCC*, 69(4), 215–221. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1542305015616099>. (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health).
8. Isgandarova, N. (2015). Music in Islamic Spiritual Care: A Review of Classical Sources. *Religious Studies and Theology*, 34, 101-114. <https://doi.org/10.1558/RSTH.V34I1.26326>. (Emmanuel College of Victoria University).
9. Isgandarova N. (2019). Muraqaba as a Mindfulness-Based Therapy in Islamic Psychotherapy. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 58(4), 1146–1160. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-0695-y>. (Emmanuel College of Victoria University).
10. Isgandarova N. (2018). Medical Assistance in Dying: Challenges for Muslim Healthcare Professionals. *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counselling: JPCC*, 72(3), 202–211. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1542305018796184>. (Emmanuel College of Victoria University).
11. Isgandarova N. (2019). *Muslim Women, Domestic Violence, and Psychotherapy, Theological and Clinical Issues*. New York: Routledge (Emmanuel College of Victoria University).

	<p>12. Isgandarova, N. (2023). Female Voices in Islamic Spiritual Care: Tensions and Achievements. In A. Grung (Ed.), <i>Complexities of Spiritual Care in Plural Societies: Education, Praxis and Concepts</i> (pp. 147-160). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110717365-007">https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110717365-007</a>. (Emmanuel College of Victoria University).</p> <p>13. Isgandarova N. (2022). Clinical Interpretation of Jinn Possession and Cultural Formulation of Mental Illness. <i>The Journal of Pastoral Care &amp; Counselling: JPCC</i>, 76(4), 245–253. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/15423050221116775">https://doi.org/10.1177/15423050221116775</a>. (Emmanuel College of Victoria University).</p> <p>14. Jamieson, C., Absolon, K., Ahmed, S.Z., Clark, R.C., Kenny, S.N., Kotiuga, N. (2023). Spirit at the Gateway: Religious Reflections on Medical Assistance in Dying. In: Kotalik, J., Shannon, D.W. (eds) <i>Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) in Canada</i>. (pp. 443-457). Springer, Cham. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-30002-8_28">https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-30002-8_28</a>. (Department of Theological Studies, Concordia University, Montreal).</p>
<p>Indonesia: 11</p>	<p>1. Nuraeni, A., Suryani, S., Trisyani, Y., &amp; Anna, A. (2023). Islamic Spiritual Care, Depression, and Quality of Life Among Patients with Heart Disease: A Systematic Review. <i>Journal of Holistic Nursing: Official Journal of the American Holistic Nurses' Association</i>, 8980101231180514. Advance Online Publication. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/08980101231180514">https://doi.org/10.1177/08980101231180514</a>. (Universitas Padjadjaran, Sumedang).</p> <p>2. Dwi, S., Peggy, S., Rasdiyanah, R. (2021). The Application of Islamic Spiritual Methods in Nursing Program Curriculum at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and UIN Alauddin Makassar. <i>Islam Transformatif: Journal of Islamic Studies</i>, 5(2), 148-159. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.30983/it.v5i2.4933">http://dx.doi.org/10.30983/it.v5i2.4933</a>. (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta).</p>

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4. Dewi, I. P., Sastro, R., Alamsyah, S. (2020). Hubungan Karakteristik Perawat dengan Pelaksana Asuhan Keperawatan Spiritual Islami di Ruang Inap Dewasa Rumah Sakit Kabupaten Bandung. *Jurnal Smart Keperawatan*, 7(2), 125. <http://dx.doi.org/10.34310/jskp.v7i2.346>. (Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan 'Aisyiyah Bandung)
5. Rosmalina, A., Khaerunnisa, T. (2021). Sejarah Perawatan Rohani Islam Pada Masa Nabi Muhammad Tahun 570-632 Masehi. *Jurnal Tamaddun: Jurnal Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Islam*, 9(2), 711-722. <http://dx.doi.org/10.24235/tamaddun.v9i2.8803>. (Fakultas Ushuluddin Adab dan Dakwah, IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon).
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Uyun, Q., Kurniawan, I. N., &amp; Jaufalaily, N. (2019). Repentance and Seeking Forgiveness: The Effects of Spiritual Therapy Based on Islamic Tenets to Improve Mental Health. <i>Mental Health, Religion &amp; Culture</i>, 22(2), 185–194. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2018.1514593">https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2018.1514593</a>. (Department of Psychology, Universitas Islam Indonesia, Yogyakarta).</li> <li>9. Isnawati, Z., Nurhayati, S. (2018). Islam, Etika dan Spiritualitas: Perannya dalam Dunia Konseling dan Keperawatan yang Multikultur. <i>Journal of Guidance and Counselling</i>, 2(1), 132-150. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/konseling.v2i1.4462">http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/konseling.v2i1.4462</a>. (IAIN Kudus).</li> <li>10. Ibn Hasani. (2018). Komunikasi Terapeutik Perawat Rohani Islam dalam Proses Penyembuhan Pasien di RSUD Ciamis. <i>Communicatus Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi</i>, 2(2), 127-160. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.15575/cjik.v2i2.4938">http://dx.doi.org/10.15575/cjik.v2i2.4938</a>. (Rumah Sakit Umum Daerah, Ciamis).</li> <li>11. Kurniawati, H., Retnowati, S., Riyono, B., &amp; Widyawati, W. (2018). Literature Review of Spiritual Care in Islamic Cultural Perspective. <i>IBDA: Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Budaya</i>, 16(2), 350–368. <a href="https://doi.org/10.24090/ibda.v16i2.1942">https://doi.org/10.24090/ibda.v16i2.1942</a>. (Universitas Gadjah Mada).</li> </ol>
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<p>Netherlands: 5</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Liefbroer, A. I., Lauwers, S., Coppens, P., &amp; Lalbadoersing, B. (2023). Spiritual Care in an Interfaith Context: Implications for Buddhist, Muslim, and Hindu Spiritual Care in The Netherlands. In A. H. Grung (Ed.), <i>Complexities of Spiritual Care in Plural Societies: Education, Praxis and Concepts</i> (pp. 161-190). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110717365-008">https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110717365-008</a>. (Tillburg School of Catholic Theology).</li> <li>2. Vellenga, S., &amp; De Groot, K. (2019). Securitization, Islamic Chaplaincy, and The Issue of (de)Radicalization of Muslim Detainees in Dutch Prisons. <i>Social Compass</i>, 66(2), 224-237. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0037768619833313">http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0037768619833313</a>. (University of Groningen).</li> <li>3. Ajouaou, M., &amp; Bernts, T. (2015). Imams and Inmates: in Islamic Prison Chaplaincy in The Netherlands A Case of Religious Adaptation or of Contextualization? <i>International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society</i>, 28(1), 51-65. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-014-9182-y">https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-014-9182-y</a>. (Islamic Theology, Free University Amsterdam).</li> <li>4. Ajouaou, M., &amp; Bernts, T. (2015). The Effects of Religious Diversity on Spiritual Care: Reflections from The Dutch Correction Facilities. In I. Becci &amp; O. Roy (Eds.), <i>Religious Diversity in European Prisons</i> (pp. 31-45). Springer, Cham. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-16778-7_3">https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-16778-7_3</a>. (Islamic Theology, Free University Amsterdam).</li> <li>5. Ganzevoort, R. R., Ajouaou, M., Van der Braak, A., de Jongh, E., &amp; Minnema, L. (2014). Teaching Spiritual Care in an Interfaith Context. <i>Journal for the Academic Study of Religion</i>, 27(2), 178-197. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1558/jasr.v27i2.178">http://dx.doi.org/10.1558/jasr.v27i2.178</a>. (the Amsterdam Centre for the Study of Lived Religion).</li> </ol>
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Iran: 4

1. Fasihizadeh, H., & Nasriani, K. (2020). Effect of Spiritual Care on Chest Tube Removal Anxiety and Pain in Heart Surgery in Muslim Patients (Shia And Sunni). *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 74(4), 234-240. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1542305020948189>. (Department of Nursing, Research Center for Nursing and Midwifery Care, Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences and Health Services).
2. Asadzandi, M., Mazandarani, H. A., Saffari, M., & Khaghanizadeh, M. (2021). Effect of Spiritual Care Based on The Sound Heart Model on Spiritual Experiences of Haemodialysis Patients. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 3(61), 2056–2071. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01396-2>. (Medicine, Quran and Hadith Research Centre, Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences, Tehran).
3. Irajpour, A., Moghimian, M., & Arzani, H. (2018). Spiritual Aspects of Care for Chronic Muslim Patients: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*. 7, 118. [https://doi.org/10.4103/2Fjehp.jehp\\_199\\_17](https://doi.org/10.4103/2Fjehp.jehp_199_17). (Department of Critical Care Nursing, Nursing and Midwifery Care Research Centre, Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences).
4. Bashar, F. R., Vahedian-Azimi, A., Salesi, M., Hajiesmaeili, M., Shojaei, S., Farzanegan, B., Goharani, R., Madani, S. J., Moghaddam, K. G., Hatamian, S., Moghaddam, H. J., Arrascaeta-Llanes, A., & Miller, A. C. (2018). Spiritual Health and Outcomes in Muslim ICU Patients: A Nationwide Cross-Sectional Study. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 57(6), 2241–2257. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-017-0543-5>. (Anesthesia and Critical Care Department, Hamadan University of Medical Sciences).

<p>Norway: 3</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Baig, N., &amp; Isgandarova, N., (2023) Exploring Islamic Spiritual Care: What is in A Name? <i>Religions</i>, 14(10), 1256. <a href="https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14101256">https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14101256</a>. (Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo).</li> <li>2. Baig, N. (2023). Islamic Spiritual Care and Negative Religious Coping. <i>Tidsskrift for Islamforskning</i>, 18(2), 163-183. (Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo).</li> <li>3. Baig, N. (2022). The Islamic Theology Behind Spiritual Care and Hospital Chaplaincy. In A. Grung (Ed.), <i>Complexities of Spiritual care in Plural Societies: Education, Praxis and Concepts</i> (pp. 99-122). Berlin, Boston: Gruyter. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110717365-005">https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110717365-005</a>. (Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo).</li> </ol>
<p>Malaysia: 2</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ____ Saged, A. A. G., Saari, C. Z., Abdullah, M. b., Al-Rahmi, W. M., Ismail, W. M., Zain, M. I. A., &amp; al-Shehri, N. (2022). The Effect of An Islamic-Based Intervention on Depression and Anxiety in Malaysia. <i>Journal of Religion and Health</i>, 61(1), 79-92. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01484-3">https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01484-3</a>. (Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, 50603, Kuala Lumpur</li> <li>2. Jamil, K. H. (2022). Report on the First International Conference on Islamic Spiritual Care: Conceptualising Spiritual Care Between Traditional Guidance and Modern Practices. <i>Intellectual Discourse</i>, 30(2). <a href="https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v30i2.1875">https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v30i2.1875</a>. (Department of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University)</li> </ol>
<p>Australia: 2</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yucel, S. (2022). An Islamic Therapy: A Fear Reducing Holistic Approach (FERHA). <i>Journal of Religion and Health</i>, 61, 3840–3851. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01286-7">https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01286-7</a>. (Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation, Charles Sturt University/Australian Catholic University).</li> </ol>

	<p>2. Zainuddin, Z. I. (2017). Aligning Islamic Spirituality to Medical Imaging. <i>Journal of Religion and Health</i>, 56, 1605–1619. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-015-0074-x">https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-015-0074-x</a>. (Health Sciences (Medical Radiation Sciences), Sydney).</p>
Germany: 2	<p>1. Ayar, C. (2023). Islamische Seelsorgeausbildung am Islamkolleg Deutschland [Islamic Spiritual Care Education at the Islamkolleg Deutschland]. <i>Spiritual Care</i>, 12(4), 375-377. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1515/spircare-2023-0059">https://doi.org/10.1515/spircare-2023-0059</a>. (Islamkolleg Deutschland e.V. Osnabrück).</p> <p>2. Schroer, J. (2023). Development of Muslim Spiritual Care (Seelsorge) in Germany: Challenges and perspectives. In A. H. Grung (Ed.), <i>Complexities of Spiritual Care in Plural Societies: Education, Praxis and Concepts</i> (pp. 123-146). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter. (University of Tuebingen).</p>
Jordan: 1	<p>1. Rababa, M., &amp; Al-Sabbah, S. (2023). The Use of Islamic Spiritual Care Practices Among Critically Ill Adult Patients: A Systematic Review. <i>Heliyon</i>, 9(3), 13862. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e13862">https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e13862</a>. (Adult Health Nursing Department, Faculty of Nursing, Jordan University of Science and Technology).</p>
Switzerland: 1	<p>1. Schmid, H., &amp; Sheikhazadegan, A. (2020). A Muslim Chaplaincy for Asylum Seekers? Results From an Evaluation Research Study. <i>Journal of Pastoral Care &amp; Counselling: Advancing Theory and Professional Practice Through Scholarly and Reflective Publications</i>, 74(2), 124-132. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/1542305020907030">https://doi.org/10.1177/1542305020907030</a>. (University of Fribourg).</p>

Denmark: 1	<p>1. Christensen, H.R., Kühle, L., Vinding, N.V. (2020). Denmark: Christianity and Islam in Prisons – A Case of Secular Professionalisation of Chaplaincy. In: Martínez-Ariño, J., Zwilling, AL. (eds) <i>Religion and Prison: An Overview of Contemporary Europe. Boundaries of Religious Freedom: Regulating Religion in Diverse Societies</i>. (pp. 113-134). Springer, Cham. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36834-0_8">https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36834-0_8</a>. (Department for the Study of Religion, Aarhus University, Aarhus).</p>
Scotland: 1	<p>1. Dharamsi, S., &amp; Liberatore, G. (2023). Our Therapeutic Direction is Towards Light: Transcendence and A Non-Secular Politics of Difference in Islamic Counselling Training. <i>Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute</i>, 30(2), 417-435. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.14064">https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.14064</a>. (Stephen Maynard &amp; Associates).</p>
United Kingdom: 1	<p>1. Rassool, G. H. (2015). <i>Islamic counselling: An Introduction to Theory and Practice</i>. UK: Routledge. (Head of Department, Faculty of Psychology, Islamic Online University. Executive Director &amp; Consultant of Sakina Counselling Institute &amp; Research).</p>
Brunei: 1	<p>1. Rahman, H. A., Abu Sufian, F., Fauzi, S., Azmi, S., &amp; Aziz, A. A. (2019). Prevalence and Patient Feedback on Islamic Spiritual Healing in Brunei. <i>Spirituality in Clinical Practice</i>, 6(3), 158–165. <a href="https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/scp0000193">https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/scp0000193</a>. (PAPRSB Institute of Health Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam).</p>

### Annual Scientific Production

Another analysed category concerns the number of publications. This can be seen in Figure 1 below.

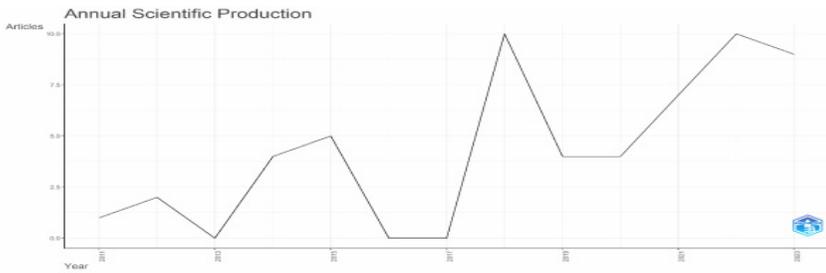


Figure 1: Number of publications from the year 2011 to 2023, with the trendline

The annual scientific production of papers within the field has shown a generally increasing trend over the past decade. Nevertheless, at the microscopic level, it displays fluctuations resulting in an inconsistent growth pattern. The year 2022 was the most productive for Islamic spiritual care, with over 10 articles published. In contrast, 2013, 2016, and 2017 had no publications, making them the least productive years.

**Annual Citation Per Year**

The collated data was analysed for annual citations.

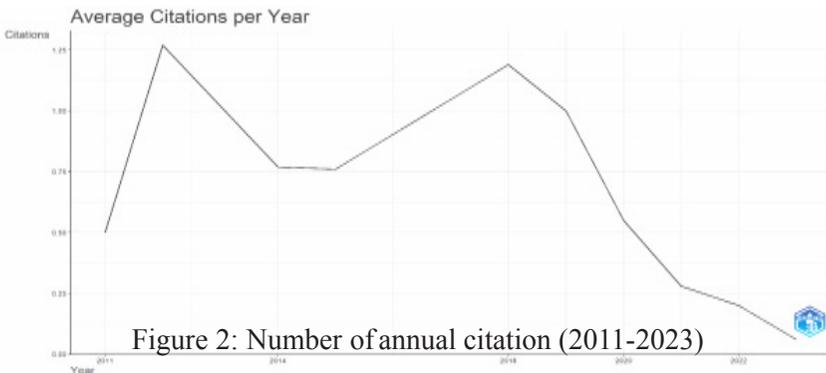


Figure 2: Number of annual citation (2011-2023)

Figure 2 shows that the annual citation rate for the field of Islamic spiritual care from these 56 literature has experienced a consistent decline from 2018 to 2023, with a minor upward trend observed between 2021 and 2022. This may not necessarily be connected to a low level of interest towards the field but indicating multiple possibilities such

as limited visibility and availability of these sources, as well as less inclusivity or interconnectivity among authors in the field.

### Most Relevant Sources

The most relevant dataset sources mentioned below (see Table 5) presents a wide array of viewpoints concerning Islamic spiritual care, pastoral care, religion, and spirituality.

Table 5: The Ten Most Relevant Sources

Sources	Articles
Journal of Pastoral Care & Counselling Advancing Theory and Professional Practice Through Scholarly and Reflective Publications	8
Journal of Religion and Health	7
Complexities of Spiritual Care in Plural Societies	4
Journal of Pastoral Theology	2
NA	2
Spirituality in Clinical Practice	2
Advanced Science Letters	1
Boundaries of Religious Freedom: Regulating Religion in Diverse Societies	1
Communicatus Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi	1
Heliyon	1

There are two articles under the category labelled as “NA” or Not Available, which indicates an absence of a specified source type. In clarifying the NA source, upon manual inspection, it was discovered that it pertains to two monographs by Routledge as listed in the primary information section (see Table 2 above). The remaining 27 documents are not explicitly mentioned in this dataset but are detailed out by Bradford’s Law. This variety suggests a thorough exploration of pastoral care, religion, and spirituality across diverse academic platforms.

### Bradford’s Law

The Bradford’s Law in the Bibliometric field is known for clustering sources according to zones; *zone 1 (core)*, *zone 2 (intermediate)*, and *zone 3 (outlying)*. The source clustering dataset organised 37 sources according to the three zones and this is shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Source clustering for “Islamic Spiritual care” based on Bradford’s Law

Source	Rank	Freq	Cum Freq	Zone
<i>Journal of Pastoral Care &amp; Counseling Advancing Theory and Professional Practice Through Scholarly and Reflective Publications</i>	1	8	8	Zone 1
<i>Journal of Religion and Health</i>	2	7	15	Zone 1
<i>Complexities of Spiritual Care in Plural Societies</i>	3	4	19	Zone 1
<i>Journal of Pastoral Theology</i>	4	2	21	Zone 2
NA	5	2	23	Zone 2
<i>Spirituality in Clinical Practice</i>	6	2	25	Zone 2
<i>Advanced Science Letters</i>	7	1	26	Zone 2
<i>Boundaries of Religious Freedom: Regulating Religion in Diverse Societies</i>	8	1	27	Zone 2
<i>Communicatus Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi</i>	9	1	28	Zone 2
<i>Heliyon</i>	10	1	29	Zone 2
<i>IBDA Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Budaya</i>	11	1	30	Zone 2
<i>Intellectual Discourse</i>	12	1	31	Zone 2
<i>International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society</i>	13	1	32	Zone 2
<i>Islam Transformatif Journal of Islamic Studies</i>	14	1	33	Zone 2
<i>Journal for the Academic Study of Religion</i>	15	1	34	Zone 2
<i>Journal of Education and Health Promotion</i>	16	1	35	Zone 2
<i>Journal of Holistic Nursing</i>	17	1	36	Zone 2
<i>Journal of Muslim Mental Health</i>	18	1	37	Zone 2

<i>Journal of Psychology &amp; Psychotherapy</i>	19	1	38	Zone 2
<i>Journal of The Royal Anthropological Institute</i>	20	1	39	Zone 3
<i>Jurnal Keperawatan</i>	21	1	40	Zone 3
<i>Jurnal Psikologi Terapan dan Pendidikan</i>	22	1	41	Zone 3
<i>Jurnal Smart Keperawatan</i>	23	1	42	Zone 3
<i>Jurnal Tamaddun Jurnal Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Islam</i>	24	1	43	Zone 3
<i>Konseling Edukasi Journal of Guidance and Counseling</i>	25	1	44	Zone 3
<i>Mental Health Religion &amp; Culture</i>	26	1	45	Zone 3
<i>Religions</i>	27	1	46	Zone 3
<i>Religious Diversity in European Prisons</i>	28	1	47	Zone 3
<i>Religious Studies and Theology</i>	29	1	48	Zone 3
<i>Social Compass</i>	30	1	49	Zone 3
<i>Spiritual Care</i>	31	1	50	Zone 3
<i>The Arts in Psychotherapy</i>	32	1	51	Zone 3
<i>The International Library of Bioethics</i>	33	1	52	Zone 3
<i>The Journal of Rotterdam Islamic and Social Sciences</i>	34	1	53	Zone 3
<i>The Muslim World</i>	35	1	54	Zone 3
<i>The Routledge Handbook of Religion, Medicine, and Health</i>	36	1	55	Zone 3
<i>Tidsskrift for Islamforskning</i>	37	1	56	Zone 3

From the 56 documents (see Table 6), the top three rankings were allocated to the core zone, comprising 19 documents stemming from 3 distinct sources. Another 19 documents, originating from 16 different sources, were categorised in the intermediate zone, while the remaining 18 documents, each published by a different source, were placed in the outlying zone. Notably, the three journals in the core zone exhibited

exceptional productivity in releasing studies related to Islamic Spiritual care, namely: *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counselling Advancing Theory and Professional Practice Through Scholarly and Reflective Publications* (8 papers), *Journal of Religion and Health* (7 papers), and *Complexities of Spiritual care in Plural Societies* (4 papers), indicating their prominence as the leading sources in this field.

### Sources Production Over Time

The production of the top five sources over time from 2011 to 2023 was analysed, as illustrated in Figure 3 below.

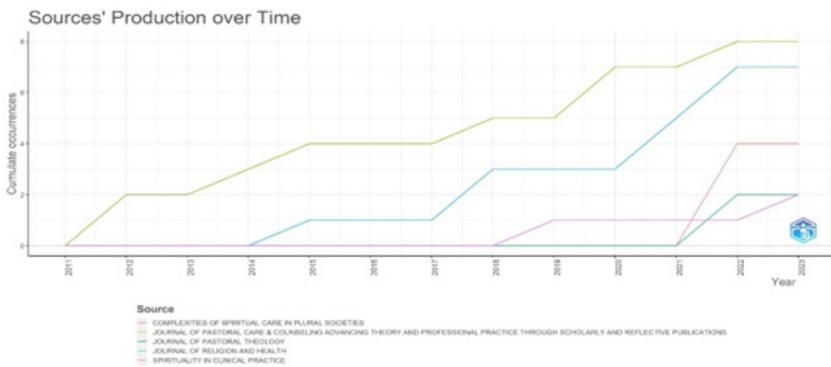


Figure 3: Production of Islamic Spiritual care materials in five leading journals

The realm of Islamic spiritual care (ISC) is primarily examined in academic journals that focus on spirituality, pastoral care, health, and theology. The leading publication in this field is the *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counselling Advancing Theory and Professional Practice Through Scholarly and Reflective Publications*, which has been in circulation since 2011, but specifically delved into ISC topics starting in 2012. Following closely is the *Journal of Religion and Health*, which was established in 2014 and has begun exploring ISC discourse in 2015. On the other hand, the book *Complexities of Spiritual Care in Plural Societies* produced four relevant articles in 2022 on ISC, with no previous or subsequent contributions. In contrast, the journal *Spirituality in Clinical Practice* which has been operational since 2011, surprisingly introduced discussions on ISC only in 2019. Lastly, the *Journal of Pastoral Theology*, founded in 2018, initiated discourse on ISC in 2022, and this trend has continued steadily through 2023.

### Most Relevant Authors

Table 7 presents the ten most relevant authors in the field of Islamic spiritual care.

Table 7: The Most Relevant Authors

Authors	Articles
Isgandarova N	13
Ajouaou M	3
Baig N	3
Laird L. D	3
Bernts T	2
Kurniawan I. N	2
Majid S. A	2
Uyun Q	2
Abdul-Majid S	1
Abdullah M	1

The author's relevance is determined by the volume of papers and research they have contributed to the field of ISC. Table 7 illustrates the 10 most prolific authors out of the 56 sources examined. In this domain, Isgandarova emerged as the predominant figure in discussions on ISC, surpassing other authors with a publication count of 13. Following her, Ajouaou, Baig, and Laird produced 3 papers each. Authors with 2 papers each are Bernts, Kurniawan, Majid, and Uyun and those with single papers include Abdul Majid and Abdullah.

### Authors Production Over Time

The production over time of the ten most relevant authors is presented in Figure 4.

Aligned with the most prominent authors illustrated in Table 7, Isgandarova emerged as the most prolific writer, as depicted in Figure 4, having authored 13 papers from 2011 to 2023, with 2018 marking the peak of her productivity. Ajouaou followed closely with 3 papers published in 2014 and 2015, consisting of 2 papers and 1 paper respectively. She was trailed by Baig and Laird, both with 3 papers

each. Baig contributed 1 paper in 2022 and 2 in 2023, more recently than Ajouaou, while Laird produced 1 paper each from 2021 to 2023. The remaining 6 authors, each with 2 papers, commenced their research in 2014, with no publications in 2016, 2017, and 2020. Notably, some authors engaged in collaborative efforts, with the most frequent pairs being Isgandarova-Baig and Ajouaou-Berntts who also cited each other. For instance, Isgandarova referenced Ajouaou in her paper titled *The Role of Practice-Based Education in Islamic Spiritual Care: The Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Training* and Baig in his work *Exploring Islamic Spiritual Care – What Is in A Name?* and *Islamic Spiritual Care and Negative Religious Coping: Islamic Practical Theology and Psychology of Religion at Crossroads*. Isgandarova has been extensively cited, particularly by Baig, concurring on key issues such as the existing disparity between the “lived and the studied” (Baig, 2023, p. 164), and the necessity for chaplains to possess a contextual legal (*fiqhi*) comprehension to address multifaceted cases that commonly arise in a diverse religious society (Baig, 2023).

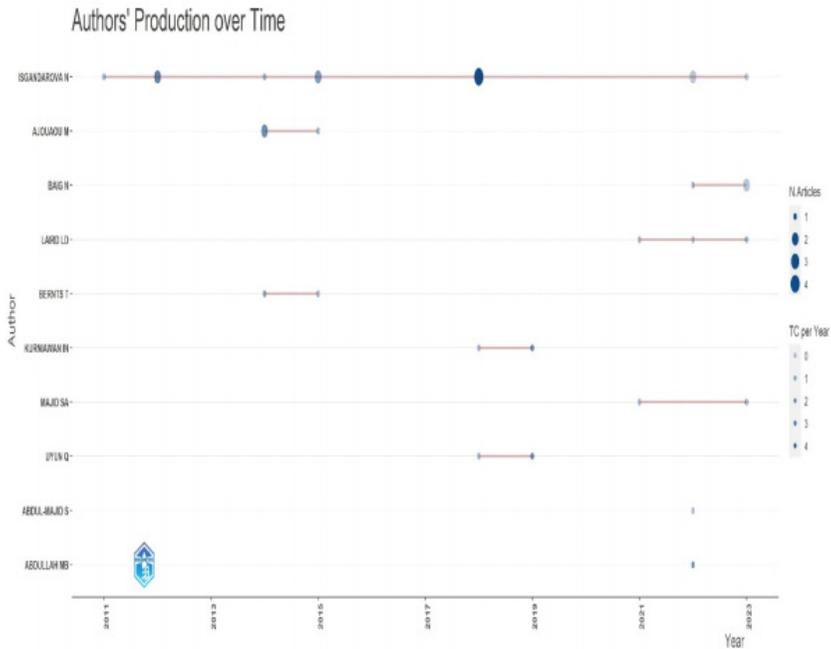


Figure 4: Authors’ Production Over Time

However, the authors seem to have placed insufficient emphasis on the central topic of discussion, which is the reference to or application of Prophetic medicine within the context of spiritual care based on current literature. It can be inferred from these writings that when Prophetic medicine is examined through the lens of spiritual care, it will require an expansion of the definition of ‘Prophetic medicine’ itself, thereby broadening the scope beyond the specific genre of Prophetic medicine to encompass the larger framework of the *Ḥadīth* tradition. As highlighted by Baig (2022), the foundational principles of spiritual care are not foreign to the prophetic teachings as evidenced by the numerous *Ḥadīths* such as the *Ḥadīth* on the presence of God among the sick (Muslim, 2569, vol. 8, p. 13), that for every sickness there is a cure (Muslim, 2204, vol. 7, p. 21), and the *Ḥadīth* of *rahmah* (al-Tirmidhi, 1924, vol. 3, p. 483). The *Ḥadīths* have codified these principles, ranging from the fundamental tenets of the Islamic worldview to the actions of the Prophet himself. Supporting this argument, Isgandarova’s study (2012) demonstrates that the *Ḥadīths*, in conjunction with the Quran, form the cornerstone of effective spiritual care practices. Additionally, as noted by Isgandarova and Baig (2023), key aspects of Islamic spiritual care such as spirituality and psychology which are primarily addressed within the *taṣawwuf* (Sufism) framework have also been influenced by the *Ḥadīths*, many of which have been acknowledged by scholars, mainly Ibn Qayyim (1990) and al-Dhahabi (1990) who have written on Prophetic medicine. Therefore, this recognition emphasises the necessity for further research to shed light on the intersection of Prophetic medicine and spiritual care.

### Most Cited Countries

Table 8 presents the total frequency of citations by country, ranked from highest to lowest.

Table 8: Most Cited Countries

COUNTRY	TOTAL CITATION
Canada	77
Iran	33
Netherlands	27

Indonesia	15
Malaysia	9
Australia	3
Denmark	3
Switzerland	3
USA	1

Canada emerged as the preeminent country in the field of Islamic spiritual care, garnering an impressive 77 citations, surpassing Iran that has 33. The Netherlands followed closely with 27 citations, while Indonesia accumulated 15, and Malaysia 9. Each of Australia, Denmark, and Switzerland received 3 citations, showcasing an equal level of recognition of ISC. In contrast, the USA received only 1 citation while other countries did not receive any.

### **Most Frequent Words**

In exploring Islamic spiritual care, the ten most frequent words and their occurrences, ranked from the highest to the lowest, were produced. They are presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9: The Most Frequent Words and Their Occurrences

Words	Occurrences
humans	15
Islam	13
spirituality	9
pastoral care	8
female	7
male	7
religion and medicine	7
anxiety	4
cultural characteristics	4
professional-patient relations	4

Table 9 illustrates the ten most significant keywords and their frequencies in the discourse on Islamic Spiritual care (ISC). The most prominent term is “humans” which appeared 15 times, reflecting the focus on human beings in the realm of spiritual care. Following closely is the term “Islam,” occurring 13 times, highlighting the Islamic perspective on spiritual care. “Spirituality” was noted 9 times, while “pastoral care” 8. The subsequent three terms, “female,” “male” and the combination of “religion” and “medicine,” each appeared 7 times. The final four occurrences were attributed to “anxiety,” “cultural characteristics,” and “professional-patient relations.” Notably, several of these keywords align with the search terms employed by the researchers to identify pertinent literature, including “Islam,” “spirituality,” and “pastoral care.” Nonetheless, as outlined in the limitations section above, the initial keywords did not yield satisfactory outcomes, prompting the adoption of the current set focusing on Islamic spiritual care.

### Word Cloud

The most relevant terms and their frequencies can be clearly depicted through the presentation of a word cloud as shown in Figure 5.

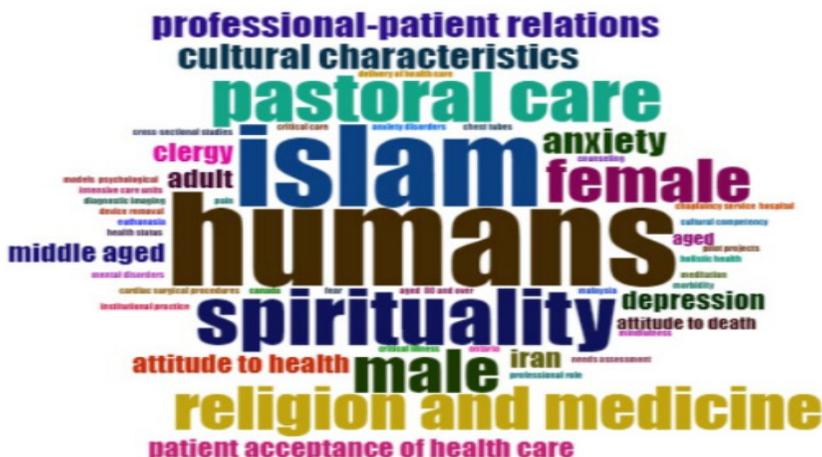


Figure 5: Word cloud of Islamic Spiritual care studies dataset

### Co-Occurrence Network

The co-occurrence network analysis yielded two thematic clusters wherein the related keywords are presented in red and blue colours, as depicted in Figure 6.

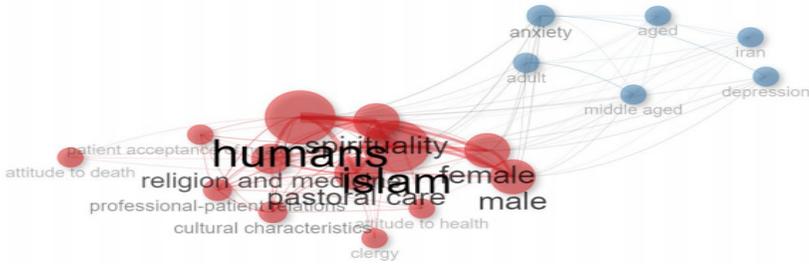


Figure 6: Co-occurrence network map of authors’ keywords

The diagram above (Figure 6) illustrates the interconnections between “Islamic spiritual care” and its associated keywords. This network visualisation, constructed using keywords extracted from the authors’ articles (authors’ keywords), revealed a total of 19 nodes organised into two distinct clusters. Cluster 1 comprises thirteen nodes highlighted in red, while cluster 2 consists of six nodes in blue. The specific details of the word nodes can be observed in Table 10 below.

Upon closer examination of the top ten keywords depicted in Table 9, it becomes evident from Table 10 and Figure 6 that all but one of the top ten most frequently occurring keywords is situated within cluster 1. The outlier, the term ‘anxiety,’ resides in cluster 2.

Table 10: Co-occurrence word nodes and clusters

Node	Cluster	Betweenness	Closeness	PageRank
humans	1	22.5761946	0.05555556	0.1172412
Islam	1	21.1231145	0.05555556	0.11348361
spirituality	1	3.80657537	0.04545455	0.07066424
pastoral care	1	5.23744267	0.04545455	0.07282304
female	1	6.20853525	0.05	0.07547002
male	1	6.20853525	0.05	0.07547002

religion and medicine	1	1.48518519	0.04	0.06314877
cultural characteristics	1	0	0.03846154	0.04675314
professional-patient relations	1	0	0.03846154	0.04675314
attitude to health	1	0	0.03846154	0.03956747
clergy	1	0	0.03125	0.01934259
patient acceptance of health care	1	0	0.03846154	0.03839333
attitude to death	1	0	0.03125	0.01709889
anxiety	2	0.66753247	0.03703704	0.0416696
adult	2	0.28972885	0.03846154	0.03866745
depression	2	0	0.03225806	0.02563017
Iran	2	0.10742706	0.03703704	0.03137181
middle aged	2	0.28972885	0.03846154	0.03866745
aged	2	0	0.03571429	0.02778408

### Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

Despite the limited nature of the collated data, several significant deductions can be made from these analyses. It is strikingly evident that the quantity of papers and studies pertaining to Islamic spiritual care lags other fields such as Islamic banking and finance, Islamic education, and Halal industry, resulting in narrowed outcomes due to data scarcity. The scope was further diminished when additional filters such as *Ḥadīth* and Prophetic medication were applied. Nonetheless, the analysed data reveals a positive trend in the production of papers and research within the realm of Islamic spiritual care starting from 2022 and continuing to rise. European countries dominate the list of the top ten most productive countries, suggesting a heightened interest in the subject matter within that geographical region. It may also suggest the trail of diasporic scholars of the field who have made their way there. Despite the unspecified timeframe for the study, the collected data is insufficient for a more robust bibliometric analysis. This highlights a noticeable gap in the authors' field of interest, underscoring the need for

more thorough and detailed investigations. Consequently, the authors are inclined towards a manual approach, as the digitally acquired data through Dimensions.ai is deemed inadequate for producing a meticulously researched outcome.

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## **Sibling Sexual Abuse: Seeking Sharī‘ah-based Solutions**

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**Abstract:** Sibling sexual abuse (SSA) is the most common form of intra-familial abuse. Long-term consequences of this abuse can turn into a lifelong battle. This article outlines the psycho-social-legal challenges of survivors of sibling sexual abuse and the dilemma facing survivors of SSA on seeking justice for their situation. The paper offers the Islamic legal perspectives and related options for management in addressing SSA, against the background of Islamic teachings on the prevention of sexualised crimes, possible punishment of the perpetrator/abuser, and ways of healing for the survivors of SSA and their family.

**Keywords:** Sibling Sexual Abuse (SSA), Sharī‘ah, Islamic law, Legal recourse

**Abstrak:** Penderaan Seksual Adik-Beradik atau Sibling Sexual Abuse (SSA) ialah bentuk penderaan dalam keluarga yang paling biasa berlaku. Akibat jangka panjang penderaan ini boleh bertukar menjadi pertempuran seumur hidup bagi pemandiri. Artikel ini menggariskan cabaran psiko-sosial-undang-undang pemandiri yang diselamatkan daripada penderaan seksual adik-beradik dan dilema yang dihadapi oleh pemandiri SSA dalam mencari keadilan untuk situasi mereka. Makalah ini menawarkan perspektif perundangan Islam dan pilihan berkaitan pengurusan dalam menangani SSA, dengan latar belakang ajaran Islam mengenai pencegahan jenayah seksual, hukuman yang boleh

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dilaksanakan ke atas pelaku/pendera, dan proses dan cara penyembuhan bagi mangsa SSA dan keluarga mereka.

**Kata kunci:** Penderaan Seksual Adik-Beradik atau Sibling Sexual Abuse (SSA), Shari'ah, Undang-undang Islam, Tindakan Undang-Undang

## Introduction

Known as the ‘forgotten abuse,’ sibling sexual abuse (SSA) is the most common form of intra-familial abuse (Lancer, 2020; Tener et al., 2020; Yates, 2020). Typically occurring between an older brother and younger sister, and irrespective of force or coercion due to the age of the victim, SSA can range from a single occurrence to numerous incidents carried out over years. While the abuse may begin in childhood, this may extend into early adulthood (Yates & Allardyce, 2021).

Even where services aimed at addressing abuse between adult and child does exist, in cases of SSA where both the perpetrator and the victim are children (i.e., under 18 years of age) there is some confusion around not only detection but also response. Existing outside of the continuum of age-appropriate curiosity, it is arguably the most misjudged form of abuse by families and professionals alike, where it is often explained as “just children learning about their bodies,” and consequently it may go unrecognised or is minimised. Survivors of this form of abuse (as well as their parents/guardians and/or other siblings) have little legal recourse, and as such, managing the long-term consequences can become a lifelong battle.

In this article, we outline the psycho-social-legal challenges of survivors of sibling sexual abuse and the dilemma facing survivors of SSA regarding seeking and finding justice for their situation. We offer Shari'ah perspectives and related options for management in addressing SSA. It should be noted that while we focus on sibling sexual abuse specifically, we acknowledge that any or all of the other three categories of abuse – physical, psychological, and relational – may also play a role (Yates & Allardyce, 2021).

## Challenges of Prevalence Rates and Definitions

As mentioned earlier, attaining a standard definition of SSA and obtaining reliable data as to its prevalence have been hampered by

complications. Current prevalence rates of SSA are inaccurate: SSA has tended to be subsumed under the generic recording of child abuse statistics, and as such there is no clear picture available. Related data by Kelly and Karsna (2018) showed that at the higher end, estimates of experience of child sexual abuse on the global level reach 30% for girls and 23% for boys, with studies suggesting that at least one-third of child sexual abuse cases are perpetrated by other children and young people, often against a younger child (Yates & Allardyce, 2021).

However, the literature clarifies that the difficulty in establishing reliable statistics around prevalence is due to a number of reasons: its “hidden nature,” stigma, and the lack of disclosure. Victims may be unwilling or unable to reach out to authorities because of the wider consequences to family and fear around conflicts, honour, shame, and blame within relationships with other siblings. Lack of uniform methodology can also impact data outcomes (Yates & Allardyce, 2021; Vanisha, 2020; Rowntree, 2007; Gilligan & Akhtar, 2005).

Reasons for underreporting include not only individual family experiences, but extend to broader, more systemic problems with management and a wider public discourse on the issue. Sibling abuse is governed by generic sexual abuse laws, and despite being a form of sexual abuse, it has no clear legal definition. Thus, the crime—and in turn the complications from cascading consequences—are trivialised, and all this is accentuated by a lack of resources for families as a whole. Furthermore, there is evidence that even professionals from education, health and social care have often failed to judge the seriousness of the act, due to their individual beliefs around what constitutes sibling sexual abuse and what is seen simply as part of childhood development. From the perspective of these professionals, sibling relationships are considered intrinsically valuable, and as such, harmful behaviour within these relationships is reframed and viewed as less harmful than other forms of abuse (this is more so the case when that abuse is psychological only). These frames of reference are maintained by the reinterpretations of any events which may contradict this view (Yates, 2020; Cyr et al., 2002; Stathopoulos, 2012). It is of note that the above issues apply across communities and cultures.

Similarly, definitions of SSA are adapted from the literature on sexual violence in general and exclude the impact of the complicated

context outlined above. Hackett et al. (2019) suggest the use of the term *harmful sexual behaviour*, meaning “sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people under the age of 18 years old that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child [or] young person” (pg. 13). Again, this is not specific to SSA: it encompasses all the issues within the context of a harmful, criminal act.

Stroebel et al. (2013) report that neither child may display symptoms of trauma at the time—as is the case for child abuse in general, the victim may think that SSA is ‘normal’ until adulthood. This suggests that not all children will express or show signs of harm, but this does not mean there is no harm, nor does it mean that time spent with their sibling will not perpetuate harm. From the imprecise information around prevalence and the lack of a clear definition, we get a sense of the complexity of SSA and that these complexities influence how the problem is understood and managed by all involved, whether individuals, families, or professionals.

## **Consequences**

### ***Consequences for the survivor***

The consequences of SSA are moderated by a number of factors including nature and duration, the context, the abused child’s co-experiences of other forms of abuse, the meaning of the abuse to the victim, individual vulnerability factors, and responses of family members and professionals (Yates & Allardyce, 2021; Yates, 2020; Tener & Silberstein, 2019; Carlson, 2011; Carlson et al., 2006). It is important to note that the onset of consequences does not limit the time frame of the related impact. As such, both short-term and long-term consequences can and do affect the child who has been abused—long into their adult life.

### ***Short-term consequences***

The immediate and short-term consequences of SSA may include pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, physical injury, symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and emotional and behavioural problems both at home and at school.

### *Long-term consequences*

The long-term consequences may include mental health problems such as depression or suicidal ideation, complex PTSD, low self-esteem, substance misuse, eating disorders, and ongoing feelings of guilt and shame. SSA can also affect marital, social, and domestic relationships resulting in the victims of SSA struggling or being unable to develop and/or maintain meaningful or healthy relations. The experience can also result in increased vulnerability to experiencing physical violence within relationships and difficulty trusting other people.

Stroebel et al. (2013) make the point that both parties are likely to be adversely affected, with depression and hyper-eroticisation having been identified as consequences for children who harm as well as for those who have been harmed. Dissociation is also a normal defense mechanism employed by both abuser and victim of SSA in coping with such experiences, further causing both children to compartmentalise and underplay the impact.

### *Impact on the family*

When sibling sexual abuse comes to light, it is commonly experienced as a crisis within the family, and can affect siblings not involved in the abuse. Members may experience conflicted loyalties, shame, and denial. Such responses are best understood systemically and not in isolation from each other. The disclosure of SSA may also reawaken or bring to consciousness undisclosed trauma for other siblings caused by similar or other forms of abuse, causing the impact of SSA to be extended beyond the individual victim and their experience (Archer et al., 2020; Yates & Allardyce, 2021; Hackett et al., 2014).

### **Legal Recourse and Justice**

Legal recourse for victims is a complicated process. Legalities applied to this situation are subsumed under generic abuse laws or indeed non-existent. The adaptation of these laws often omits the seriousness or relevant contextual factors which may affect overall sentencing and judgement. The time frame and developmental age of children, as well as the singling out of one sibling above others, also mean that the case is much harder to prove and can leave the victim feel the odds are stacked against them from the outset. This in itself can be not only an obstacle to taking cases through the legal system, but also has a counterproductive

impact on the suffering of the survivor: feeding into rather than removing the consequences and ongoing experience of abuse at a wider level. Where the social legal system fails individuals, victims may turn to Shari‘ah, where there are more specific guidelines for certain forms of sexual abuse, with the hope that some sort of justice may be sought here. However, the problem here lies not only in cultural influences, which may prohibit reporting or bringing cases to light, but also in actual implementation of Shari‘ah and the related *hadd*<sup>1</sup> punishment, because this system does not exist in the majority of Muslim countries.

### Islamic Deliberations on SSA

The following is an outline of the most important deliberations and Islamic legal rules related to SSA, aiming to shed light on preventive aspects, protection of the victim, repercussions for the abuser (including potential criminal prosecution), and possible ways of healing. A complicating factor in this discussion is that older compilations of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) mention prohibited sexual intercourse (*zinā*<sup>2</sup>)—such as *zinā* with the wives of *mujāhidīn* and close relatives—as a most despicable and heinous act, but seem not to mention cases of *zinā* between siblings who are minors, nor between an adult and his/her minor sibling and coerced sexual relations between them, in the literature available to us today. Sexual abuse and sibling sexual abuse likely previously existed in Islamic societies, just as other crimes and offenses existed even in the lifetime of the Prophet (PBUH) and have taken their legal rules. SSA may have been too rare an occurrence for greater details to be available in related literature. It is, however, necessary to understand that the amplification of these crimes today is due to a changed society with changed systems and concepts. Usually, the challenge then is to find Islamic responses for problems that would not have been amplified within an Islamic framework.

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<sup>1</sup> Islamic criminal law describes as *hadd* (pl. *hudūd*) a set of clearly defined penalties for certain transgressions, such as theft, illicit sexual relations, slander, highway robbery, etc. Other transgressions that do not fulfill the stringent conditions of an implementation of *hudūd* are subject to *ta‘zīr*. *Ta‘zīr* is subject to the discretion of the head of state and could comprise anything from prison to fines.

<sup>2</sup> *Zinā* in Islamic law refers to illicit sexual relations, be they consensual or not. As neither of the English terms adultery nor fornication seem to reflect the meaning of *zinā* accurately, we decided to use the Arabic term.

## Prevention is Better than Cure – Remarks on the Islamic Social System

Rather than being a “religion” in the Western secular sense of the word, Islam is a way of life. It is therefore essential to consider the systems which, if implemented, would act as a deterrent from the commission of a crime. The Islamic social system is organized in a way to prevent illicit relations from happening—as far as possible. The Qur’an states:

{ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الرُّبَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا } (الإسراء:23)  
 {Do not even come close to illicit sexual relations *zinā*): it is verily a disgrace and a bad way.} (17:32)

This system of prevention is proactive in nature; as such, it includes general requirements for both sexes to practice general modesty in speech, attitude, and behavior. For example, both males and females are exhorted to wear modest, non-revealing clothing and to cover private parts; to avoid situations in which males and females who are non-*maḥram*<sup>3</sup> come into contact in private spheres or seclusion (*Al-Mawsū‘ah al-fiqhiyyah al-kuwaitiyyah*, 19/265ff.); and to “lower the gaze” (see Qur’an 24:30). The prohibition of pornography and/or publicly showing images of uncovered bodies of both males and females (as in films, on television, in advertising), which curbs the commodification of the human (in particular, the female) body, are additional preventive measures that foster a non-sexualised atmosphere in private and public spaces. A licentious understanding of sex education may contribute to being understood as an invitation to “try” certain practices or “normalise” Islamically illegitimate behaviour.

It is indeed the oversexualisation of society, the continuous stimulation through media, music, and the behaviour of certain celebrities and those who promote them, that all contribute to a misguided channelling of the sexual drive. In contrast, early marriage channels this human need and provides safe spaces for individuals.

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<sup>3</sup> *Maḥram*, from *ḥarama* (to forbid), are people who cannot get married to each other; these are divided into temporary and permanent *maḥram*. Permanent *maḥram* are those relatives who can under no circumstances get married (e.g., siblings, fathers and daughters, mothers, and sons), whereas temporary *maḥram* are those who are forbidden from marriage due to reasons/circumstances that may change.

However, the average age of marriage in Muslim societies has been rising continuously, due to economic, social, and sometimes legal factors (OECD, 2019). Living in extremely close quarters, with no space for privacy, and without the social and economic means to alleviate this, may contribute to the occurrence of the problem within families and households. Substance abuse (alcohol, drugs), which is prohibited in Islam, may also be a contributing factor.

Sibling sexual abuse takes place in the privacy, intimacy, and seclusion of the most protected unit of society, the core family. The physical and psychological consequences, including the betrayal of trust, may strike even harder than in other realms of society. Even here, the Islamic social system offers rules and guidelines to prevent abuse.

Children, whether of the opposite sex or the same sex, are not to share beds after the age of ten according to the majority of scholars, and from the age of seven according to some (*Al-Mawsū'ah al-fiqhiyyah al-kuwaitiyyah*, 38/33ff.), based on the Prophetic hadith narrated by al-Tirmidhi:

'Amr b. Shu'ayb reported from his father, from his grandfather (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Command your children to pray when they are seven years old, and spank them for (not offering) it when they are ten, and separate them in beds" (Tirmidhi, n.d.)

They are to be educated not to show their private parts (*'awrah*) to others, not even to their own parents and siblings, other than in cases of necessity. Personal privacy needs to be respected in the bedroom, bathroom, and locker/changing room. Studies and anecdotal evidence seem to assert that close proximity of siblings (sleeping in one room or one bed, showing themselves in revealing clothes, i.e., uncovering their *'awrah* in front of their family members) facilitates the occurrence of abuse<sup>4</sup> (Şaqar, 2011, 1/89).

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<sup>4</sup> A note may be warranted here to avoid misunderstandings: Wearing revealing clothes is not an excuse for sexual aggression, nor does it transfer the responsibility to the victim. It may however contribute to a sexualized atmosphere that facilitates the occurrence of abuse. Islamic law has clearly defined which parts of—both male and female—bodies should remain covered in which settings, and the wisdom behind these rules is indicated in the fact that

These protective mechanisms provided by the intricate interaction of Islamic legal rules and concepts do not, however, necessarily exist in contemporary Muslim-majority societies or among Muslim communities in majority non-Muslim societies. This is due to the influence of non-Islamic rules and concepts, compounded by ignorance or neglect of the Islamic rules, as well as to socio-economic factors the individual cannot change. It is, however, necessary to understand that the amplification of sexual abuse, including SSA, is due to a changed society with changed systems and concepts.

Islamic law contains stringent regulations for transgressions of sexual relations. The following is a basic outline of the most important related rules, generally reflecting the majority view of Muslim scholars of different schools, and an attempt to provide a framework for Islamic evaluations on SSA. Sexual relations are permissible within a legally concluded marriage that is subject to certain conditions; among them, that both partners are legally responsible and have entered into the marriage contract according to their free will: that is, no party is coerced. Certain relationships (by bloodline or breastfeeding) exclude eligibility of marriage; marriage is for instance not permissible between aunts and nephews, uncles and nieces, or siblings. As mentioned earlier, people who are prohibited from marrying each other due to family or foster bonds are referred to as *mahram*.

Sexual relations outside of wedlock are prohibited, even if by mutual consent. Adultery is considered to be a crime and a major sin. Muslim scholars define *zinā* as intentional sexual vaginal intercourse without an existing marriage bond, the Hanbali school adds anal intercourse to the list. (Abdallah, 2022, p. 198) Homosexual relations are, regardless of consent or coercion, regarded as a punishable crime (*Al-Mawsū'ah al-fiqhiyyah al-kuwaitiyyah*, 35/339).

Coercion in sexual relations as in rape and child sexual abuse is illegitimate and punishable by law. The understanding of coercion includes any factor that may influence consent and free will, such as sleep, insaneness, minor age, thirst, hunger, or other forms of pressure (Abdallah, 2022, p. 203). Rape of a female is automatically considered

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they are different for different settings and circumstances. Abuse, however, can also happen even if this precaution has been taken.

*zinā* (scholars presume that rape happens outside of wedlock), while rape of a male (by a male) is punishable under the crime of *liwāṭ*, homosexuality.<sup>5</sup> A rape victim is not to be punished for the crime of adultery and has not acquired any sin. According to Maliki law, the rapist will be punished by *ḥadd* as well as ordered to pay *ṣadāq* to the rape victim, a compensation that is to be paid in cases of doubtful intercourse with a woman eligible for marriage;<sup>6</sup> this would however not apply to minors (Abdallah, 2022, p. 200).

Cases of sexual abuse within the family are generally referred to under the general term *zinā al-maḥārim* (“illicit sexual relations between close family members”). Islamic law generally regards incest (sexual relations between people who are *maḥram* and cannot legitimately marry) as a crime that weighs heavier than “common” cases of *zinā* (*Al-Mawsū‘ah al-fiqhiyyah al-kuwaitiyyah*, 24/20). Some scholars (among them Imam Ahmed b. Hanbal) stipulate that the perpetrator of this crime be executed, be he currently or previously legally married and having consummated the marriage (*muḥṣan*) or not (non-*muḥṣan*, *bikr*), while others decree that the penalty is that of *zinā*, with a distinction between a *muḥṣan* and non-*muḥṣan* person (‘Afānah, 2010, 17/5). This is the case even with mutual consent, as Islamic law does not consider consent to a crime as an excuse. Sexual abuse of (minor) relatives may weigh even heavier due to the infliction of coercion, the complete breaking of trust with the ultimately vulnerable.

### **Possible Legal Repercussions of SSA under Shari‘ah**

Sexual abuse, child sexual abuse (by strangers, family, or “friends”) and sibling sexual abuse are criminal offenses. Islamic rules for their prosecution are stringent, but criminal prosecution requires a number of conditions that are (purposefully) difficult to meet.

Islamic law differentiates between different criminal offenses that may apply in cases of sibling abuse. The most general term is *zinā*:

<sup>5</sup> Female homosexuality (*ṣiḥāq*) is considered to be a grave sin but does not count as *zinā* and is therefore not subject to *ḥadd* punishment (*Al-Mawsū‘ah al-fiqhiyyah al-kuwaitiyyah*, 24/19f).

<sup>6</sup> *Ṣadāq* for cases of ‘doubtful intercourse’ can be applied where there is doubt about an existing marriage bond; it may be extended to a rape victim as a form of punishment for the perpetrator/ compensation for her injury.

illicit sexual intercourse between a male and a female who are not bound by a legal marriage. The penal system differentiates between a perpetrator who is or has been married before (*muḥṣan*) and someone who is not and has never been married before (*bikr, ghayr muḥṣan*; a number of other conditions apply, see *Al-Mawsū'ah al-fiqhiyyah al-kuwaitiyyah*, 2/220ff.). While the former is punished by stoning to death (*rajm*) under fulfilment of stringent conditions, the latter is to be punished by flogging (100 stripes of the whip) and alienation for a year (*Al-Mawsū'ah al-fiqhiyyah al-kuwaitiyyah*, 24/22). Both penalties come under *ḥadd* punishments; they require the presence of four absolutely trustworthy eyewitnesses who have seen the perpetration themselves, or the confession of the mentally capable adult perpetrator, or the occurrence of pregnancy in an unmarried woman, as indicator to the crime.

Given that *zinā* is a crime that is rarely committed in public and in the presence of morally upright witnesses, the criteria for *ḥadd* punishment are very difficult to meet. However, the head of state may adopt different, less stringent punishments (*ta'zīr*) for these (and other) crimes if the conditions to implement *ḥadd* punishments are not met. The difference between adultery/fornication and rape in terms of criminal prosecution is the additional aspect of coercion (generally being exerted by the male on the female). It is within the jurisdiction of the Islamic authorities to decide on the nature of the additional punishment for coercion, which may go as far as the punishment for highway robbery (*ḥirābah*), or major disturbance of public order. If the sexual intercourse is of (male) homosexual nature, the term *liwāṭ* applies; and again, the factor of coercion needs to be taken into account (*Al-Mawsū'ah al-fiqhiyyah al-kuwaitiyyah*, 35/246ff.).

### **Considerations around Criminal Prosecution of SSA under Islamic Law**

With regard to sibling sexual abuse, a number of complicating factors come into play.

For criminal prosecution, the perpetrator needs to be legally responsible, meaning that he/she has reached the age of puberty and possesses complete active legal capacity (*ahliyat al-adā'*; *Al-Mawsū'ah al-fiqhiyyah al-kuwaitiyyah*, 7/160), combining physical with mental maturity. Generally, *fiqh* scholars take the onset of puberty as an

indicator of legal maturity. The onset of puberty also coincides with the emergence of sexual drive; in other words, an adolescent capable of sexual intercourse (and sexual abuse) is also fully legally accountable under Islamic law. A child abuser at the age of discernment (*tamyīz*, generally estimated from the age of seven, but in some individuals earlier) is basically able to differentiate between right and wrong and may be subject to educational measures for transgressions, but not to criminal prosecution. On the victim's side, the statement of a minor child may not be valid in court, but indicators (DNA samples) may be used to come to a *ta'zīr* punishment. This is with regard to court decisions.

The Islamic legal system has some crucial guidelines that are applicable here. First, the default state of any person is the absence of guilt; second, *ḥadd* shall not be applied in case of doubt. Just as the victim of a crime deserves protection, innocent people deserve protection from prosecution for crimes they have not committed. In this context, to protect people generally from illicit slander in which they are falsely said to have committed a crime such as (particularly) *zinā*, there is a punishment for this form of slander (*qadhaf*) amounting to 80 stripes of the whip in combination with cancelling their suitability to serve as witness—forever (*Al-Mawsū'ah al-fiqhiyyah al-kuwaitiyyah*, 33/13).

However, not every case may be decided or even brought forward to the authorities. This in no way absolves the responsible parent or legal guardian from their responsibility of taking action in the matter. Parents should be alert about the behavior and interactions of their children, and take immediate action if they suspect sexual (or other kinds of) abuse. While it is correct that family bonds (*ṣilat al-rahim*) should be maintained, priority should be given to the protection of the victim. Alienation of the abuser from the household could be such a protection. Alienation could take different forms, such as sending him/her away from the home to a safe place where nobody else is endangered, or for adult abusers, even to prison (*Al-Mawsū'ah al-fiqhiyyah al-kuwaitiyyah*, 41/122). While the specified time for alienation of the unmarried adulterer (after whipping) is a year, the authorities could order a longer term. For *ta'zīr* punishments, there is no specified time in the legislative sources (41/125). The concept of alienating the abuser from the victim, meaning removing him/her from the household, needs to

be accompanied by therapeutic and educational measures. Abusers are very often victims themselves (DeLong & Reichert, 2019). Measures need to be taken to break this cycle.

Islam advises the perpetrator of a crime to repent (*tawbah*). Repenting has different aspects: abstaining from repeating the sin/wrongdoing ever again, accepting (and even actively seeking) punishment by self-incrimination (which is mainly applicable to adults who committed *hadd* transgressions), amending the wrong if possible, and asking Allah for forgiveness. As for the victim and his/her relatives, they may forgive the abuser if they decide it is helpful in the healing process. This may very much depend on the gravity and circumstances of the perpetration(s). The system of retaliation (*qiṣās*), which applies in the prosecution of certain criminal acts (e.g., homicide or intentional injury), gives the victim or his/her family the choice (after a proper court verdict) to inflict the same damage on the perpetrator that he has inflicted, or to accept compensation (*diyāh*), or to forgive him/her altogether. As the decision lies with the victim and/or their family, a process of coming to terms with the traumatic experience can start here. Islam has shown a way to give the victim a voice and leverage in the perpetrator's punishment. Just how far these mechanisms can be implemented in cases of SSA is, again, subject to the decision of an Islamic authority. *Qiṣās* generally applies in cases of injury and would not be legislated in rape or sexual abuse cases, unless for other inflicted injuries.

Social pressure should not be exerted on the victim to “forgive and forget” for the sake of the social reputation of the family or their “peace of mind.” Uncovering a crime, even within the family, should not be made taboo at the expense of the victim. In the absence of Islamic criminal prosecution, the least a family can provide is protection of the victim through alienation of the perpetrator, removing the abuser from the family space to make it safe.

It ought to be mentioned that, unfortunately, legislation in present-day Muslim-majority countries sometimes diametrically opposes the Islamic legal rule. To offer the perpetrator of rape, for instance, impunity if he legally marries the victim is cruelly cynical and will lead to further psychological harm to the survivor. The same needs to be said when a woman reports a rape only to find herself prosecuted for adultery/fornication. It is also not a solution to try and replace an Islamic criminal

court by “taking justice into their own hands.” These counterproductive regulations and, sometimes, customs, have no basis in Islamic law and culture.

The solution should be to strive to return to Islamic justice and societal systems, rather than inflicting even more harm on individuals, their communities, or society.

### **Conclusion: The Dilemma for SSA Survivors and their Families**

As indicated in the foregoing discussion, survivors and their families are left with a dilemma. Little is known about the actual prevalence of SSA, mainly because a number of social as well as professional barriers restrict reporting. This is coupled with complex legal frameworks and limited implementation of *Shari’ah*. Nevertheless, we can infer that very little support is available to victims and their families, which forces them to endure the damaging consequences of SSA throughout their lives. The question remains, where can these survivors turn for justice?

The abuser, on the other hand, needs to be taken care of in a way that assures he/she does not fall into the same abusive pattern again. Criminal prosecution, even if applied, is only a part of this. The Prophet (PBUH) recommended helping the oppressor by preventing them from oppressing others (al-Bukhari, n.d.). Abusers need to be prevented from falling into the same pattern ever again.

It is difficult to resolve a complex issue such as SSA within an Islamic (legal) framework. Societies in the Islamic world today have gone through changes in legal systems and societal makeup, which makes Islamic solutions appear to be a mismatch for contemporary problems, as the very framework and foundations to tackle them are not activated.

Allah says:

(وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَىٰ)

{Whoever turns away from the remembrance of Me (Allah) lives an abominable life, and We will resurrect him in a state of blindness on the Day of Judgment.} (Qur’an, 20:124)

On a general level, the best protection against these crimes is to take the preventive measures mentioned in the beginning. Children and

others in vulnerable groups should be made aware of permissible and impermissible ways of being touched; an atmosphere of trust should be built between parents and children so that children are able to confide in their parents.

If the abuser has confessed to his crime, and in the absence of Islamic criminal punishment, he/she should be separated from the family and not allowed access to the safe family space, in order to protect the victim(s). Other members of society should be made aware of SSA and the factors that may lead to its occurrence, so as to be able to protect their children. Caution is advised to ensure protection for vulnerable groups and individuals while not barring the abuser from the short- and long-term assistance he/she will need to break the cycle and prevent recurrence. The case becomes far more complicated with children who grew up keeping the abuse to themselves or being unaware that what happened to them actually was abuse. Confronting or calling out the abuser after years have passed is possible, because in Islamic law there is no statute of limitations for crimes, even if a criminal prosecution at this stage may not be possible (unless the abuser belatedly confesses to his/her crimes). Whether it does assist the healing process and would potentially bring about justice needs to be carefully evaluated by therapist and victim. The various possible scenarios need to be thoroughly assessed before action is taken.

Although the individual is responsible for his/her actions, the onus is on society, its social and legal systems, and those in charge of them, to find solutions. SSA should not be constructed as an individual problem to be solved by individuals in the first place. Solutions need to be found that prevent these crimes from happening and offer protection and healing to the victim and their families, without causing further disintegration to society.

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# Developing *Sharī‘ah*-Compliant Asset Pricing Model in the Framework of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* and Islamic Wealth Management

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**Abstract:** This article offers a conceptual framework for developing the *Sharī‘ah*-Compliant Asset Pricing Model (SCAPM) using the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* and Islamic Wealth Management (IWM). This article also provides a new perspective on finding Islamic financial benchmarks as an alternative to conventional financial benchmarks in the Islamic finance industry. This research was conducted using a qualitative research method with deep reference to published journal articles and books in the fields of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah*, Islamic Wealth Management, and asset pricing model. As a measure of the expected minimum rate of return in an asset pricing model, this article proposes the fulfilment of basic necessities (*darūriyyāt*) and zakāt rate as proxy for investors’ required rate of return. This study acknowledges both systematic and non-systematic risk’s effects on asset pricing.

**Keywords:** *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah*, *Sharī‘ah* compliant, asset-pricing model

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini menyediakan rangkakerja konseptual untuk membangun Model Harga Aset Patuh Syariah menggunakan *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah*. Kajian ini juga memberikan perspektif baharu dalam mencari penanda aras kewangan

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Islam sebagai alternatif kepada penanda aras kewangan konvensional dalam industri kewangan Islam. Penyelidikan ini dijalankan menggunakan kaedah kajian kualitatif dengan rujukan mendalam kepada artikel jurnal dan buku terbitan dalam bidang *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, Pengurusan Kekayaan Islam, dan model Penentuan Harga Aset. Sebagai ukuran jangkaan kadar pulangan minimum dalam model penetapan harga aset, artikel ini mencadangkan inflasi sebagai proksi untuk memenuhi keperluan asas pelabur dan Zakāt sebagai proses pembersihan dan pengagihan kekayaan dalam Pengurusan Kekayaan Islam. Kajian ini mengambil kira kedua-dua kesan risiko sistematik dan tidak sistematik terhadap penentuan harga aset.

**Kata kunci:** *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, patuh syari'ah, model penentuan harga aset

## Introduction

The relationship between the expected return and risk in investment has an important role in a financial decision and lies at the heart of financial management. In Islamic finance, this relationship is governed by the principles of risk and return sharing, wherein investors share both the risks and potential profits of an investment. This stands in contrast to conventional finance, where investors typically expect fixed rates of return. This unique risk-return relationship serves as the theoretical foundation for the development of *Sharī'ah-Compliant Asset Pricing Model (SCAPM)* for investment in the Islamic financial industry (Selim, 2008; Sadaf, 2014; and Hazny et al., 2020).

It is interesting to note that classical Islamic literature has discussed the connection between return and risk in investment. In this context, *Majallāt al-Aḥkām al-'Adliyyah*, the Ottoman Empire's civil code from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, outlines the principle of *al-ghunm bil ghurm* as one of the *Sharī'ah* legal maxims. This principle, detailed in article 87, states that an investor, as the owner of the underlying asset, activity, or capital, must bear market risk and ownership risk in order to earn a return on his investment (Abdullah, 2022). To manage assets effectively, investors must assess risk factors alongside expected returns. Understanding the relationship between return and risk, guided by principles of *al-ghunm bil ghurm*, enables informed decision-making for achieving expected returns.

However, it must be admitted that in the modern era of empirical literacy, Islamic finance has lagged behind conventional finance due to

a lack of data and research, standardisation, government support and regulation, specialised human resources, and its small global market share. This is evident in the evolution of financial theories and models. In conventional finance, to elaborate the relationship between return and risk in investment, Sharpe (1964), Lintner (1965), and Mossin (1966) have developed a famous asset pricing model known as the Capital Asset Pricing Model (CAPM). This model simplifies the relationship between return and risk, expressing expected return as the sum of the risk-free rate and the market risk premium, offering a quantitative measure of risk-adjusted return.

The CAPM has been widely adopted in both conventional finance and Islamic finance due to its practicality and ease of use. While scholars such as Selim (2008), Hakim et al. (2016), and Jabeen & Kausar (2021) have explored its applicability in Islamic finance, its integration into the industry remains a topic of debate. As a demand-side model seeking to maximise investor utility, the CAPM poses challenges in Islamic finance due to *Sharī'ah* compliance requirements. Given Islamic finance's emphasis on ethical investments and prohibition of interest-based transactions, a thorough examination of CAPM assumptions from a *Sharī'ah* perspective is imperative.

According to Reilly and Brown (2003), the key assumptions of the CAPM can be summarised as follows: investors can borrow or lend at the risk-free rate, investors have homogeneous future return expectations, all investments share the same time horizon, no taxes or transaction costs exist, investors can freely trade portions of holdings, no inflation or interest rate changes, and capital markets are in equilibrium with fairly priced investments. While most assumptions in conventional CAPM align with Islamic finance principles, the first, concerning the risk-free rate, conflicts with interest prohibition. While certain adjustments and refinements may be necessary to address specific Islamic finance principles and market dynamics, the fundamental assumptions underlying CAPM do not contradict the core principles of Islamic finance. Recognising the compatibility of these assumptions with Islamic finance principles enables researchers and practitioners to further develop *Sharī'ah*-Compliant Asset Pricing Model, tailoring it to reflect the unique characteristics and ethical considerations of Islamic financial markets.

Investors utilise a risk-free rate as the baseline for minimum expected return with zero risk over a specific period. Some Muslim scholars perceive this rate, often based on government securities' interest rates, as closely resembling *ribā* (*usury*), which is strictly prohibited in Islamic law. Therefore, a securities model with a risk-free rate component is considered *Shari'ah* non-compliant (Sadaf & Andleeb, 2014). Some Muslim scholars tolerate using interest rates as a benchmark in Islamic finance, given the industry's relatively small share of the global financial market despite its growth and development. Meera et al. (2010) argue that, because of that small portion and its co-existence with well-developed conventional finance, the Islamic finance industry is obliged to use the benchmark of the formal conventional market in which they operate. Hearn et al. (2011) mentioned that due to the narrow focus on Islamic finance, there is limited literature on the roles and principles of Islamic stock markets.

This article argues that using interest rates as benchmarks in Islamic finance should be avoided if alternative options are available. The prohibition of *ribā* (*usury*) forms the fundamental rationale against such benchmarking (Kantakji & O'haj, 2012). Conventional interest rates, according to Naik (2006), are inappropriate as benchmarks for profit rates in Islamic finance due to differing concepts and philosophical, accounting, and contractual bases. Pricing Islamic finance products based on conventional interest rates is considered unfair given the varying prices of different commodities in daily life. Pricing financial securities remains a prominent topic of discussion (Ahmed et al., 2014), with ongoing debate among Islamic scholars due to differing perspectives (Salman, 2014).

One of the resolutions issued by Fiqh Academy under OIC in its 8th Conference on Currencies Issues, held in Jeddah 18-19 Shawwal, 10-11 April 1993, urges to promptly create a benchmark that is acceptable from the *Shari'ah* perspective as an alternative to interest-based rates to determine the profit margins. Usmani (2007) urges Islamic financial institutions to discontinue this practice immediately. First, he argues that using interest rates as a benchmark for *ḥalāl* business is undesirable. Secondly, it does not advance the basic philosophy of the Islamic economy, thereby making no impact on the system of distribution. Moving forward, Islamic finance, which is inherently different from the conventional system, needs its own benchmarks, yet progress across

jurisdictions necessitates time and sustained efforts, remaining a future agenda for stakeholders in the industry.

In the context of benchmarking in Islamic finance, the ongoing debate over interest rates highlights the necessity for a comprehensive and *Sharī'ah*-compliant approach in developing asset pricing models. Previous studies of the SCAPM (Ashker, 1987; Shaikh, 2009; Hanif, 2011; Hazny et al., 2020) have focused on replacing the risk-free rate without thoroughly examining Islamic theory and principles as benchmarks. This article proposes integrating *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* into SCAPM, addressing gaps in previous research, thus laying a pivotal foundation for its advancement. Firstly, it emphasises understanding the essence of the risk-free rate before proposing substitutes, ensuring subsequent advancements are well-grounded. Secondly, it critically evaluates previous substitutes, paving the way for more nuanced alternatives aligned with Islamic finance principles. Thirdly, by integrating *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, it fosters sustainable Islamic finance development, emphasising ethical decision-making. This incorporation into the risk-return trade-off framework forms a robust basis for future advancements in the field.

To strengthen the position of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* as a grounded theory, a contemporary practical approach to Islamic finance is needed. Within the realm of investments, the most relevant contemporary approach is Islamic Wealth Management (Anggraini, 2020), reflecting a harmonious alignment between financial practices and the broader goals of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. Islamic Wealth Management, guided by the principles of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, delivers investment decisions that comply with Islamic finance principles and contribute to the well-being and development of individuals and society.

One of the objectives of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* is the preservation of wealth (*hifz al mal*), emphasising responsible and ethical investment practices. Islamic Wealth Management avoids investments in activities prohibited in Islam and adheres to risk-sharing principles. Additionally, the equitable distribution of wealth (*qasḍ al-nafs*) is promoted through practices such as *zakāt* and charitable giving, contributing to a more just and fair economic system. Economic stability and the well-being of society (*hifz al-'umr*) are prioritised, encouraging investments that positively impact economic development while avoiding speculative

or exploitative practices. Unlawful transactions (*ḥarām*), such as usury and excessive uncertainty, are strictly avoided in *Sharīʿah*-compliant investments. Social justice (*ʿadl*) is a fundamental principle, and Islamic Wealth Management fosters investment decision making that contribute to the betterment of society, emphasising economic development and inclusivity.

Therefore, in this article, we aim to elaborate deeper into the SCAPM by constructing a framework that emphasises the connection between return and risk utilising the theory in Islamic finance known as *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah* ground principle and Islamic Wealth Management (IWM) approach. By using this theory and approach, the development of the SCAPM would involve tracing the origins of Islamic principles and concepts as the initial benchmark. This would ensure that the model is based on a thorough understanding of Islamic finance and investment, which would result in a more robust and accurate model. This would also provide a sense of authenticity to the model, which would increase its acceptability among the Muslim community.

From the Muslim investor point of view, the goal of SCAPM application is achieving *al-falāḥ*, which can be translated as well-being, prosperity or welfare in the world and Hereafter. By integrating the concept of *al-maṣāliḥ al-ʿāmmah*, or public interest, in addition to financial considerations, SCAPM can promote an ethical and holistic approach to investing, fairness and justice, resulting in the well-being of both investors and society. The model would have a strong emphasis on social responsibility, which would ensure that a portion of the wealth generated is used for the benefit of society and aligns with the principle of wealth distribution.

This article aims to shed light on the significance of the importance of incorporating the principles of *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah* ground principle and the Islamic Wealth Management approach into the development of the SCAPM. In addition to providing theoretical insights, this research will also explore practical applications of the model, with a specific focus on its potential benefits for Muslim stakeholders within the Islamic financial industry. Through this examination, the article aims to contribute to the development of a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to investment management that aligns with Islamic ethical principles.

## Literature Review

### *Maqāšid al-Sharī'ah*

*Maqāšid al-Sharī'ah* refers to the objectives of Islamic law. The term 'maqāšid' (plural: *maqāšid*) denotes a purpose, objective, principle, intent, goal, or end (Ibn Ashur, 2006). Abu Hamid al-Ghazali classified these objectives under 'unrestricted interests' in his work *al-Mustafa fi Ilm al-Uṣul* (d. 505 AH/1111 CE). Al-Qarafi further linked *maṣlaḥah* and *maqāšid* by a fundamental rule stating that a purpose is valid only if it leads to the fulfilment of some good or the avoidance of mischief. 'Sharī'ah' denotes the rules and provisions revealed by Allah through Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), forming the foundation of the Islamic worldview and system of ethics (Elahi & Alam, 2022). *Maqāšid al-Sharī'ah* serves as the pillar of the Islamic financial system, enhancing justice and well-being for stakeholders at both macro and micro levels (Soualhi, 2015). Islamic economics aims to cultivate a real economy, trading in tangible assets and providing returns proportional to risk.

This article uses the *Maqāšid al-Sharī'ah* rationale established by Abu al-Ma'ali al-Juwayni (d. 478 AH/1085 CE), further developed by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 505 AH/1111 CE) and Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi (d. 790 AH/1388 CE). *Maqāšid al-Sharī'ah* encompasses three categories: (1) necessities (*ḍarūriyyāt*), crucial for religious and worldly affairs, requiring protection to prevent chaos; (2) needs (*ḥājjiyyāt*), neglected interests leading to individual or community hardship; and (3) luxury/complementary (*taḥsīniyyāt*), improving desired aspects of life, whose loss may not disrupt daily life but diminishes comfort.

Under the category of necessities (*ḍarūriyyāt*), as depicted in Figure 1, Al-Ghazali introduced the term 'preservation' and prioritised the necessities suggested by al-Juwayni as follows: (1) preservation of faith/religion, (2) preservation of soul/life, (3) preservation of mind, (4) preservation of offspring/lineage, and (5) preservation of wealth. These five essentials ensure the stability of worldly welfare and security in the Hereafter (Auda, 2011). Understanding *Maqāšid al-Sharī'ah* entails recognising Islam's goal of achieving success in both worldly and the hereafter (*al-falāḥ*) within the framework of Islamic *Sharī'ah* law. *Maqāšid al-Sharī'ah* provides a foundational framework for Islamic finance, guiding the industry's ethical and moral standards (Malik et al.,

2021). It aims to protect social order, promote human well-being, and preserve core community principles (El-Mesawi, 2006).

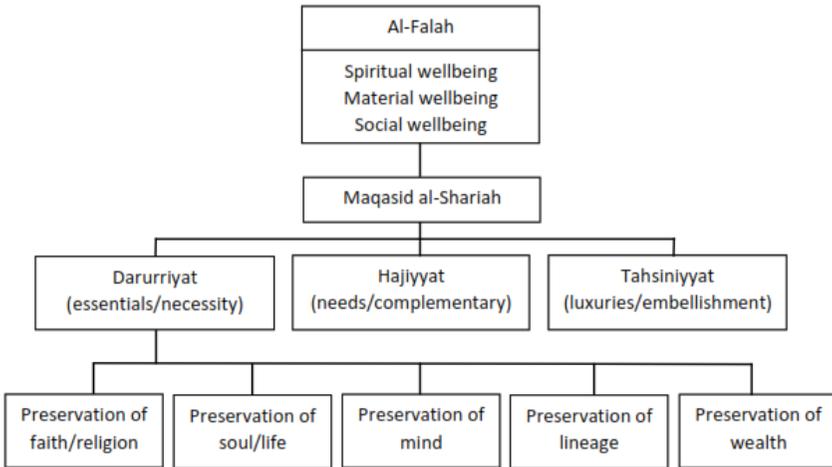


Figure 1: Level of necessities in *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*.  
[Source: Adopted from Auda (2011)]

In the context of Islamic finance, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* plays a pivotal role in shaping financial products, regulatory guidelines, and ethical standards, providing a framework for understanding its objectives and principles governing transactions (Qoyum, 2018). It guides stakeholders in navigating complexities, promoting values advocated by *Sharī'ah*, and shaping regulatory guidelines and ethical standards for socially responsible financial practices. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* utilisation in discussing Islamic finance is driven by various factors, including its role in determining benefits and harms, understanding the various levels of *Sharī'ah* objectives, priorities, and categories, facilitating legal reasoning, and serving as a gateway for analogical decisions (Al-Ayubi & Halawatuddu'a, 2021).

*Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* has received significant attention in the field of Islamic finance, with numerous studies adopting it as a regulatory framework for financial institutions, policy-making, economic development, performance measurement, evaluation of social performance, product design, and product assessment (Arshad et al., 2018; Alziyadat & Ahmed, 2019; Hamidi & Worthington, 2018; Laela

et. al., 2018; Qoyum, 2018; Julia & Kassim, 2020; Ramli et al., 2019; Mohammed et al., 2020; Tarique et al., 2021). These studies highlight the importance of incorporating *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in various aspects of Islamic finance, from the formulation of policies and products to the evaluation of social and economic performance.

Considering social sustainability poses a growing challenge in Islamic finance (Tarique et al., 2021). In this article, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* guides SCAPM development to integrate social sustainability into asset pricing models. SCAPM, thus formulated, serves as an educational tool for promoting ethical and socially responsible financial practices (Julia & Kassim, 2020). This incorporation of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* is crucial for fostering ethical and socially beneficial financial practices in Islamic finance (Malik et al., 2021). It ensures alignment with Islamic law objectives, contributing to societal well-being (Rosly, 2010), and positions SCAPM to significantly impact the future of Islamic finance, promoting compliance with *Sharī'ah* while upholding moral and social responsibility (Hasan et al., 2016).

However, while integrating *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* into the development of SCAPM is crucial, it presents several challenges, highlighting the need for a conceptual framework to guide its application. Such a framework provides insight into how scholars identify objectives, how Islamic financial institutions implement them, and how consumers adhere to them. Balancing the diverse objectives of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* while creating a practical and effective asset pricing model can be complex (Shahwan, 2014). It is also essential to ensure that SCAPM remains adaptable to changing economic and financial conditions for its long-term success (Qoyum, 2018). Drawing from the normative foundations and essential elements of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, this article aims to offer a framework that facilitates the development of SCAPM aligned with its principles as an Islamic ground principle.

### ***Islamic Wealth Management***

To implement *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in economic activities, Muslim scholars linked it with Islamic Wealth Management (IWM) (Nasr, 2015; Basah & Tahir, 2019; Budiantoro & Larasati, 2020; Mahmud et al., 2021). IWM is a holistic approach to asset management that adheres to *Sharī'ah* law and promotes social responsibility. As can be seen

in Figure 2, it encompasses five stages in the wealth cycle: creation/accumulation, consumption, purification, distribution, and protection (Al-Faizin & Akbar, 2018). IWM ensures that all economic activities and investments comply with Islamic finance principles (Ibrahim et al., 2014; Bedoui & Mansour, 2015), emphasizing the preservation of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* fundamentals and objectives.

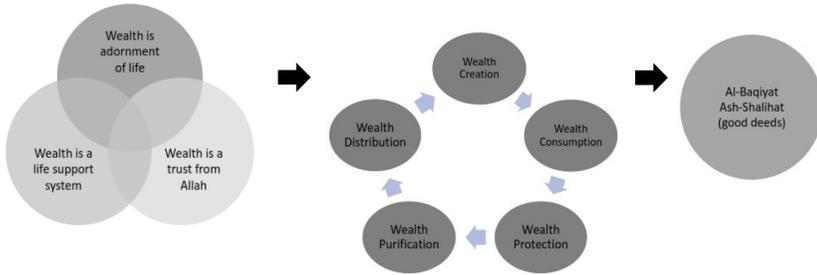


Figure 2: Model of Islamic Wealth Management.  
[Source: Adopted from Al-Faizin & Akbar (2018)]

In Islamic thought, wealth, as defined by the Shafi'iyyah, Malikiyyah, and Hanabilah schools of thought, encompasses all valuable things. Its value is determined by its process and the final product or service it provides. Islamic teachings stress socially responsible wealth use and distribution, promising rewards in both this world and the Hereafter. Muslims believe that everything belongs to Allah, and humans are mere caretakers of the wealth bestowed upon them. Allah is the absolute owner of everything, including wealth, and humans are entrusted with it to please Allah through good deeds. Hence, wealth plays a critical role in human life, necessary for fulfilling human needs.

Islamic Wealth Management (IWM) and SCAPM are closely linked in *Sharī'ah*-compliant investments. IWM demands adherence to *Sharī'ah* principles, necessitating that any asset pricing model in Islamic finance incorporates ethical and legal aspects like the prohibition of *ribā*, *gharār*, *maysir*, *ghabn*, and *ḥarām* activities. SCAPM, in particular, requires a comprehensive understanding of Islamic finance's unique features, including profit and loss-sharing and the role of risk-sharing. Additionally, the model must consider the social and environmental impact of investments, along with wealth distribution and protection

throughout the IWM cycle, such as investing in socially responsible activities and ensuring equitable returns.

***Sharī'ah-Compliant Asset Pricing Model (SCAPM)***

The Capital Asset Pricing Model (CAPM) determines the required rate of return on an investment, asserting that the expected return equals the risk-free rate plus a risk-based premium. Developed from the Modern Portfolio Theory (MPT) in the 1960s, refined by scholars like Sharpe, Treynor, Lintner, and Mossin, it emphasises systematic risk as the primary consideration for investors. While widely used in conventional and Islamic finance, CAPM encounters challenges in Islamic finance due to its reliance on the risk-free rate, associated with *ribā (usury)*. Additionally, its focus on maximising returns without ensuring fairness and equity contradicts the principles central to Islamic finance. Thus, using CAPM in Islamic finance may be problematic as it may not fully align with Islamic financial practices' principles of fairness and equity.

Muslim scholars have attempted to adapt the conventional CAPM model by substituting the interest-based risk-free rate with *Sharī'ah*-compliant variables. Subekti and Rosadi (2020) introduced and summarised these adjustments, as presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** The Development of *Sharī'ah*-Compliant Asset Pricing Model

Models	Variables	Authors
SCAPM-1	Market Risk Premium (MRP)	Cyril & Karim (1987)
SCAPM-2	Zakāt and MRP	Ashker (1987)
SCAPM-3	NGDP and MRP	Shaikh (2009)
SCAPM-4	Inflation Rate and MRP	Hanif (2011)
SCAPM-5	Sukuk rate and MRP	Hakim et al. (2016)
SCAPM-6	Sukuk rate and MRP with zakāt purification	Hazny et al. (2020)

Source: Adopted from Subekti and Rosadi (2020)

The table above illustrates five SCAPM development models spanning from 1987 to 2020. SCAPM-1, introduced by Cyril and Karim in 1987, employs the CAPM without the interest rate. Subsequently, scholars sought to replace the risk-free rate with *Sharī'ah*-compliant

factors. For instance, Ashker's SCAPM-2 (1987) uses the *zakāt* rate, while Shaikh's SCAPM-3 incorporates the national gross domestic product (NGDP). Hanif introduced SCAPM-4, integrating the inflation rate, while Hazny et al. (2020) developed SCAPM-5, substituting the risk-free rate with the sukuk rate and incorporating *zakāt*. These models have advanced SCAPM's suitability for Islamic finance. However, most of these developments replaced the risk-free rate without considering the origin of Islamic principles and concepts as the primary source.

Ashker (1987) proposed substituting the *zakāt* rate as a substitute for the risk-free rate in SCAPM. However, *zakāt* may not be suitable as it does not represent the minimum expected rate of return in investment decisions, unlike the risk-free rate, which reflects individual investment goals and preferences. *Zakāt* primarily serves wealth purification and distribution objectives, not aligning directly with investors' financial goals and risk tolerance. Sheikh (2009) suggested substituting Nominal Gross Domestic Product (NGDP) for the risk-free rate in asset pricing models. While NGDP reflects overall economic health, it fails to represent the minimum expected rate of return in individual investment decisions and lacks consideration of Islamic ground principles essential in Islamic finance

Hanif (2011) proposed substituting the inflation rate for the risk-free rate, highlighting its similarity to technical asset valuation models in the conventional framework. However, this model lacks reference to Islamic ground principles, making it less comprehensive by neglecting social obligations and responsibilities inherent in Islamic investment. Using inflation alone does not fully consider the ethical and religious dimensions emphasised in Islamic teachings, such as the obligation to purify wealth and the social responsibility of wealth distribution. Substituting sukuk rates for the risk-free rate in the SCAPM framework (Hazny et al., 2020) has limitations. Although sukuk rates closely resemble the risk-free rate, they offer a narrow scope, primarily focusing on Islamic bonds and excluding other *Shari'ah*-compliant asset classes. Moreover, relying solely on sukuk rates may create expectations of specific returns, which may not align with the unpredictable nature of financial markets and may lead to expectations of predetermined returns.

Based on the discussion of previous studies on SCAPM above, this article aims to develop SCAPM from an Islamic perspective, addressing

a gap in previous research by focusing on Islamic ground principles that can serve as the basis for further development in determining the measurement and proxy, rather than simply seeking a replacement for the risk-free rate. Challenges in SCAPM implementation in the capital market include difficulties in agreeing on expected rates of return, crucial for establishing benchmarks. The delayed development of SCAPM compared to conventional CAPM requires acceleration for practical application. Empirical proof of SCAPM application, for example, in the development of behavioural finance or time-varying markets, is lacking. Using *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* offers alternative solutions and opens discussions for benchmarking, fostering further development. This article proposes using *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and the Islamic Wealth Management (IWM) approach to formulate the SCAPM framework comprehensively.

### ***Methodology of Conceptual Framework***

This study adheres to Jabareen's (2009) approach in constructing the conceptual framework, which is referred to as a grounded theory technique. The procedure for conceptual framework analysis entails several phases: (1) Mapping selected data sources involves mapping the spectrum of multidisciplinary literature on the phenomenon, identifying text types, and other data sources, ensuring comprehensive data collection for validity, (2) Extensive reading and categorising of selected data aim to categorise data by discipline and importance within each discipline. Recognising the imperative nature of incorporating *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* into SCAPM, the IWM approach was identified as a crucial bridge to offer a comprehensive understanding of Islamic finance and investing. This phase necessitated the identification of specific *Sharī'ah*-compliant components in alignment with the principles of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and the IWM approach, encompassing wealth creation, consumption, purification, distribution, and protection; (3) Identifying and naming concepts involves reading and rereading data to "discover" concepts, allowing them to emerge from the literature, (4) Deconstructing and categorising concepts includes identifying main attributes, characteristics, assumptions, and roles, organising concepts based on features and ontological, epistemological, and methodological roles; (5) Integrating concepts aims to group similar concepts into a new one, reducing their number; (6) Synthesis, resynthesis, and making sense involve iterative processes until a coherent theoretical framework

emerges, involved presenting the constituents of the proposed framework in both narrative and graphic forms, drawing inspiration from the methodology outlined by Miles & Huberman (1994). This dual presentation method offers a multi-dimensional understanding of the framework's components, elucidating the intricate connections and dependencies within the model. It goes beyond a mere description, providing a visual representation that enhances clarity and accessibility. (7) Rethinking the conceptual framework acknowledges its dynamic nature, subject to revision based on new insights, comments, and literature, ensuring it makes sense across disciplines and enhances their theoretical perspective on the phenomenon.

### ***Proposed Sharī'ah-Compliant Asset Pricing Model in the Framework of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah***

Proponents of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, including Auda (2007), Chapra et al. (2008), and Lamido (2016), assert that *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* could serve as a framework for economic development theorisation. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* can potentially guide the activities of human beings since it offers a legal framework that guides the boundaries of economic activity performed in a society (Asutay, 2007).

### ***Al-Falāḥ***

The aspiration of every individual is to achieve success. In the Quran, success is referred to as *al-falāḥ*. According to the book *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li-alfāz al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Al-Baqi, 1984), the word *al-falāḥ* and its derivatives are mentioned in 40 verses in 25 surahs. *Al-falāḥ* encompasses success in both worldly and Hereafter, serving as a central aspiration for Muslims. On an individual level, it entails meeting basic needs and having the freedom for personal growth. At a societal level, *al-falāḥ* aims for equality and prosperity, fostering growth in socio-economic, political, and religious spheres. Islam advocates ethical economic prosperity alongside moral, cultural, and socio-political advancement. Asutay & Harningtyas (2015) suggest that *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* serves as a foundational framework for promoting *al-falāḥ* by guiding economic activities in line with Islamic principles. It prioritises necessities (*darūriyyāt*) to safeguard fundamental aspects of human life, and serves as a precondition for the attainment of *al-falāḥ* and the realisation of a harmonious and fulfilling life.

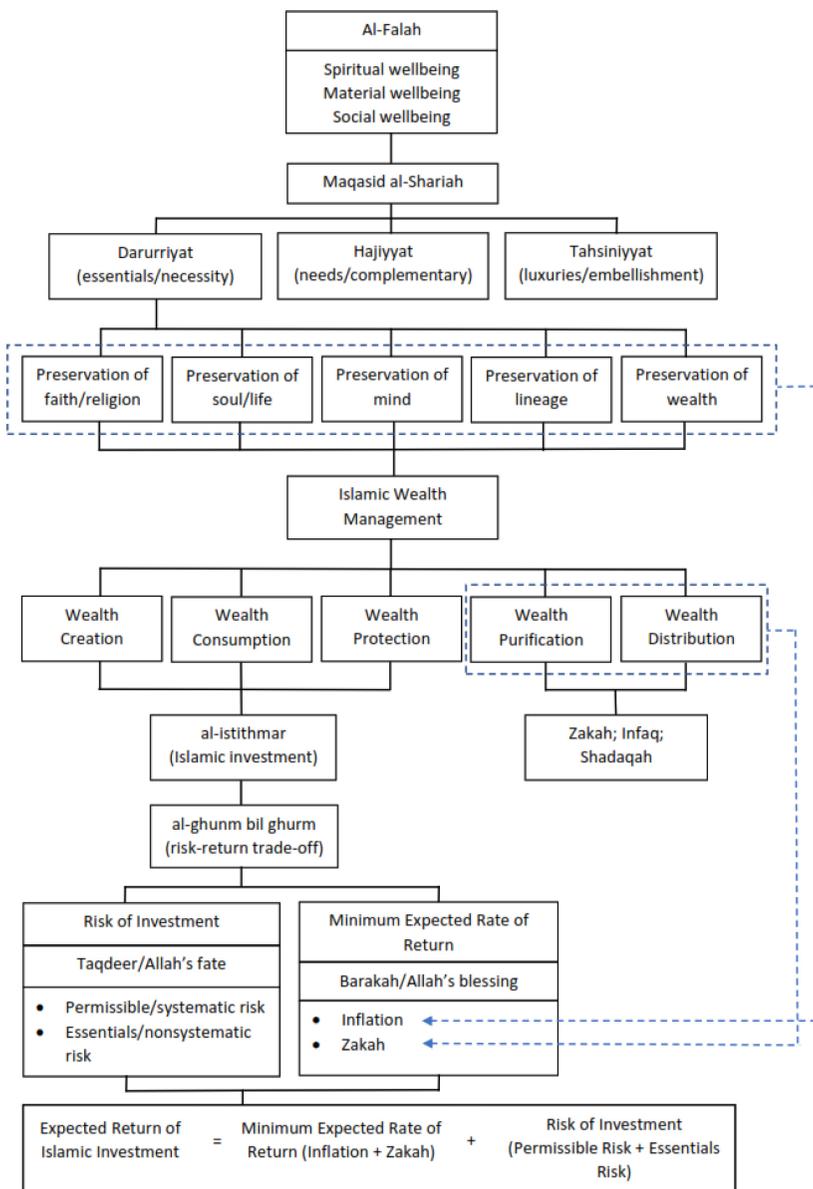


Figure 3: The framework of SCAPM, based on *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and IWM

### *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah in Asset Pricing*

Developing a robust asset-pricing model is crucial in Islamic finance. Conventional models like CAPM face challenges due to their reliance on interest rates conflicting with Islamic principles. To address this, the *Sharī'ah*-Compliant Asset Pricing Model (SCAPM) has emerged. This article aims to develop SCAPM, emphasising *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* as a guiding principle. It seeks to establish a strong theoretical foundation rooted in Islamic principles while accommodating investors' unique needs through adaptability to specific contexts. Incorporating Islamic ground principles into SCAPM is crucial. These principles, derived from both *naqlī* knowledge found in the Quran and Sunnah and *'aqlī* knowledge from other sources, guide the framework to align with broader Islamic objectives (Saad et al., 2022). Without them, ethical, legal, and reputational issues may arise, eroding trust in Islamic finance (Ibrahim & Mirakhor, 2015). Emphasising *why* questions alongside *what* ensures adherence to Islamic fundamental principles (Sanuri, 2023), enhancing investment concepts in Islamic finance.

This article proposes an alternative to the risk-free rate in asset pricing models using *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and Islamic Wealth Management. It recognises the essence of the risk-free rate in the CAPM within an Islamic framework. The risk-free rate represents the minimum expected return from a theoretically riskless investment. In conventional finance, investors use it as a benchmark to evaluate riskier assets, expecting higher returns. Otherwise, they might prefer risk-free assets like government bonds. In Islamic finance, the minimum expected rate of return reflects *Sharī'ah* compliance and wealth preservation, ensuring that an investor's wealth not only maintains its real value but also grows over time, accounting for economic conditions and the fulfilment of financial obligations of wealth distribution and purification, guided by *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and Islamic Wealth Management. It ensures adherence to *ḥalāl* criteria, facilitates wealth growth, and fulfils financial obligations, thereby promoting financial stability and social welfare beyond the minimum rate set by conventional finance for asset valuation.

Figure 3 outlines the foundational principles guiding Muslim investors *towards al-falāḥ*, rooted in *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, the ultimate goal of well-being in spiritual, moral, and socio-economic aspects. It

categorises well-being into *darūriyyāt* (necessities), *hājiyyāt* (needs), and *taḥsīniyyāt* (embellishments), it justifies fulfilling the five basic needs—(1) Preserving Faith/Religion for financial sustainability while upholding religious teachings; (2) Preserving Soul/Life as a financial safety net for health and well-being; (3) Preserving the Mind linking ethical investments with mental well-being and the Islamic pursuit of knowledge; (4) Preserving Offspring/Lineage supporting family well-being and inheritance through long-term financial planning; (5) Preserving Wealth ensuring individual and societal financial stability by safeguarding wealth value over time and meeting financial obligations like *zakāt*—at the necessity level as essential for attaining the primary objective of human life, *al-falāḥ*.

These necessity needs can shape the SCAPM framework for defining the minimum expected rate of return, while considering the specific preservation requirements and principles of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. Employing *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* as an Islamic foundational principle can partially answer the question of “Why do you expect a certain level of profit from your investments?” A Muslim investor can respond, “At a minimum, to safeguard my basic needs.” Instead of expecting a specific interest rate, such as the risk-free rate, Muslim investors anticipate returns that preserve their necessities.

To operationalise the fulfilment of necessity levels in *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* within SCAPM, identifying financial indicators representing these preservation needs is crucial. One potential proxy for measuring the minimum expected rate of return is the inflation rate, a key economic indicator reflecting the percentage increase in the general price level of goods and services over a specified period. As inflation rates rise, the purchasing power of currency erodes, meaning the same amount of money can buy fewer goods and services. Inflation can result from factors like increased demand, changes in supply, or fluctuations in currency values.

The foundation regarding the inflation rate as a benchmark in Islamic finance has been discussed by a group of Islamic scholars. Mansoori (1998), in his discussion on the indexation of loans, mentions that Islamic scholars, including Ziauddin Ahmad (1980), Rafiq al-Misri (1981), A. Mannan (1981), Umar Zubair (1982), Sultan Abu Ali (1982), Gui Muhammad (1992), Mawlana Muhammad Ta Sin (1996), and

several others, advocate for indexation and find it to be in accordance with the principles of justice and fairness as laid down in the *Quran* and the *Sunnah*. They suggest that indexing the principal amount, within specified constraints and commensurate with inflation or deflation, seems to be a logical proposition. From a *Sharī'ah* perspective, proponents argue that linking loans to an agreed-upon price index, as is done with index-linked loans, ensures equity in debtor-creditor relationships. In times of inflation, lenders might gain more in monetary terms, and during deflation, less, aligning with the principles of 'equity.'

Incorporating the inflation rate into SCAPM's minimum expected rate of return is crucial to mitigate the erosion of money's real value over time. This ethical approach, free from interest-based calculations, safeguards economic well-being for individuals and society, reflecting economic realities accurately. It offers a robust and *Sharī'ah*-compliant method for investors to preserve and potentially increase their wealth amidst market fluctuations. This adaptation demonstrates the relevance of Islamic finance principles, providing a practical solution for investors facing inflationary pressures, aligning with the goal of protecting purchasing power to meet necessity needs.

The next component of the minimum rate of return under the *Sharī'ah* perspective is *zakāt*. As a Muslim wealth owner, integrating the *zakāt* rate into the minimum expected rate of return enhances the ethical foundation of Islamic finance in SCAPM. *Zakāt*, a Pillar of Islam, promotes wealth purification through a 2.5% contribution, fostering social justice and economic equilibrium. This approach actively stimulates prosperity, ensures fair wealth distribution, and contributes significantly to social welfare and poverty alleviation. *Zakāt* possesses unique dual characteristics as a form of worship integral to the religion and a financial levy with economic implications for both payer and receiver. It reduces wealth inequality and discourages idle wealth. *Zakāt* is not viewed as charity; rather, it is seen as the right of the poor to the wealth of the rich. The Quran emphasises this, stating, "Of their wealth, there is a right for the poor and the beggar" (Q.S 51:19). Regarding the *zakatability* of stocks, scholars offer two main opinions, providing simplicity and ease of calculation in aligning *zakāt* obligations with investment returns. The first approach considers tradable shares as *zakatable* business merchandise, while the second calculates *zakāt* on

stocks based on market value plus dividends, applying a standard zakāt rate of 2.5% for a lunar or 365-day year (Al-Qaradawi, 1999).

### ***Islamic Wealth Management in Asset Pricing***

Islamic Wealth Management (IWM) stands at the forefront of financial practice, integrating Islamic principles to prioritise individual and societal well-being. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* guides this integration, necessitating a re-evaluation of traditional asset pricing models to ensure alignment with Islamic finance principles. The five stages of the wealth cycle in IWM—wealth creation/accumulation, consumption, protection, purification, and distribution—reflect the importance of preserving wealth in accordance with *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, which encompasses the satisfaction of human necessities.

In the context of developing the *Sharī'ah*-Compliant Asset Pricing Model (SCAPM), the IWM perspective proves essential in operationalising *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. IWM infusing ethical and *Sharī'ah*-compliant considerations into financial practices. Grounded in these principles, IWM ensures that SCAPM not only adheres to *Sharī'ah* compliance but also advances broader socio-economic objectives such as risk mitigation, wealth distribution, and sustainable investing. By integrating IWM concepts, SCAPM becomes a holistic model that reflects Islamic finance values, bolstering investor confidence and contributing to *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*'s objectives within asset pricing.

Moreover, IWM elucidates the relationship between return and risk across investment stages, fostering ethical and responsible investing decisions. In the stages of wealth creation/accumulation, consumption, and protection, the IWM approach plays a role in determining investment decision-making processes based on *Sharī'ah* principles. These principles are essential to the development of SCAPM, as they ensure that investors and entrepreneurs share in the risks and rewards of an investment in a fair and equitable manner. In wealth purification and distribution, IWM underscores the importance of *zakāt* as an additional component in determining the expected minimum rate of return. It is important for a Muslim to note that every wealth held comes with obligations that are directly attached to it. By fulfilling *zakāt* obligations, Muslims not only uphold their faith but also contribute to wealth purification and distribution, advancing both personal and societal well-being. Thus, IWM plays a dual role in SCAPM, elucidating investment

principles aligned with *Sharī'ah* and incorporating zakāt into the minimum expected rate of return calculation.

### Research Contribution

The conceptual framework of SCAPM based on *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and IWM presented is expected to contribute to stakeholders involved in the Islamic finance industry. Figure 4 summarises the contribution of the framework for practitioners, regulators, and academics.

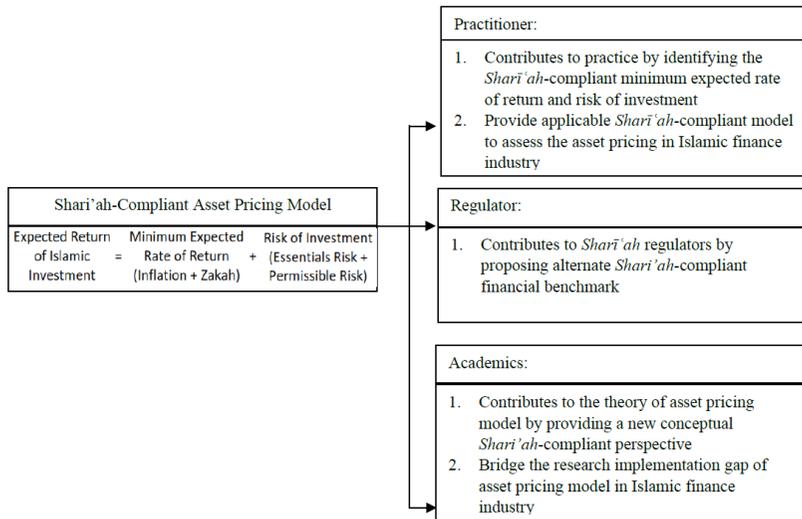


Figure 4: Contribution of the SCAPM framework based on *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and Islamic Wealth Management (IWM)

### Conclusion

*Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* ground principle and Islamic Wealth Management approach has provided an important foundation for developing an economic and financial framework. The *Sharī'ah*-compliant assessment of investment asset values, which relates to the expected return and the risk that must be borne, is a promising endeavour. However, its development and application must always comply with *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. Therefore, research and study must be conducted continuously and simultaneously on the essential components of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in the Islamic finance industry. Not only at the theory and conceptual framework level but also in its interpretation and application in Islamic finance transactions.

This article provides a comprehensive framework based on the *Maqāšid al-Sharī'ah* theory as the basic foundation and the concept of Islamic Wealth Management for establishing a *Sharī'ah*-Compliant Asset Pricing Model (SCAPM) that is simple, easy to apply, and most importantly, constructed from a *Sharī'ah* perspective. SCAPM will allow Muslim investors to assess their asset's value in the context of the relationship between expected return and risk on investment by incorporating the inflation rate and obligation to pay zakāt into the minimum expected rate of return. This framework will assist the Islamic finance industry in implementing *Maqāšid al-Sharī'ah* when assessing the value of its assets. Furthermore, the insights gained from this article will enhance awareness among scholars, academics, and *Sharī'ah* practitioners regarding the opportunities and potential for implementing the *Maqāšid al-Sharī'ah* approach in economics practice, especially in the development of practical financial models. Therefore, this is an initial attempt to address the research gap.

### **Research Limitation**

The proposed framework is conceptually developed based on the views of prominent classical Islamic scholars and jurists without focusing on a particular business or product of the Islamic financial industry. The framework does not apply specific parameters to justify the proxies used to create the SCAPM. However, this paper will initiate future research expansion by addressing the current challenges to adopting *Maqāšid al-Sharī'ah* in the Islamic finance industry. The objective of the future study will be to develop a practical framework based on quantitative and qualitative research, establish *Maqāšid al-Sharī'ah* parameters, and develop an applicable asset pricing model compliant with *Sharī'ah*.

### **Acknowledgement**

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# **Da'wah through Documentary Films Produced by Malayan Film Unit (MFU) and *Filem Negara Malaysia* (FNM), 1957-1970**

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**Abstract:** This research aims to find out the role of documentary films produced by the Malayan Film Unit (MFU) and *Filem Negara Malaysia* (FNM) as a da'wah medium in Malaysia and abroad from 1957 to 1970. The Department of Information Service and the Federation of Malaya Government collaborated with the Islamic Department of Malaya and the Islamic Department of Brunei to use MFU and FNM documentary films to develop an Islamic Malay community, which adhered to the actual teachings of Islam, during that time. Findings indicated that these documentary films by MFU and FNM were the early medium of da'wah in the Federation of Malaya after the independent. It

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also indicates that the Federal Government, together with the relevant agencies, is responsible for Islamic religious affairs in the country during the specified period.

**Keywords:** Malayan Film Unit (MFU), Filem Negara Malaysia (FNM), Malaysia, Documentary Films, Da'wah

**Abstrak:** Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peranan filem dokumentari yang dihasilkan oleh Malayan Film Unit (MFU) dan Filem Negara Malaysia (FNM) sebagai medium dakwah di Malaysia dan luar negara dari tahun 1957 hingga 1970. Jabatan Penerangan dan Kerajaan Persekutuan Tanah Melayu bekerjasama dengan Jabatan Islam Persekutuan Tanah Melayu serta Jabatan Islam Brunei dalam menggunakan filem dokumentari MFU dan FNM untuk mendidik masyarakat Melayu Islam bagi mengamalkan ajaran Islam sebenar pada masa itu. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa filem dokumentari oleh MFU dan FNM merupakan antara medium terawal dakwah di Persekutuan Tanah Melayu selepas kemerdekaan tanah air. Malah ia menunjukkan Kerajaan Persekutuan bersama-sama agensi yang terlibat bertanggungjawab dalam hal ehwal agama Islam di tanah air dalam tempoh yang dinyatakan.

**Kata kunci:** Malayan Film Unit (MFU), Filem Negara Malaysia (FNM), Malaysia, Filem Dokumentari, Dakwah

## Introduction

In Malaysia, the post-independence years presented a new phase to its history and development as it envisioned forming an independent and sovereign country according to its own rules (Parmer, 1966: Mohd Yakoob, 2007). In addition, after independence, Islam went through its transitional phase since the Muslims at that time faced the dilemma of choosing the correct values which were suitable to Islamic ethics and, at the same time, ensuring that these values would help them to grow (Othman, 2005). At that time, most Malays still held on to their cultural practices and conservative views of religion (Hamayotsu, 2017: Mohd Sharif et al., 2024). Their belief in these traditional values was deeply rooted to the extent that the Malays needed help to accept changes, leaving them needing clarification with the rapid development and modernisation that took place around them (Abdullah & Mohd Noor, 2020). Among the Malay community, many harboured pessimistic views on development and modernisation (Abdullah et al., 2024).

There was a strong connection between the Malay tradition and Islam (Abdul Wahab et al., 2022; Abdul Wahab et al., 2023). Islam greatly influenced the values in the Malay way of life, such as the way they think and behave, as well as their faith and belief system (Mohd Sharif et al., 2021). Nevertheless, some of the daily practices were against the teachings of Islam and caused the Malays to be backward. At the same time, the Malay community's way of thinking was still steeped in various supernatural beliefs and traditions that deviated from Islamic teachings (Mat Salleh, 2021).

Understanding the significance of upholding Islam, enriching the people's knowledge of Islam, and correcting the behaviours of some Malays who had deviated from the religion, the Department of Information Service, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Federal Government collaborated with the Islamic Department in the Federation of Malaya and Brunei Islamic Department. However, there is only one preaching documentary film involving the cooperation of Brunei and MFU, which used the Malayan Film Unit (MFU). Later, in 1963, MFU, known as *Filem Negara Malaysia* (FNM), produced documentary films for Da'wah. This situation is not surprising because MFU is mindful of its task to promote understanding among communities, combat illiteracy and assist in public education and information through the mass media of films. In fact, after independence, the Department of Information's scope and activities have increased. It took part in every national agenda and event, cultural festival and campaign organised by the government, including for Islamic purposes (MFU 164/1959).

It has to be emphasised here that this da'wah was unlike the common understanding of calling and asking individuals to embrace Islam (Radzi & Harun, 2021). It was apparent that the effort was aimed at inviting Muslims to observe Islamic teachings, which included issues such as theology, shari'ah, akhlāq, and institutions (Hakim, 2021). In another aspect, the Federal Government wanted to use MFU and FNM as mediums in bringing the Malay Muslims together, which was the strength of the ummah. This study has its significance since, until today, there is a shortage of research pertaining to the government's role in using films as da'wah medium in this country. Hence, the researcher would like to find out the extent to which Malayan Film Unit (MFU) and *Filem Negara Malaysia* (FNM) films became the medium of da'wah in Malaysia from 1957 to 1970.

## Literature Review

Studies on the role of MFU and FNM as mediums of da'wah from 1957 to 1970 did not get much attention among researchers. There were a few previous studies that generally discussed MFU and FNM, and they provide an initial outlook on the gap that exists in this issue. Abdul Muthalib (2010) summarised that films produced by MFU were the tools for propaganda aimed at ending the British Empire in Malaya. In addition, the author stated that the organisational structure of MFU had nurtured the spirit of unity since the beginning of its establishment, and local experts also ran it. Meanwhile, Hee (2017) concluded that MFU could not be acknowledged as a national film since many of them were produced during the British colonial period and had elements of racism. He also added that MFU was the propaganda tool of the ruling government to convey imperialist ideology in Southeast Asia that was propelled by Anglo-American imperialism during the Cold War. Next, Gunaish et al. (2022) stated that initially, MFU establishment was part of the British plan to improve their image and position in Malay as colonials after the Second World War. This was seconded by Abdullah et al. (2021), who reported that the British had utilised the printed, electronic, and mass media in disseminating its ideology, propaganda, and cultural values, such as the culture of imperialism and others, to strengthen their power after the Second World War.

Aitken (2016), on the other hand, stated that films produced by MFU contained influences from the Griersonian (John Grierson, a pioneering documentary maker who used motion pictures for education) and British Civil Service traditions in their production. He discussed the existence of foreign art theories in the production of MFU films from the perspective of art. As Alauddin (2004) stated, the historical development in documentary films, especially those from MFU, proved that these quality documentaries were produced when the technology was not fully acquired on their part. Shamsudin (2014) also concluded that MFU was a significant development in recording growth in society. According to the author, these recordings could be used to create awareness among the community to be actively involved in the country's development and agricultural sector, to be part of restructuring society, and to build political institutions. Barnard (2009) mentioned that the impact of MFU propaganda was minimal to the society in Malaya. On the other hand, the power to keep spreading messages through films remained in the

hands of the Shaw Brothers and Cathay Keris through their network of cinemas. Mohmad Rafik et al. (2020) believed that Malaysian animated films by FNM have lost their identity due to the influence of imperialist culture, especially American animated films.

### **Technical Features in MFU and FNM Documentary Films, 1957-1970**

Overall, almost all MFU and FNM documentary films that became da'wah mediums had their narrators as the main voice-overs that would explain the story in each scene. In these films, several aspects of everyday realities were featured, and most of them were centred on an event or incident. For instance, a film would begin with a visual representation of one of the mistakes in an action. After that, the visual would elaborate on finding the solution or the right way to act. From the aspect of technological development in documentary film technology produced by MFU and FNM, it was apparent that Malaya depended on expertise and technology from Western films, especially those from the United States. Indirectly, Western influence was absorbed in the process of producing the documentary film. In addition, during the said period, several officers were sent to the United States, Canada, Britain, and New Zealand to learn and gain more knowledge in the process of documentary film production. Being abroad exposed them to experiences and skills related to filming, and this knowledge was applied in the MFU film production after that (The Straits Times, January 31, 1963).

MFU and FNM also depended on existing technology, and this caused limited film production. Moreover, the filmmaking quality relied on the expertise of the director and the cameraman to record spontaneous scenes among the public. Using a heavy Mitchell BNC Camera (1946) reduced shots in motion. As a result, the cinematic film documentary produced was static, and each actor did not have dialogues based on the themes given in the film. From the aspect of language and communication, MFU and FNM movies were produced in several languages to ensure adequate understanding for the audience. Among the languages commonly used were Bahasa Melayu, English, Chinese, Tamil, and others. Through this approach, the process of sharing information with the illiterate and less-educated members went on smoothly.

Some strategies were used to represent reality in each scene produced since the media was a highly credible channel that provided an easy path for the dominant groups to spread their ideology to the target audience (Liu & Horsley, 2007). Most film documentaries were produced through docu-drama techniques. Docu-drama presentations used semi-real images by featuring professional and non-professionals to portray the situation as close to reality as possible. Such a strategy developed the audience's trust since the visual shown was related to the truth in their lives. Moreover, the docu-drama exposed films to a new form in the country's film documentaries, which explored different perspectives to match them with a bigger picture.

In addition, there were documentary films produced using the narrative strategy, such as classic Malay films that fused musical and dance elements in a life story. For instance, *Şafar* (1962), directed by Mohd Zain Hussain, featured the latest issue which gripped the Muslim community in Malaya at that time. In the past, the Muslims perceived that the Şafar month in the Islamic calendar was the month of bad luck or misfortune, and hence engaged in dubious practices to ward them off. In *Şafar*, the celebration of this event that was featured in the film was shot in Malacca. Mohd Zain tried to construct an image where men and women mingled freely during the event. Elements of classical Malay films, such as love stories, dance scenes and music between two main characters, appeared in the movie (*Şafar*, Malayan Film Unit, 1962).

Other than these elements, the film also contains information, which could influence the public's mind and behaviour. Nevertheless, not all documentary films were made without dialogues between two characters: if these dialogues are needed, they would be used to support the information that is required to be conveyed. MFU and FNM used the narrative presentation strategy through voiceovers to explain every dialogue and behaviour acted out by the characters who were trapped in a dilemma. The dialogue's effectiveness was impactful to the public as they were influenced by the convincing vocal projection and acting performances of the actors who successfully portrayed the character given to them (*Şafar*, Malayan Film Unit, 1962).

### **MFU and FNM Film Documentary Da'wah Mission 1957-1970**

Various documentary films such as *Mari Kita Sembahyang* (*Come Let's Pray*), *Pertandingan Membacha al-Quran* (*Quranic Recitation*

*Competition*), *Seruan Suci* (*Holy Call*), *Lawatan Di-Raja Ka-Timor Tengah* (*Royal Visit to the Middle East*), *Maulud dan Berzanji* (*Birth and Praises of Prophet Muhammad PBUH*), *Gema dari Menara* (*Echoes from the Minaret*) dan *Şafar* were produced as part of the government's efforts to develop the Muslim community to adhere to the actual teaching of Islam in Malaysia. However, this paper discusses only some of the documentary films listed.



Figure 1.1: Narration technique in *Şafar* (*Safar*, Malayan Film Unit, 1962).

Going through the list of films produced by MFU, it was found that a documentary entitled *Mari Kita Sembahyang*, created in 1962, was the first produced after the independence (*Mari Kita Sembahyang*, Malayan Film Unit, 1962). Just by reading the title, one could imagine the content of the whole film. The film featured natural scenes of the five prayers, and the voice-over provided more understanding of the ibadah. This film was produced based on the request from Islamic departments around the country. It was perceived that films like this must be made to ease da'wah efforts, especially on matters pertaining to the best way to perform *şalāt* to the public (*Mari Kita Sembahyang*, Malayan Film Unit, 1962). The researcher believes that the film was produced on the

basis of responsibility since *ṣalāt* is the highest level of ibadah. In fact, *ṣalāt* is the pillar of the religion (Hanafiah, 2019). If the pillar is absent, it is not possible to be a Muslim. If the pillar is not strong, everything could collapse (Morgan, 2009). Hence, ‘the pillars’ are crucial for the Muslims. This notion was supported by Mu’az bin Jabal RA, who stated that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

رَأْسُ الْأَمْرِ الْإِسْلَامُ، وَعَمُودُهُ الصَّلَاةُ، وَذِرْوَةٌ سَنَامِهِ الْجِهَادُ

Meaning: “The head of the matter is Islam, its pillar is prayer, and jihad is its peak”, by al-Tirmizi (2616) (Bal Ikhwan Khairulanwar et al., 2022). Therefore, it is not surprising that the first film produced covered the issue of faith as it upheld and increased knowledge among the public. The film, which ran for 15 minutes, was translated into three languages, namely English, Tamil and Mandarin. It also received requests from foreign countries such as Egypt, Ceylon and Farnosa (*Mari Kita Sembahyang*, Malayan Film Unit, 1962).

Next, *Ṣafar*, which was published in 1962, contains narration on the *Mandi Safar* celebration, which was practised by the Malay Muslims in the past, especially in Malacca, Kelantan, Terengganu, Negeri Sembilan, Sabah and Sarawak. The film was produced to provide exposure to and create awareness of this ancient practice among the people. This is because, before this film, there was widespread movement and opposition by the Islamic department and scholars from the Federation of Malaya and Indonesia regarding the practice of *Mandi Safar* that Muslims had followed for a long time. These scholars stated that *Mandi Safar* is a superstitious practice and is not found in Islamic teachings. For example, The Perak Religious Affairs Department stated: “there is no religious basis in Islam for such an observance.” “It is not incumbent on Muslims to observe *Mandi Safar*, and so we do not advise them to follow this tradition” (The Straits Times, 15 July 1961). Even the famous Indonesian ulama, Hamka, stated in the same tone that the practice of *Mandi Safar* is not found in Islamic teachings (Berita Harian, 28 August 1960). The Deputy Mufti of Johor, Abd. Jalil Hassan also stated that these types of celebrations were part of superstition and utterly ridiculous (*‘bidaah dan tak masuk akal’*). The Mufti of Singapore also produced a fatwa that *Mandi Safar* is haram since it is blasphemous (Berita Harian, 9 July 1963).

For that purpose, MFU took the initiative to publish the film, *Şafar*, to make the Muslim population aware that this practice is against the teachings of Islam. Shooting for this film was done in Malacca. The producer utilised a semi-reality technique to present the authentic atmosphere of the Şafar celebration with additional characters to portray the behaviour of men and women during the event. It took place on the last Wednesday in Şafar, which is the second month in the Islamic calendar (*Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia*, 1966). Basically, this traditional celebration was practised for many years by the Malay community based on the belief that they needed to avoid bad omens during the Şafar month. It was the norm in the past that Şafar (a month in Islam) was considered a month of misfortune by Muslims (Nagata, 1986). They would write verses from the Quran, soak them in water, and use the water to bathe to prevent bad omens in their lives. In fact, the same water would be drunk, and it was called Şafar Water (Mohd Hanipah, 2021). Mohd Zain Hussain, who was the film director, also showed images of men and women mingling freely during the event (*Şafar*, Malayan Film Unit, 1962). The film used elements of classical Malay film, featuring a love story, dance scenes, and music between the two main characters. The researcher also believes that the film was produced to save the *'aqīdah* of the Muslim Malay community from being affected by superstitious traditions, which were practised for generations. This is because film production could be a reference for improvement in Islamic laws and development.



Figure 1.2: Scene in *Şafar*, 1962 (*Şafar*, Malayan Film Unit, 1962).



Figure 1.3: Scene in *Şafar*, 1962 (*Şafar*, Malayan Film Unit, 1962).



Figure 1.4: Scene in *Şafar*, 1962 (*Şafar*, Malayan Film Unit, 1962).



Figure 1.5: Scene in *Şafar*, 1962 (*Safar*, Malayan Film Unit, 1962).



Figure 1.6: Scene in *Şafar*, 1962 (*Safar*, Malayan Film Unit, 1962).

On January 31, 1964, the first *Muktamar Islam Asia Tenggara dan Timur Jauh (Islam in Southeast Asia and Far East)* conference was held in Kuala Lumpur, and YAB Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra AI-Haj, the Prime Minister, officiated it. The conference, which Muktamar Islam Sedunia (World Muslim Congress) organised, was attended by one hundred participants from twelve countries, namely New Zealand, The Philippines, Taiwan, Cambodia, South Vietnam, Ceylon, Maldives, Fiji, Thailand, Brunei, Singapore, and Malaysia. Some of the issues discussed in the conference were matters pertaining to challenges faced by the communities in the aspect of religion, education, and economy of the Muslims in Southeast Asia and the Far East (Othman, 2010). In addition, the *Muktamar* focused on methods to face and reject atheism and also activities from Christian missionaries. As a result of this conference, *Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam (PERKIM or Islamic Welfare Organisation Malaysia)* was established to spread Islam in this country, while internationally, *Pertubuhan Islam Serantau Asia Tenggara dan Pasifik (Islamic Regional Organisation for Southeast Asia and the Pacific)* was established to protect the welfare and wellbeing of the Muslims in the region (Faiz, 2021). Through the historical event mentioned, the documentary film entitled *Muktamar Islam Sa-dunia* was produced



Figure 1.7: Scene in *Muktamar Islam Sa-dunia*, 1964 film (*Muktamar Islam Sa-dunia*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1964).

in 1964 to record significant moments in the diplomatic ties between Malaysia and the Arab countries, especially since Malaysia was the first country after the war to be chosen as the host for the World Muslim Congress. The congress was held to discuss theological, educational, social, and economic problems faced by Muslims worldwide, especially in the Far East (*Muktamar Islam Sa-dunia*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1964).

This film was produced to highlight Malaysia's involvement in international Islamic associations. It was a participation that carried significance for the members since there would be cooperation in the fields of economy, society, and culture among all. Moreover, there was also collaboration among all the members at attempting to protect and solve Islamic issues. Hence, it was not a surprise that the government had asked FNM to produce a documentary-based film that aimed to provide exposure of Malaysia's involvement and other Islamic countries in these matters. In fact, the nation's participation in the pact and collaboration in this association would convince the Muslim population that the government had made an effort to uphold Islam in the country during that time (*Muktamar Islam Sa-dunia*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1964).

The film *Seruan Suchi*, which was produced in 1965, featured a significant episode in the spread of Islam in Malaysia when His Majesty the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong and the Queen were accompanied by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Senu Abd Rahman and his wife embarked on a journey to Makkah for pilgrimage (*Seruan Suchi*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1964). It is common knowledge among Muslims that the hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam. This religious obligation must be completed by the Muslim at least once in their lifetime for those who can afford and are able to physically do it (Maslan, 2014). For Muslims, the journey to Makkah for hajj was not an easy or safe trip (Peters, 1996). Hajj voyages in those years were considered the last journey since the pilgrims had to face numerous perils and difficulties. Some of the challenges that the pilgrims had to deal with were the conditions of the voyage, which were long and arduous, and they were exposed to all sorts of dangers, such as storms and diseases (Maslan, 2018). Before the use of steamships, the pilgrims from Malaya would board sailing vessels to Makkah, and the journey took months since it harnessed the power of the wind (Maslan, 2013).



Figure 1.8: Scenes in *Seruan Suchi*, 1964  
(*Seruan Suchi*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1964).



Figure 1.9: Scenes in *Seruan Suchi*, 1964  
(*Seruan Suchi*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1964).



Figure 2.0: Scenes in *Seruan Suci*, 1964 (*Seruan Suci*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1964).

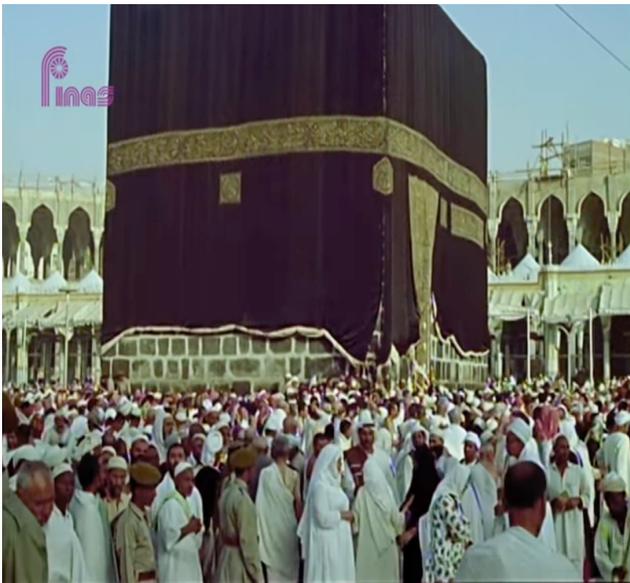


Figure 2.1: Scenes in *Seruan Suci*, 1964 (*Seruan Suci*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1964).

To the researchers of this paper, this film was produced to provide visual exposure and education to the public on the way the Hajj is performed. Previously, people would only be able to hear the narration of the pilgrims in relation to their experiences once they returned. Now, with the use of film, they could watch the pilgrims performing the challenging ritual. Even though the film is in the form of a documentary, the researchers believe the exposure would encourage others who could afford it to also perform the ibadah.

Next, the film *Gema dari Menara* was produced in 1968 by FNM through collaboration with *Jabatan Ugama Islam Brunei* (Brunei Islamic Department). The film was created as a result of diplomatic ties between Malaysia and Brunei, and it was mentioned that the Brunei Government contributed \$200,000 to complete the film. The main actors and actresses were chosen from both countries (*Gema Dari Menara*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1968). For this film, the theme was that of Western influence in the life of the Muslim communities. The film clearly featured the way Western culture influenced the younger generation in the aspect of socialisation, fashion, and belief systems. In addition, there was a scene, which featured a family from that unit nurturing the teaching of Islam, emphasising it as a responsibility of the parents. It was also the period in which popular culture became the preferred trend among Malaysian youth (*Gema Dari Menara*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1968). In fact, the influence also came from cultural agents of imperialism, who were primarily artists local and abroad.

Next came xenocentrism, which refers to the belief that items, designs, ideas, values, and beliefs in one's community were far inferior or backward as compared to other cultures. This concept looks down at one's own culture (Cucato, 2022). From the situation mentioned, the development of Islam and the government's effort to create a community that observed the actual teaching of Islam were met with some challenges. Hence, due to the factors mentioned above, FNM had a solid foundation to produce such films. The researchers also viewed the film as the most significant da'wah medium when the initiative also involved other neighbouring countries such as Brunei. In fact, the film received positive feedback from Arab countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and others (*Gema Dari Menara*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1968). The situation shows that Muslim countries were challenged by the spread of Western culture in their daily life. The invasion of foreign culture

did have an impact on the socio-cultural aspect of the people in that era (Ramadan, 2009). Malaysia and Brunei's involvement in producing this documentary film was an exemplary initiative in upholding Islam during that period (*Gema Dari Menara*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1968).



Figure 2.2: Scenes in *Gema Dari Menara* (*Gema Dari Menara*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1968).



Figure 2.2: Scenes in *Gema Dari Menara* (*Gema Dari Menara*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1968).



Figure 2.2: Scenes in *Gema Dari Menara*  
(*Gema Dari Menara*, Filem Negara Malaysia, 1968).

### **Announcement, Distribution and Screening of MFU and FNM Films, 1957-1970**

MFU and later FNM were unlike commercial films, which were driven by monetary gain through the screening of films at movie theatres. Their revenue came from film buyers from abroad as well as the services they offered in producing films for the use of the industry or foreign agencies. This unit worked with others when it came to disseminating documentary films in Malaya. Since MFU and, later, FNM were established, mobile vans and commercial movie theatres were utilised as platforms to reach the targeted audience. The form of the film screening was sustained even after independence. The Information Department manned mobile vans, and sometimes, they were handled by the Health Department, Social Welfare Department, and other government agencies. As for movie theatres, they were run by local film entrepreneurs such as Rex, Capitol, Lido, and Cathay. This unit worked together with the movie theatre operator to screen its film at the premise before any commercial film was shown (Gunaish et al., 2021).

In 1957, 123 mobile vans were mobilised to screen MFU films in *kampung* areas such as Kampung Baru Cina. This screening was intensified, and it reached other *kampungs* through the mobile van service from the Information Department (Hodge, 1957). The Information Department often made visits to the *kampung* areas, and they aimed to visit once every eight weeks (Annual Report of Malayan Film Unit 1957-1960). It was a program that was run seriously by the government since 1959 when Syed Ja'afar Albar stated that MFU played a significant role in the country's development process. Moreover, students, public servants, enforcement officers and others also became the target audience at this time. Officers from the Information Department were tasked to live in the rural areas to provide information through film screening (*wayang pacak*) from those produced by MFU while giving speeches to the locals (MFU 164/1959).

Film screening from the mobile van usually focuses on rural areas and communities. Sometimes, boats were also used by the Information Department to screen films in rural areas close to the riverbanks. Mobile vans were sent to each village at least once a month, and documentary films were brought to be screened by the villagers. The excitement began the minute the mobile van reached the *kampung*. The mobile van team worked hard in announcing their activities at night to attract community members to come and watch the show (Gunaish et al., 2021).



Figure 2.2: Mobile van announcing news about the outdoor movie screening.

An hour before dusk, the mobile van would circle the kampung area to announce the screening of the film, which would take place at night. Right before sunset, the mobile van would stop at a vacant plot, such as a football field or a significant junction in the middle of a town. Next, the team would begin the task of setting up the white screen and assembling the projector. Mobile van operators were asked to hasten the preparation for screening, and music would be played if there was a gap in the program to prevent the viewers from being bored (1978/00513, DOI (K/P) No.640/53).



Figure 2.3: Preparation by Information Department officer before the screening

The officers would put the projector on a table and erect wooden fences for the safety of the projector to prevent disruptions by the mischievous kampung children. Film screening would begin right after the operator made a short announcement through a loud hailer. Each program usually screened two MFU films, and then the last would be the screening of commercial films such as Malay movies, animated movies, Cowboy movies or Hindi movies. Before the process of executing this screening program, the team would discuss choosing suitable films to be shown with the local district officer. In fact, the screening and distribution situation is similar to the situation in Brunei. *Pelita Brunei*, which is the official newspaper of the Government of Brunei, also acted to publicise the release of this MFU film in the news. The people of Brunei gave great support in screenings held in selected schools and public locations (Zainal et al., 2023).



Figure 2.4: Outdoor Film Screening by the Information Department



Figure 2.5: The use of a boat as a medium to screen MFU film to those who stayed on the riverside.

In addition, MFU and FNM also used local newspapers to invite the public to attend all these outdoor film screenings, which were carried out all around the country. Newspapers from 1963 to 1970 promoted various activities that involved film screening in collaboration with other local agencies such as the Johor Islamic Department (*Jabatan Agama Islam Johor*), Saudi Arabia Consulate (*Konsul Arab Saudi*) and others. To illustrate, on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1966, the newspaper, *Berita Harian*, invited the public to attend a free movie screening in Kuala Lumpur in conjunction with Film Week from 24<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> May at the Information Department cinema. One of the films screened was *Seruan Suchi*. Advertisements in the newspapers were evidence that FNM documentary films, which acted as da'wah medium, were also shown at cinemas for the urban

dwellers in the capital city. The film advertisements were usually done together with local commercial film and imported film advertisements. As stated before, in Brunei, the promotion and screening of MFU films used Pelita Brunei newspaper for promotion (Zainal et al., 2023).

Sudah-kah tuan? menyaksikan gambar Masir yang terbesar yang telah menjadi buasan ramai di-Singapura ini.

**GALAXY** 447792

Hari ini 3 Pertunjukan  
3.00-6.00-9.00 malam

Cherita perjalanan Nabi Muhammad dari Mekah ka-Madinah di-sulami dengan gambar yang berwarna warni

**هجرة الرسول**

SOUTH-EAST ASIA FILM CO. Presents  
the Prophet's Journey from MECCA to MEDINA!

**HAJRET EL RASSOUL**  
EASTMANCOLOR

STARRING:  
\*MAGDA \*IHAB NAFEH  
ENGLISH & MALAY SUBTITLES

"SERUAN SUCHI" dalam bahasa Melayu. Bayaran murah untuk kanak-kanak sekolah kepada semestempat duduk \$1.00 tempah-lah siang cepat saksi-lah hari ini.

Figure 2.6: Newspaper advertisement regarding FNM film, which was shown at cinemas.

**GALAXY** 447792

Hari ini 4 Pertunjukan  
1-3.45-6.30-9.00 Malam  
ESOK: 1-4.0 Malam

Julang gambar beritanya dengan Hijrah Nabi Muhammad dari Mekah ka-Madinah

**هجرة الرسول**

Serie "Seruan Suchi" (Berwarna) gambar warna dalam bahasa Melayu yang Tuan? jangan lepakan peluang menyaksikan-nya.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA FILM CO. Presents  
the Prophet's Journey from MECCA to MEDINA!

**HAJRET EL RASSOUL**  
EASTMANCOLOR  
ENGLISH & MALAY SUBTITLES

STARRING:  
\*MAGDA  
\*IHAB NAFEH

Hari ini 11.00 pagi "TALES OF A CAPTIVE PRINCESS"  
Sempu/Warna.

Menduga Akal Film Hajret El Rassoul Hadiah istimewa untuk para penonton pada Hari Sabtu 11-2.00 Jan 9.00 malam. Hadiah dari KINERAMA The Screen Star.

Figure 2.7: Newspaper advertisement regarding FNM film, which was shown at cinemas.

### **The Effectiveness of MFU and FNM Documentary Films, 1957-1970**

The researchers found it challenging to measure the success of MFU documentary film as well as the role of FNM as a da'wah medium in the period stated. It is also difficult to determine the effectiveness of this approach as the duration studied on the government's effort to produce documentary films as da'wah medium only lasted around thirteen years. However, the government's approach to using MFU and later FNM for da'wah strengthened the relationship with the public through the introduction of policies. From the role mentioned, the government believed in the effectiveness of MFU and FNM as a communication medium. This was true as, at that time, the government was still struggling with the early phase of national development, which focused on public facilities such as electrical supply, water supply, health, education, and others, which were still at an unsatisfying level (Rudner, 1977: Abdullah & Mohd Noor, 2019: Porok, 2022). Each MFU and FNM film that was shown had a complete explanation, and it contributed to adequate comprehension of the situation provided.

In 1957, it was reported that seventeen cinemas screened MFU films every night. A 35 mm film print was usually used for commercial cinema screenings, which took place in urban and rural areas. As for 16 mm film produced by MFU, it was employed by the mobile van to show to rural areas through outdoor film screening (*wayang pacak*). Statistics reported that in 1957, 6,088 films were loaned to commercial cinemas around the country for one year. In the same year, 37,357 films were loaned to mobile vans and foreign agencies to be shown to the audience that the government targeted. One hundred twenty-three mobile vans were mobilised to kampung areas (Hodge, 1957).

In 1958, 7,111 films were shown to the audience at the cinema, and the number increased compared to the year before. In fact, loaned films for outdoor film screening all around Peninsular Malaysia increased to 47,413 films. Such consistency was observed until 1959 when as many as 7,807 films were screened at cinemas. Nevertheless, comparatively, there was a decrease in the number of movies loaned from the previous amount to 7,751 films for outdoor film screening. This was because the Information Department successfully deployed 98 mobile vans to the kampungs. Two years before, 123 Information Department mobile vans

were sent to the rural areas to disseminate information to the people (Annual Report of Malayan Film Unit 1959).

Here, the momentum mentioned influenced the record of film borrowing in 1960, when only 6,546 films were successfully screened at cinemas as MFU started to focus on the rural areas in 1960. The ruling government at that time suggested that rural development must be shown to the people from the *kampungs* (villages) to encourage them to participate in the government's effort. As a result, the number of loaned films by the mobile van and foreign agencies increased when 40,516 films were successfully screened to the targeted audiences. Syed Ja'afar Albar, the Minister of Information then, called all mobile vans to intensify their efforts in the rural areas. He believed that the effort would lead to more films being shown to promote rural development to gain support of the community in the development program (Annual Report of Malayan Film Unit 1957-1970).

The *kampung* communities gave a warm welcome to the mobile van teams every time they came to show new MFU and FNM movies. For instance, at Pekan Ayer Mawang, Johor, Negeri Sembilan, it was reported that the program was well received by the public. Almost 500 Malays and Chinese came to watch the outdoor film screening (*Berita Harian*, 11 July 1959). Even though Barnard (2009) believed that MFU had not succeeded in making an impact among the communities in Malaya, the MFU film screening during the time mentioned had given beautiful memories and experiences to the people who had limited access to entertainment, especially film screenings since many cinemas were located in towns that were far from their places. However, the researchers believe that if these films were screened at mosques all over the country as an effort to convey *da'wah*, as mentioned in this study, their effectiveness might be measured. The screening would be one of the main activities at the mosque for *da'wah* to the Malay Muslim community. However, the researchers also realised that the Information Department did not use the mosque or other religious institutions as their film screening location since there was limited equipment available on the premises. The outdoor film screening had to also be conducted in spacious places to ensure that many viewers would come and watch.

## Conclusion

The MFU film documentary and later FNM were approved as the early medium that the government used for da'wah before the rise of Islam in Malaysia, which started in the 1970s. At the same time, the Federal Government was responsible for improving the image and position of Islam in the country during this period. The government's awareness of the ability of films to stimulate thinking and influence behaviours of the community members through the process of conveying information via audio-visual material resulted in MFU being sustained and rebranded as FNM in Malaysia. As part of the Federal Government's effort to use MFU and FNM as da'wah medium, many initiatives were carried out, including improvement in filmmaking, film screenings all around the country, structural changes in MFU, production of movies based on the latest Islamic scenario and many others. As a result, a compelling momentum was created, and MFU and FNM experienced an increase in documentary film screenings in Malaysia and abroad.

The increased visibility of documentary film screenings across Malaysia and abroad highlighted the international impact of MFU and FNM in disseminating Islamic teachings and fostering a sense of unity in the Muslim community. The government's multifaceted approach, including educational initiatives, public screenings, and innovative storytelling techniques, created an environment where these films became not just a source of information but also a catalyst for positive social and cultural change. As FNM continued its role as a da'wah medium beyond the 1970s, it became a dynamic tool for addressing evolving challenges and opportunities within Malaysian society. The ongoing production of documentary films enabled FNM to adapt to contemporary issues, making it a relevant and influential force in shaping public perceptions of Islam. The sustained commitment to da'wah's efforts through film demonstrates the enduring impact of visual storytelling in fostering a deeper understanding of Islamic principles and values.

In essence, the journey from MFU to FNM marks a significant chapter in the history of Islamic propagation in Malaysia. The government's strategic use of film as a da'wah medium not only contributed to the proliferation of Islamic teachings but also underscored the importance of adapting traditional methods to contemporary approaches for effective communication. As FNM continues to play a vital role in the ongoing

da'wah efforts today, it stands as a testament to the enduring power of film in shaping cultural narratives and fostering a harmonious and informed society.

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# The Role of the Principal-Agent-Client Model in Understanding Corruption in the Public Procurement Sector in Malaysia

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**Abstract:** Corrupt practices in public procurement in Malaysia are explained in this paper using a principal-agent model. The government leaders, who are typically politicians, ministers, or their relatives, are referred to as the “principal” while the officials who carry out their duties are referred to as “agents”. The actors in the model who constitute the third party — the other actor in the cycle of corruption — include clients, customers, and the public at large. The principal-agent-client framework was applied to 18 selected corruption cases in Malaysia to describe and analyse the actors involved in the transgressions and illegal acts in these cases. The cases were investigated by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) from 2014 to 2019, charged and found guilty by the courts in Malaysia. The findings show that all the actors in the role of agent were public officials, while the actors in the role of client were from the private sector, and the actors in the role of principal were high-ranking government officials, their relatives, and politicians.

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**Keywords:** Corruption in Malaysia, Public procurement's corruption, Principal-Agent theory.

**Abstrak:** *Principal-agent-client model* (PAC) digunakan untuk menerangkan amalan rasuah yang berlaku dalam sektor perolahan awam di Malaysia. Merujuk kepada model tersebut, dalam kajian ini, "*Principal*" adalah merujuk kepada pemimpin kerajaan, ahli politik, menteri dan keluarga mereka yang terlibat. "*Agent*" di dalam kajian ini merujuk kepada pegawai kerajaan yang melaksanakan tugas dan kumpulan ketiga yang dipanggil "*Client*" merangkumi klien, pelanggan dan orang awam yang berurusan dengan kerajaan. Kerangka PAC digunakan untuk menganalisis kesemua aktor-aktor yang terlibat di dalam kes-kes yang melibatkan amalan rasuah dan salah guna kuasa. Kes-kes yang dianalisis merupakan kes-kes yang disiasat oleh Suruhanjaya Pencegahan Rasuah Malaysia (SPRM) dari tahun 2014-2019 yang telah dibuat pertuduhan di mahkamah dan telah didapati bersalah oleh mahkamah di Malaysia. Di akhir kajian, keputusan menunjukkan bahawa kesemua aktor yang terlibat di dalam kes rasuah yang dirujuk sebagai "*Agent*" adalah merupakan pegawai kerajaan, manakala yang dirujuk sebagai "*Client*" adalah merupakan daripada kalangan pelanggan, daripada sektor swasta yang berurusan dengan kerajaan dan kumpulan ketiga iaitu "*Principal*" merujuk kepada pegawai tinggi kerajaan, ahli politik dan keluarga mereka yang terlibat.

**Kata kunci:** Rasuah di Malaysia, rasuah di dalam sektor perolehan awam, teori *Principal-Agent*

## Introduction

Malaysia has had numerous corruption scandals involving well-known politicians, public servants, business leaders from both private and public companies, as well as white-collar and blue-collar workers and members of the public. Examples included the Bumiputra Malaysia Finance Scandal in 1983, the Pan-Electric Industries Scandal in 1985, the Deposit-taking Co-operative Scandal in 1986, the Perwaja Steel Scandal in the 1980s, the Forex Scandal in the 1990s, the Malaysian Airlines (MAS) Financial Scandal in the 1994-2001 period, the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) Scandal, the National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) scandal in 2010, the 1 Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) scandal in 2010, and the Felda Global Ventures scandal in 2017 (Durairaja, et al., 2019). Recent high-profile cases, such as SRC International Sdn. Bhd. (SRC), resulted in the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Abd Razak, being convicted of all charges and imprisoned for 12

years. In addition to that, in 2022, his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, was also charged with corruption and found guilty by the High Court of all three charges against her. She was sentenced to 10 years' jail and fined RM 970 million. However, a stay of imprisonment was granted pending her appeal to the higher court. All the negative perceptions from the corruption scandals have brought infamy to Malaysia, resulting in the nation's poor performance in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 2021 and 2022. The interesting fact is that most of those corruption cases were in the public procurement sector in Malaysia.

This paper will share a significant finding of corruption procurement cases in Malaysia from 2014–2019 using the principal-agent-client (PAC) framework. This paper will explain the nature of corruption acts by the actors and their roles, which usually do not appear in statistics, such as what kind of offences they commit and what type of conviction they get because of their criminal offences. The findings are expected to be useful for scholars and policymakers in designing proper policies that are holistic and practical in the Malaysian context.

### **Public Procurement in Malaysia**

In Malaysia, the procurement system is largely decentralised (Ashari, 2013). The Ministry of Finance (MOF) is responsible for regulating all the government procedures concerning procurement, including policy, guidelines, and procedures such as The Procurement Guideline Book of Malaysia, The Financial Procedures Act 1957, the Treasury Instructions (TI) and the Treasury Circular Letter (TCL) (Othman et al., 2010). The main goal of Malaysian government procurement is to support government programme by securing the best value possible through the purchase of goods, services, and labour. To achieve this goal, both price and non-price factors such as whole life cost, quality, quantity, timeliness, maintenance, and warranty are closely considered. This procurement regime includes government procurement policies as follows:

1. To stimulate the growth of local industries through the maximum utilisation of local materials and resources.
2. To encourage and support the evolvement of Bumiputera (indigenous) entrepreneurs in line with the nation's aspirations to create Bumiputera Commercial and Industrial Community.

3. To increase and enhance the capabilities of local institutions and industries via transfer of technology and expertise.
4. To stimulate and promote service oriented local industries such as freight and insurance.
5. To accelerate economic growth whereby Government procurement is used as a tool to achieve socio-economic and development objectives.

Direct purchase, quote, tenders, and direct negotiation are the four major methods of procurement employed in Malaysia. (Azmi, & Ismail, S., 2022). Although the procurement process is governed collectively and has standards in place as described, there are still issues and potential for improvement (Jones, 2013). A study of Malaysia's public procurement system discovered 16 flaws, which point to the country's public procurement system as being inefficient and in need of further improvement to better serve the country (Azmi & Ismail, 2022). The biggest issue that might arise because of inefficient policies and a lack of openness in the process is corruption. According to Thai (2004), Mahmood (2010), Othman et al. (2010), and Hui et al. (2011), ineffective public procurement processes lead to detrimental side effects of corruption. According to Hassan (2016), unethical behaviour that receives a profit, avoids responsibility, and harms an organisation is what is meant by corruption in procurement. The culprit could be a customer, owner, statutory board member, employee, public official, public figure, or vendor who assisted the affected organisation in purchasing goods or services.

This study will focus on actors who are involved in corruption cases in Malaysia, their roles in corrupt practices, types of sentences, and convictions by the court of law. The findings will help in deciding what else needs to be done to combat corruption in public procurement. The principal-agent theory and the principal-agent-client model (PAC) will serve as the framework for an explanation of the actors and their roles in corrupt practices in public procurement in Malaysia.

### **Corrupt Actors in The Public Procurement: Theoretical Frameworks**

Al-Attas (1995) defines corruption as the misuse of trust for personal gain. According to Nye (1989), corruption refers to using rewards to distort the judgment of someone who has been entrusted with

something. Corruption is a behaviour that deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in a position of public authority because of private motives such as wealth, power, or status, according to a definition given by Khan (1996). Another definition considers corruption as a transaction between private and public sector actors through which collective goods are illegitimately converted into private payoffs (Heidenheimer et al., 1989). Transparency International and the World Bank describe corruption as the abuse of public power for private ends. According to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), there is no theory of corruption that can explain corruption holistically. However, it suggests that there are four main theories that can explain corruption:

1. **Principal-Agent Theory:** This theory is predicated on the idea that public officials act as agents to safeguard the principal's interests. The principal can prescribe the pay-off rules in the principal-agent relationship, but in practice, the interests of the agents frequently diverge from the principal's interests. Additionally, there is informational asymmetry that is to the agent's advantage and could be exploited by the agent for personal gain (Groenendijk, 1997).
2. **Collective Action Theory:** A different hypothesis that has recently been developed to explain why systemic corruption endures despite legislation making it illegal as well as why corruption in some nations defies other anti-corruption initiatives is collective action theory. The collective action theory highlights the significance of elements like trust and how people perceive other people's behaviour, going beyond the typical principal-agent relationship (Persson, Teorell, and Rothstein, 2013).
3. **Institutional Theory:** Institutional theory provides a taxonomy for comprehending how corruption may persist in organisations, institutions, and society despite the existence of an anti-corruption framework by incorporating the social environment into the study of corruption (Luo, 2005).
4. **Game Theory:** This theory, which takes cues from economic literature, aims to explain why public officials make dishonest decisions. According to Macrae (1982), corruption is a crucial

and frequently deeply ingrained component of peoples' decision-making processes. In this situation, several characters, such as corrupt officials and people looking for favours, are faced with a "prisoners' dilemma." They must decide to act honourably by abstaining from corruption and accepting bribes.

This study will choose principal-agent approach to explain corruption in areas such as economic development, bureaucratic corruption, legislative corruption and to reflects most of the anti-corruption programme (Ugur & Dasgupta, 2011, Jain 2001, Persson et al., 2013). Furthermore, there are many scholars in economics and political science who view corruption as a particular instance of a more general principal-agent dilemma (Banfield 1975; Klitgaard 1988; Rose-Ackerman 1978; Shleifer and Vishny 1993). This theoretical approach defines an agent as a management or public officer who, by virtue of his or her employment contract, is required to act on behalf of the principal and serve the principal's interests as if they were the agent's own. The government, including politicians, ministers and their associates, or representatives of the public can all be the principal. The wishes and goals of the principal and the agent may differ or may diverge over time, yet an agent must use some discretion in his/her own decision-making and works to serve the interests of the principal. Furthermore, the principal may find it difficult or expensive to keep an eye on the agent's actual actions (Eisenhardt 1989, Jensen & Meckling 1976). When an agent wilfully puts his own interests above those of his principal or organisation and breaches his trust, the agent develops a corrupt nature and begins to amass bribes (Banfield 1975, Rose-Ackerman 1978, Shleifer & Vishny 1993).

Klitgaard (1988) and Groenendijk (1997) expanded the principal-agent theory by adding another actor to the model, which is the client. The principal-agent-client model refers to the activity of a new actor, which is the client. It can become the third party that is involved in the solicitation of bribes with the agent. However, Groenendijk (1997) argues that the client can also become a new principal for the agent. On the other hand, Klittgaard (1988) compares the principals to elected officials who frequently lack the necessary expertise for their job duties. These principals hire officials to operate as their agents, and often these agents have so much information at their disposal that they are unable to monitor all economic activities. These agents may have administrative control over monopolies, the ability to strengthen market domination,

or both. Some employees lack accountability and might request bribes from competitor businesses. It is crucial that we alter the relationship between the principal, agent, and client to prevent corruption by limiting access to monopolies, limiting discretion, and guaranteeing agent accountability.

Several studies have applied the principal-agent approach in explaining corruption in public procurement. A study by Rose-Ackerman & Soreide (2011) analysed the corruption risk in the public procurement. They indicated that reducing information asymmetry and increasing transparency will be the keys to mitigate corruption risk. Graycar's (2019) study focuses on understanding and preventing corruption in procurement in a public sector setting in Australia. He argues that we need to focus on the different types of corruption and different types of procurement to enlighten the corrupt behaviour of public officials and suppliers in the procurement process.

In Malaysia, governmental procurement corruption has always been a significant problem. Scholars and professionals have developed the Principal-Agent-Client (PAC) paradigm to comprehend this issue. As it provides a theoretical explanation of how corruption occurs between various actors in the procurement process, the PAC model has grown to be a crucial framework for analysing corruption in public procurement. According to the PAC model, the public procurement officers (the agent) uses discretion to benefit themselves or their clients when the interests of the principal (the government or the public) and the agent (the agent) diverge. According to this approach, clients try to persuade agents to behave in their favour by offering incentives or rewards. As a result, the agents may work with the customers to get around procurement laws, which has a negative impact on the principal by increasing costs or delivering bad goods or services.

Hassan & Ahmed (2015) used the PAC model to examine Malaysia's public procurement system's corruption factors. They discovered that poor governance, an absence of openness, and a lack of accountability were the main causes of corruption in the procurement process. Similarly, Baharuddin & Rahman (2018) examined the causes of corruption in the Malaysian public procurement process using the PAC model. They discovered that the government, as the principal, had little control over the agents, or public procurement officials, and that these agents were vulnerable to client manipulation.

Understanding the dynamics of corruption in public procurement is possible with the help of the PAC model. According to this paradigm, the principal is the government or other organisation that commissions an agent to complete a work, and the client is the person or group that gains from the assignment being completed. When the agent – in charge of the work and has access to more information – takes part in actions that benefit the client at the principal's expense, corruption may result. The principal-agent-client actors' roles in corruption in public procurement are a topic of many discussions and debates such as:

*The principal's accountability:* Whether the principal is accountable for corruption in public procurement is a topic of discussion. Some contend that failure to exercise enough monitoring or the creation of an atmosphere that fosters dishonest behaviour should hold the principal liable (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2017), while others contend that the agent is primarily responsible (Crespo-Tenorio & Llamazares, 2010).

*Agent's incentives:* Whether the agent's motivations in the principal-agent-client relationship inevitably result in corruption is a topic of discussion. Due to lax control and monitoring, some contend that the agent has an incentive to engage in corrupt activities (Mauro, 1998). While others contend that corruption may be reduced by using the right incentives and enforcement measures (Olken, 2007).

*Client's role:* The third point of contention is the client's potential involvement in public procurement corruption. While some contend that the customer actively participates in corruption by profiting from the agent's corrupt actions (Lambsdorff, 2002), others contend that the client may be a victim of corruption if they are ignorant of the agent's actions (Soreide, 2011).<sup>1</sup>

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1 There are multiple approaches in explaining corruption. The phenomenon can be seen by using multiple lens in human behavioural science such as sociology, politics, economics, psychology and other such as functionalist, criminologist, and moralist. According to Al-Attas (1995), corruption is an immoral action and cannot be tolerated. However, according to Feldman, Y. (2017) indirectly, people are more convenience to accept gift as a response to a good deed by others regardless there is a conflict of interest or not. Corruption sometime seen as a grease to the economy as argued by Huntington (1968) and

Overall, these debates highlight the complexity of corruption in public procurement and the need for a multifaceted approach to combating it. Therefore, this paper aims to explain the phenomenon in the Malaysian context.<sup>2</sup> The method of data collection and analysis will be summarised in the next section.

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Ford., H (1908). As for politics, it always related to the political fund (Teh, 2002). This fund is necessary for the political party to run their political party including in election, mass talk and hi tea party (Agus, 2005). The political party cannot rely merely on their member fees to run their organization. While typology of corruption such as grand corruption, petty corruption and as argued by Amundsen (1999) give a much impression of what can be done by the politician to get easy money. Other type of corruption that related to politics is a legislative corruption as debated by Jain (2001). In Psychology, there are several research pertaining corruptions such as Pertiwi (2021) argues the human perception towards other are among the factors that determining their behaviour or misbehaviour including corrupt practices. This was echoed by Weisel, O., & Shalvi, S. (2015), in a normal experimental paradigm, people are choosing between moral norms which are collaborate or be honest. The research found that people tend to collaborate to the immoral action as to collaborate to the moral action. People are collaborating as means of communication and not merely greed in shaping corruption.

2 . In Malaysian context, there are several research pertaining corruption on why and what. There are three patterns of corruption in Malaysia which are power; opportunity; and moral values. This are the determinants factor of individual act to involve in corruption in Malaysia (Othman, et al., 2014). This was in line with the research finding by (Azman, Ab. Rahman, A., et al., 2022) opined that power and opportunity are the internal factor of corruption in Malaysia. While the external factor of corruption in Malaysia includes low salary, financial and workforce difficulties and national policy on anti-corruption. The latest book by late Prof. Mohamad Kamal Hassan (2021) has streamlined the idea of internal factor of corruption in Malaysia. He argues that moral and ethical crises was in the deep roots in the disease hearts and *nafs al-ammarah* which is the bad deeds such as greed, power, warlords, narcissism, hypocrisy, cronyism, and excessive adoration to political leader are among the root cause of corruption among Malay-Muslim politician in Malaysia. He proposed to make a spiritual and moral transformation through major changes and reforms of the political parties, culture, and behaviour; and strengthening the unification of Muslim Ummah as a divine commandment and embody the Prophetic universal mission of compassion and mercy to all the worlds.

## Research Methodology

This paper aims to analyse the actors involved in corrupt practices in public procurement using the lens of principal-agent-client in Malaysia using selected MACC case files. Therefore, a qualitative approach was used to gain a qualitative understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations. As mentioned earlier, this study focused on the selective investigation paper of MACC that investigates corruption cases related to the procurement process. Case study approaches were used, which tend to employ a variety of data sources, including direct observation, interviews, document review, artifacts, and other sources (Eisenhardt, 1989 & Yin, 2009). The document review analysis was used to analyse actual MACC investigation papers on public procurement in Malaysia between 2014 and 2019.

Content analysis was the main approach to data analysis in this study. According to Berelson (1952) and Kerlinger (1986), content analysis is a research technique that involves studying and analysing data in a systematic and qualitative manner to measure variables. It involved the data that was obtained from the selected MACC's investigation papers. All chosen public procurement corruption cases were selected and put through inclusion and exclusion criteria, which are listed as follows:

- 1) Public procurement-related Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) cases from 2014 to 2019.
- 2) Only convicted cases.
- 3) *Kemas Untuk Simpan* (KUS) or completed and inactive investigation documents are among the inclusion criteria.

This paper analysed 18 selected MACC cases from 2014–2019 to determine the actors involved in corrupt practices. The principal-agent framework developed by Graycar (2022) is used as a guideline in determining the actors involved. He argues that, when the agent behaves corruptly in procurement activities, they will be a clear antidote, however if the principal is involved in public procurement corruption, the remedies were unclear.

The researchers find that data from MACC case files regarding public procurement have certain limitations. All the primary data extracted from the case files, with the inclusion and exclusion criteria,

only provided data for the “agent” and the “client.” None of the case files provided by MACC were related to the principal as an actor in the corruption case. Therefore, the researchers included data from other related and authoritative sources, which are from selected law journals in Malaysia, which provide the grounds of judgment of high-profile cases. These cases are related to the “principal” as defined in this study. Thus, two cases are selected for this study:

1. Public Prosecutor vs. Rosmah Mansor
2. Public Prosecutor vs. Tan Sri Mohd Isa bin Abdul Samad

This study involved sensitive issues such as classified government documents and high-profile cases involving politicians. It examines 18 selected investigation papers for cases convicted by the court of law that have been declassified from 2014 to 2019. Therefore, an approval was given by the Division of Policy, Planning and Research (*Bahagian Dasar, Perancangan dan Penyelidikan*) of MACC for the application to refer to the investigation paper of the MACC case files. The present study is also approved by International Islamic University Malaysia’s (IIUM) Research Ethics Committee (IREC). To ensure the confidentiality of the persons involved, data collection document would not have the subject’s name or other sensitive or private information. Instead, it will use a unique ID to refer to the subject. However, two high-profile recent corruption cases will use the principal’s respective names as the documents are publicly accessible from selected law journals.

### **Findings and Discussion**

The study of corruption in public procurement in Australia by Graycar (2019 & 2022) analysed public hearing cases over a 30-year period at New South Wales Independent Commission against. He found that, in rich countries, the principal is principled, and the agent may be a potential corruptor. However, this may differ in developing countries, where the principal may be less principled. The main problem with the principal, according to him, is that the principal is subject only to ex-post detection of his or her corrupt actions, rather than the agent, who faces real-time monitoring, supervision, and detection by the principal. This problem occurs because of the ability of the principal, as a minister, head of department, or policymaker, to turn things around according to

his or her capabilities as a person in power over an agent. Thus, by using the operational definition of principal, agent and client that has been discussed before, it will shed light on a finding and discussion of corruption cases involving the principal, agent, and client as actors in a Malaysian setting.

### *Principal as a Corrupt Actor*

#### 1. Wife of the Prime Minister

The accused is the wife of the former Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Mohd Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak. Datin Sri Rosmah Mansor faces three charges under Section 16(a) (A) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Act 2009, where she is accused of corruptly soliciting and receiving gratification as an inducement and reward for helping a company called Jepak Holding Sdn. Bhd. in getting a project valued at RM 1.25 billion from the ministry of education.

The accused is sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for each charge and the sentence is to run concurrently. She was also fined a total RM 970 million for all three charges, in default 30 years' jail. The sentence for jail term was given a stay of execution pending the appeal to the Court of Appeal. (MLRH, 2021).

#### 2. Chairman of FELDA

Mohd Isa was charged with nine counts of taking gratification of more than RM3 million under Section 16(a)(A) of the MACC Act and one offense of criminal breach of trust (CBT) in December 2018. The reward was for approving Felda Investment Corporation Sdn. Bhd. (FICSB) purchase of the RM160 million Merdeka Palace Hotel & Suites (MPHS) from GAPSB in Kuching, Sarawak.

On 3 February 2021, Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad, the former chairman of the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA), was found guilty by the High Court of nine corruption counts totalling RM3 million. He was given a six-year prison sentence, a RM15.45 million fine, in default 18 years' jail. But while the accused is appealing to the Court of Appeal, Mohd Isa was given a stay of execution for his punishment. (MLJU, 2021). However, on 6 March 2024, the Court of Appeal acquitted and discharged him on all nine charges of corruption. The prosecution later appealed the acquittal at the Federal Court.

### *Agent as a Corrupt Actor*

#### 3. Community College

The case, under section 23 of the MACC Act of 2009, involves the use of position for improper gains. The educator works at Padang Terap Community College. He used Syarikat RHA Sepakat Enterprise, owned by his sister-in-law, to procure the task of supplying spare parts for electrical equipment valued at RM 34,250.25 for the community college. He used his position to award the project to his sister-in-law. The accused pleaded guilty under Section 23 ASPRM 2009. He was sentenced to a day's imprisonment, a fine of RM 171,251.25, or in default, 6 months' imprisonment. However, he was unable to pay the fine and was imprisoned for 6 months.

#### 4. Farmers' Organization (LPP)

In 2014, a public official, who served as the Sabah Farmers' Organization Board's Economic Affairs Assistant, abetted with his friend, the owner of FZ Cemerlang Resources, to solicit bribes totalling RM 380,000. He also accepted bribes from Syarikat Aliran Handal Sdn. Bhd. totalling RM 35,000 in exchange for job offers for supply-related work involving organic fertiliser. The accused was later convicted of all charges and sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment, a fine of RM 6,000, in default 3-month imprisonment.

#### 5. Selangor State Agricultural Development Corporation (PKPS)

On 5 August 2014, a public official was detained as part of an entrapment operation after accepting a bribe from the complainant in the amount of RM 3,000 in exchange for not interfering with the subcontractor's work at the Selangor Agricultural Development Corporation (PKPS) farm in Sungai Panjang, Kuala Kubu Bharu. He was later convicted of the alternative charge (Penal Code) and was fined RM 15,000, in default 6-month jail term.

#### 6. Royal Malaysian Navy (TLDM)

In 2014, a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Malaysian Navy persuaded his wife, who worked in the procurement division, to secure a project in favour of a friend, and to authorise payment for supply works valued at RM 1,363,317.95 for the friend's company. In return, he and his wife received kickbacks amounting to RM 421,011.67. The accused

pleaded guilty to an alternative charge (Penal Code) and was sentenced to a 9-month jail term. He was also fined RM 80,000, in default 5-month jail term.

#### 7. Melaka Stadium Corporation

Between 2011 and 2015, the Assistant Director of Management and Finance at Melaka Stadium Corporation abused his position by giving his younger brother's company, Ah Boy Suppliers & Services, permission to purchase cleaning and maintenance supplies and equipment worth nearly RM 100,000 for the Hang Jebat Stadium, which is run by the Melaka Stadium Corporation. The accused pleaded guilty to an alternative charge. She was sentenced to a day imprisonment and a fine of RM 65,836.50, in default 2-year jail term.

#### 8. Technical University

A Technical University lecturer in Melaka abused his position as a project leader to obtain bribes by submitting and recommending the quotation of the HA Mega Supply Company owned by his mother-in-law to be selected as the supplier of the Low Wind Vertical Axis Wind Turbine project priced at RM 19,986.00 without making a declaration of interest. The accused pleaded guilty to the charge. He was sentenced to a day's imprisonment and fine of RM 45,600 in default 12-month jail term.

#### 9. Penang State Forestry Department

In 2014, the Deputy Director of Development, Penang State Forestry Department, solicited a bribe of RM 4,000 from a contractor in return for providing an herb plant project worth RM 28,000 in the Telok Bahang Recreational Forest. He was arrested in an entrapment operation while accepting the bribe money. At the end of the trial, he was sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment for all charges and a fine of RM 62,500 in total, in default 3-month jail term.

#### 10. Farmers Organization (LPP)

In Rompin, Pahang, the General Manager of Pahang Farmers Board (LPP) abused his power in connection with a cattle supply project worth RM 100, 000 that was purchased from SR Teras Tani Enterprise, a company owned by his wife, which he failed to declare. The accused

pleaded guilty to an alternative charge and was sentenced to a fine of RM10, 000, in default 3-month jail term.

#### 11. Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL)

A public technician at DBKL used his position to obtain bribes from contractors who carry out maintenance works. He also used his position as project supervisor to ask the contractor to choose his wife's company to do subcontract repairs and received bribes amounting to RM 56,240 as wages on behalf of his wife. The accused pleaded guilty to an alternative charge and was sentenced to a fine of RM 12,000, in default 2-month jail term.

#### 12. Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA)

As an administrative officer of FELDA and holding the position of Vice President 4 of the Malaysian Felda Youth Council (MBFM), he embezzled allocations from the Malaysian FELDA Youth Council amounting to RM 34,170.00 in relation to the 2013 Felda Saji Kitchen Champion programme, where the allocation was not used for the programme in question and as payments to suppliers who should have been paid off by him. It is suspected that the allocation was used for his personal use and that of his company. He pleaded guilty to the charge and was sentenced to 14 days imprisonment with 1 stroke of *rotan* and a fine of RM 16,000, in default 1-year prison term.

#### 13. Royal Malaysian Navy (TLDM)

A Royal Malaysian Navy lieutenant received a bribe from a supplier for helping to secure a supply project at the Fleet Supply Depot, Lumut, Perak, from 2012–2014. In return, he received bribes totalling RM 104,971.97. He pleaded guilty to an alternative charge (Penal Code). The court sentenced him to 7 months' imprisonment and a fine of RM 10,000, in default 3-month prison term.

#### 14. Selangor State Malay Customs and Heritage Corporation (PADAT)

As a curator at the Selangor State Malay Customs and Heritage Corporation, he verified a supply claim from Security Multi Solution Enterprise Company for the supply of musical equipment amounting to RM 49,800, knowing full well that it was a false claim. After full trial, he was found guilty of the charge. He was sentenced to a day's imprisonment and a fine of RM 36,000 in default 12-month jail term.

#### 15. Terengganu Islamic Religious and Malay Customs Council (MAIDAM)

In 2015, as an assistant engineer at the Terengganu Islamic Religious and Malay Customs Council (MAIDAM), he verified a supply claim by ADR Caliber Enterprise Company and realised the claim contained false details. It refers to a document claiming the supply and installation of carpets at Surau Al-Hijrah Tok Adis, Kuala Terengganu, amounting to RM 11,000 to the Terengganu Council of Islamic Religion and Malay Customs (MAIDAM), which did not follow the specified specifications. The accused pleaded guilty at the end of the prosecution. He was sentenced to 1 month's imprisonment and a fine of RM 32,000 in default 12-month jail term.

#### 16. Farmers Organisation (LPP)

Between 31 January to 31 December 2016, as the General Manager of LPP Merlimau Melaka, he was entrusted to manage the Rice Fertiliser Scheme Project and ordered 56,700 bags of NPK and Urea fertilisers worth RM 2,544,650.00 for the use of farmers in the Merlimau Area. He fraudulently misused all the property for his own use and sold it to other parties. He pleaded guilty to an alternative charge (Penal Code) and was sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment and 6 strokes of *rotan* for criminal breach of trust.

#### 17. National Anti-Drugs Agency (AADK)

As an Anti-Drugs Assistant, submitted on behalf of his wife a document which is a Local Order (LO), which contains false details of a claim for payment of food and drink services for the National Anti-Drugs Day Programme at Melaka State Level, 2013, amounting to RM 9,000, although no supplies were made. The accused pleaded guilty at the end of the prosecution. He was sentenced to a day's imprisonment, a fine of RM50,000, and in default 9-month jail term.

#### *Client as a Corrupt Actor*

#### 18. Branch Manager

The Branch Manager of the Master Cargo Agencies, Song Branch, made a false claim with false account details to the Song Police District Office (IPD) amounting to RM 12,853.70 for private goods delivery service for a police officer who was transferred from IPD Song to IPD

Meradong but the service was never carried out. He was sentenced to a fine of RM 64,270.00, in default 4-month imprisonment, and 5-day imprisonment for the second charge.

#### 19. Branch Manager

The Branch Manager of the Master Cargo Agencies, Song Branch, made another false claim with false account details to the Song Police District Office (IPD) amounting to RM 18,006.00 for private goods delivery service for a police officer who was transferred from IPD Song to IPD Kota Kinabalu, but the service was never carried out. He was sentenced to a fine of RM 90,30.00 in default of the 6-month imprisonment under the Penal Code charge.

#### 20. Company Director

The director of Nfort MSC Sdn. Bhd. made false claims for capital grant payments known to contain false details to MOSTI (Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation) for the installation of IT information system items, the development of networking systems, and other works involving information systems. It refers to the payment to a subject matter expert (SME) amounting to RM200,000 where the said expenses do not exist. The accused has pleaded guilty to the charge. He was sentenced to a day imprisonment, a fine of RM1 million, and, in default 5-year jail term.

The above-mentioned corruption cases were reviewed from the 18 case files of MACC from 2014-2019. Two recent high-profile corruption cases in the public procurement sector in Malaysia were included in this case study to provide a diverse set of data collection approaches that will trigger the assessment of trustworthiness. As this paper aimed to analyse the role of the principal-agent-client in explaining and determining the actors involved in corrupt procurement practices in Malaysia, thus, the analyses of the study are summarised in the following table:

No.	Actor	Role	Offense	Conviction
1.	Wife of Prime Minister	Principal	Soliciting and receiving graft	Pending / Appeal
2.	Chairman of GLC	Principal	Receiving graft	Pending / Appeal
3.	Lecturer	Agent	Abuse of public office	Jail term and fine

4.	Economic Affairs Assistant	Agent	Soliciting and receiving graft	Jail term and fine
5.	Supervisor	Agent	Soliciting and receiving graft	Fine
6.	Lieutenant Commander, Navy	Agent	Soliciting and receiving graft	Jail term and fine
7.	Assistant Director	Agent	Abuse of public office	Jail term and fine
8.	Lecturer	Agent	Abuse of public office	Jail term and fine
9.	Deputy Director	Agent	Soliciting and receiving graft	Jail term and fine
10.	General Manager	Agent	Abuse of public office	Fine
11.	Technician	Agent	Abuse of public office	Fine
12.	Administrative officer	Agent	Abuse of public office	Jail term, caning and fine
13.	Lieutenant, Navy	Agent	Receiving bribe	Jail term and fine
14.	Curator	Agent	False claim	Jail term and fine
15.	Assistant engineer	Agent	False claim	Jail term and fine
16.	General Manager	Agent	Abuse of public office	Jail term, caning and fine
17.	Anti-Drugs Assistant	Agent	False claim	Jail term and fine
18.	Branch manager	Client	False claim	Fine
19.	Branch manager	Client	False claim	Fine
20.	Company director	Client	False claim	Jail term and fine

From the above-mentioned case studies, 75 percent of the actors are government servants as agents. The actors categorised as principal represent 10 percent, and the client, as the last category of actor, represents about 15 percent. This finding was supported by a few factors, such as

the fact that, according to the Ministry of Finance of Malaysia (2022), the budget spending on public supplies and services has increased from 29.3 billion in 2019 to 30.3 billion in 2022, and it constitutes around 12 percent of GDP, or 11 trillion annually. Even in the European Union (EU), despite higher integrity in the procurement system, fraud and corruption have caused 10–20 percent losses (Bosio et al., 2020). This indicates that the source of corruption is mostly government budget spending, as Kaufman (2004) estimated that more than US\$1,000 billion in bribes are paid annually, with the volume of bribes exchanged for public sector procurement alone amounting to roughly 200 billion dollars per year. Therefore, most of the public officials involved in public procurement are exposed to the transgression act along the way.

There are 13 actors from the senior level of management, which constitutes 65 percent. Only two of the actors were classified as principal, and the remainders were agents. The remainder of the actors, eight of them, fell under the category of agent. The interesting fact is that all the client actors are in senior-level management, and none of them are in junior-level management. All the cases involving principals are high-ranking public officials, including the wife of the Prime Minister, and a chairman of Government-Linked Company (GLC).

In terms of offenses committed by actors, seven of them fell under the criminal offense of abuse of public office, or 35 percent of total actors. While soliciting and receiving bribes constitute around 35 percent, or seven actors involved in this kind of criminal offense. The remainder of actors, or six of them, committed another type of offense, which is a false claim, or around 30 percent. Another finding is related to the convictions of those actors that have a similar trend, which is that most of the convictions are jail terms or fines. Five of the cases resulted in only fines. Most of them are sentenced to jail terms and fines by the court of law. Another intriguing fact is that two actors were given strokes of *rotan* for their offenses. This case is related to the Criminal Breach of Trust (CBT) offense, which constitutes caning as part of the sentence, a provision under the Penal Code. From all 20 cases discussed, the total amount of money that changed hands among actors was estimated at around RM 212,988,244.95 million, and the total amount of the procurement value was estimated at around RM 5,373,069,195.87 billion in total.

Those cases affected several public sectors. Slightly more than one quarter, or 28.5 percent, fell within the agricultural sector; 14 percent fell under education and enforcement; and two cases under the hotel/tourism and defence sectors represent 9.5 percent. The other sectors—sports, religion, and science and technology—have one case each. Overall, all the actors in the role of agent were public officials, all the actors in the role of client were from the private sector, and all the actors in the role of principal were high-level government officials, their relatives, and politicians. There are two cases involving the principals still pending in terms of conviction because they appealed their conviction to the superior court, such as the Court of Appeal and the Federal Court of Malaya. This privilege is usually used by the principal, as they have the ability to make such an appeal. For this “principal,” the corrupt money involved was enormous, and the consequence was also enormous, which was five times the sum or value of the gratification. *Rosmah Mansor vs. Public Prosecutor* was the classic case when a record fine of RM 970 million was imposed by the Higher Court. On the other hand, most of the cases related to the “agent” and “client” ended in the lower court, and most of them pleaded guilty. As mentioned by Graycar (2022), the principal is only exposed for their transgressions after the corrupt practices have been done, often in the form of a report that can be discredited or ignored, and they will manipulate the playing field or be immune from the consequences. In Malaysia, it can be related to cases involving politicians such as Lim Guan Eng in 2018 and Tan Sri Musa Aman in 2020, where their corruption cases were dropped by the Attorney General (NST, 2018, 2020).

Overall, the multiple sources of data collection techniques used in this study have proven that all the rich analyses extracted from this case study is very significant to the body of knowledge in corruption and procurement.

## **Conclusion**

Finally, the PAC model has proven to be a helpful framework for comprehending corruption in Malaysian public procurement. The PAC frameworks are useful in determining the actors who are involved in corruption in the public procurement sector in Malaysia. The findings illustrate that corruption in public procurement is more prevalent among public officials in the Malaysian context. The approach will

aid in pinpointing corruption-causing elements and formulating countermeasures. The way forward is to have an in-depth study on the *modus operandi* and to investigate the type of collusion that occurs between the principal and agent in corrupt practices. It will help policymakers and practitioners create more effective anti-corruption measures to enhance public procurement outcomes in Malaysia.

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# Exploring the Interdependence Model in Malaysia-Indonesia Relations: Insights from Sabah, Malaysia

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**Abstract:** The historical similarities between Malaysia and Indonesia, apparent in geographical proximity and social-cultural dimensions, significantly influence perspectives and discourse on their bilateral relations. Despite frequent assertions of shared kinship and racial ties, relations between Malaysia and Indonesia are consistently characterised by rivalry, marked by numerous disagreements and challenges. This paper posits that conflict is a minor element in the broader discourse of relations, emphasising the importance of cooperation due to the complex interdependence between these two countries. Using Sabah as a case study, this paper highlights the significance of interdependence between Malaysia and Indonesia, delving into pivotal issues that shape the dynamics of their bilateral relationship. It focuses on several issues such as the

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population and kinship ties, the reliance of the Sabah economic sector on the Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI), consumer goods and everyday necessities, interdependence in the security sector, and finally haze and environmental pollutions to outline the dynamics of interdependence between Sabah (Malaysia) and Indonesia. All facets describing these relations are emphasised since they demonstrate that these two countries are interdependent and share common interests in nearly all sectors. This paper contends that despite facing various contentious issues and problems, the interdependence that occurs contributes to a harmonious relationship and is able to avoid conflict between the two countries.

**Keywords:** Interdependence, Security, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sabah.

**Abstrak:** Persamaan sejarah antara Malaysia dan Indonesia, jelas dalam melalui kedekatan geografi dan dimensi sosial-budaya, memainkan peranan penting dalam membentuk perspektif dan wacana dalam hubungan dua hala kedua-dua negara ini. Malangnya, walaupun sering mendakwa berkongsi hubungan saudara dan serumpun, hubungan antara kedua-dua negara ini secara konsisten dicirikan oleh persaingan, ditandai dengan pelbagai perselisihan dan cabaran. Makalah ini menegaskan bahawa persaingan adalah elemen kecil dalam wacana yang lebih luas mengenai hubungan ini. Ia menekankan bahawa saling kebergantungan yang kompleks adalah penting untuk memahami hubungan ini. Menggunakan Sabah sebagai kajian kes, makalah ini menyerlahkan kepentingan saling kebergantungan antara Malaysia-Indonesia dan menyelidiki isu-isu penting yang membentuk dinamik hubungan dua hala ini. Antara isu utama adalah seperti hubungan penduduk dan persaudaraan, pergantungan sektor ekonomi Sabah kepada Pekerja Migran Indonesia (PMI), barangan pengguna dan keperluan harian, saling kebergantungan dalam sektor keselamatan, dan akhirnya jerebu dan pencemaran alam sekitar yang memperlihatkan dinamika saling kebergantungan antara Sabah (Malaysia) dan Indonesia. Semua aspek yang menggambarkan hubungan ini ditekankan kerana ia menunjukkan bahawa kedua-dua negara ini saling bergantung dan berkongsi kepentingan bersama dalam hampir semua sektor. Kertas ini menegaskan bahawa walaupun menghadapi pelbagai isu dan masalah yang menjadi perbalahan, namun saling kebergantungan antara kedua negara mampu mengelakkan konflik serta menyumbang kepada hubungan yang harmoni antara kedua-dua negara.

**Kata kunci:** Saling kebergantungan, Keselamatan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sabah.

## Introduction

Indonesia and Malaysia are two neighbouring countries that share not just land and sea borders, but also the same language and historical roots. Thus, the relation between these two countries is exceptionally intimate and unique. However, at the same time, these factors also contribute to problems and conflicts in the relationship. This can be seen clearly after both gained their independence following World War II. Starting with *Konfrontasi*<sup>1</sup> at the beginning of independence until today, the two countries are plagued with various issues and problems to the extent that it can bring tension in their relations. Therefore, this paper attempts to understand Malaysia-Indonesia relations via the perspective of interdependence. Utilising the state of Sabah, situated in East Malaysia and sharing both a land and sea border with eastern Indonesia, this paper demonstrates that interdependence between these two nations would enhance cooperation and act as a deterrent against conflicts or wars. Although there are flaws in the relationship between these two countries, their interdependence will compel them to continue working together to solve issues in an increasingly challenging environment.

## Malaysia-Indonesia Bilateral Relations

The Malaysia-Indonesia relationship is often characterised by nicknames like “little-big brothers”, reflecting a shared destiny since both nations were colonised and tied to kinship due to cultural, historical, and religious similarities. These shared characteristics contribute to

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<sup>1</sup> The *Konfrontasi* (1963 to 1966) was an armed conflict sparked by Indonesia's opposition to the idea of the Federation of Malaysia. This historical episode was characterised by a breakdown in political, economic, and social relations, culminating in armed incursions, subversion, and destabilisation. In the specific context of Sabah, pivotal military engagements unfolded in Kalabakan (14 series) and Pulau Sebatik (14 series). The Kalabakan incident was the most significant, witnessing eight fatalities and 18 injuries among Malaysian security forces. Meanwhile, Sarawak also witnessed a multitude of battles, notably in Tebedu (83), Simanggang/Sarikin (36), Palampu and Nagayat (12), Kapit (10), and Barrio and Ba'kelalan (5). One of Sarawak's intense battles took place in Long Jawai, Tebedu, and situated 48 km from the Sarawak-Kalimantan border, when 21 Border Scouts, 6 Gurkhas, and two police officers were ambushed by 200 Indonesian soldiers (Mackie, 1974; Nik Mahmud, 2000; Mad Ali @ Abang, 2021).

a cordial relationship. Early studies, including those by Abdullah (2003), Abubakar (2008), Wan Hassan & Dollah (2010), Chong (2012), Bustami, et al. (2021) Maksum (2018), Liow (2003, 2005) and Chan (2018), explore the relationship's ideational perspective, focusing on kinship factors, shared history, and identity. Chan (2018) emphasises the 'special relationship,' highlighting reciprocity, trust, and loyalty, while examining the interplay between power dynamics and shared identities. Jibrán (2018) also argues that international organisations, such as ASEAN, play a crucial role in ensuring harmonious Malaysia-Indonesia relations.

Changes in domestic and international politics have significantly altered the interaction between Malaysia and Indonesia. Globalisation and the rise of international markets have compelled all nations to pursue a competitive identity. This shift is particularly evident in Malaysia-Indonesia ties, where this decade has witnessed the emergence of rivalry between the two nations. According to Abubakar (2008) and Maksum (2018), the primary policy in both Malaysia and Indonesia is to compete globally, overlooking the traditional notions of a little-big brother relationship or '*serumpun*' (similar stock or race). They argue that Indonesia-Malaysia relations are often viewed as overly emotional and fraught with various problems. Consequently, characterising Malaysia-Indonesia relations as genuinely amicable remains elusive, given the persistent diplomatic disputes that significantly hinder development and stability.

Since their independence, Malaysia and Indonesia's bilateral relations have been shaped by historical challenges, notably the '*Ganyang Malaysia*'<sup>2</sup> during the *Konfrontasi* era (1963-1966). This legacy persists, with ongoing issues encompassing mistreatment of Indonesian migrant workers, terrorism, cultural and territorial disputes

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<sup>2</sup> The '*Ganyang Malaysia*' or "Crush Malaysia" campaign, declared by President Sukarno on September 25, 1963, was a concerted effort to protest the proposed establishment of Malaysia. In executing this campaign, Sukarno initially employed a multifaceted approach involving political, economic, and propaganda strategies to stop this idea. This encompassed measures such as cutting off diplomatic ties with Malaysia. However, when these actions didn't work, he decided to launch military attacks against Malaysia (Mackie, 1974; Nik Mahmud, 2000).

in the Celebes Sea (Block ND6 and ND7 or Ambalat) and the Sulu Sea (involving conflicts in Sipadan and Ligitan). These problems reflect the inherent complexities in their relationship. The post-*Konfrontasi* period has seen the overlapping claim in the Celebes Sea (ND6 and ND7) emerge as a particularly contentious issue (Druce & Baikoeni, 2016; Schofield & Storey, 2005; Meng & Chrisnandi, 2013; Maksum, 2016; Arsana, 2010), intensifying negative portrayals of Malaysia in Indonesian media (Maksum, 2017). This disagreement is further fuelled by allegations of inhumane treatment of Indonesian workers in Malaysia. The potential escalation of these issues highlights the need for careful and serious addressing to prevent further strains in the bilateral relationship.

However, the disagreements and challenges between Malaysia and Indonesia are not likely to escalate into a full-blown conflict or war. Recent developments in domestic and regional security challenges have compelled both governments to collaborate, enhancing cooperation due to the changing security landscape. This perspective aligns with liberalism, which argues that international cooperation is the most effective way to address bilateral issues. In contrast to realism, liberalism suggests that despite anarchy in international relations, elements like the interdependence of states can mitigate potential conflicts. Recent developments, such as President Jokowi's proposal to move the Indonesian capital to Kalimantan, indicate a potential expansion of cooperation and interdependence between Malaysia and Indonesia (Gulasan *et al.*, 2021). This is particularly relevant for Sabah, an East Malaysian state sharing land and sea borders with Kalimantan, prompting careful scrutiny of the proposal to maximise potential benefits.

The state of Sabah encompasses an area of 72,689 square kilometres of land with its maritime territory occupying 360 square kilometres, constituting 30 percent of Malaysia's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) (Jafar, *et al.* 2022). Geographically, Sabah extends from the South China Sea in the west to the Sulu Sea in the northern region of Kudat, encompassing the eastern coast, which spans the Sulu Sea and the Celebes Sea in the Semporna and Tawau areas. Furthermore, Sabah also shares territorial waters on the borders with three neighbouring countries of Indonesia, the Philippines, and Brunei. The state coastline stretches approximately 1,860 kilometres, extending from Cape of Mengalong, Labuan to Sebatik Tawau Island (JUPEM, 2005; Hazani,

2020). Therefore, leveraging on the model of complex interdependence, this paper illustrates several examples based on the existing relationship between both countries, demonstrating how this framework can effectively elucidate the dynamics of their bilateral relationship.

### **The Model of Complex Interdependence**

One of the primary theories in international relations that underscore the importance of cooperation is liberalism. In contrast to realism, where classical political realism and neorealism are fundamentally distinct concepts, liberalism, especially in its neo-liberal form, maintains a coherent framework in its assumptions and approaches concerning the functioning of the world. Neo-liberalism extends the same foundational liberal assumptions to the contemporary environment, taking into consideration the conditions of globalisation and the post-World War II and post-Cold War era. For liberalism, the anarchic and conflictual nature of international politics is subject to change. Liberalism symbolises a decrease in conflicts, an avoidance of wars, and a pivot towards cooperation as the predominant form of international relations. According to liberal theory, achieving this transformation is possible through the implementation of rules, norms, institutions, and values. In the liberal perspective, these elements should not only guide international relations but also regulate the behaviour of states.

Furthermore, within the broader framework of liberalism, another significant concept that has evolved is the complex interdependence model. In “Power and Interdependence” (1977/2011) Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye explored the concept of complex interdependence. This term refers to the complex nature of relations among states, characterised by a multitude of channels connecting societies. Beyond traditional intergovernmental diplomatic relations, complex interdependence encompasses trans-governmental officials and numerous informal ties among non-governmental elites and corporations. Keohane and Nye emphasise that these diverse connections form multiple networks among states, contributing to the complexity of interdependence. In this framework, the agenda of interstate relationships involves a range of issues that lack a clear or consistent hierarchy. This model continues to be pertinent in elucidating diverse facets of international relations until today. As opposed to the theory of realism, the concept of complex interdependence rejects major assumptions in realism on world

politics. Instead, Keohane and Nye (2011) propose three assumptions in international politics: First, other than the state, there are other non-state actors whose roles are significant in international relations; second, hierarchical order is absent in explaining a variety of global issues internationally; third, the military strength as an instrument for conflict resolution has become obsolete (Keohane & Nye, 2011: 20-25).

Nonetheless, this paper contends that Keohane and Nye's model requires a reconfiguration with diverse concepts and terminology to comprehensively grasp the intricacies of interdependence. The interactions among nation-states present numerous complexities, demanding a nuanced scholarly approach to international relations. In the realm of security studies, for example, a more comprehensive understanding of interdependence can be achieved by incorporating concepts like "common security" or "cooperation among adversaries" (Møller, 1996), "mutual security" (Smoke 1991), "reciprocal security" (Booth, 1985), or "cooperative security" (Nolan, 1994). This broader conceptualisation enhances the comprehension of interdependence in the context of security discourse. Despite the varied terms, the underlying idea is that a state's security is intricately linked to the security of its neighbouring countries. Thus, in explaining Sabah's security, this concept suggests that instability in neighbouring Indonesia will impact the stability and security of Sabah. In this relational context, it can be argued that the more prosperous and secure the neighbouring countries, the greater the security enjoyed by the state.

The assumption accurately reflects the situation in Sabah, where regional stability significantly influences the state's security considerations. Malaysia has adopted the "prosper thy neighbour" strategy in its foreign policy to achieve this objective. This proactive approach signifies Malaysia's efforts to strengthen regional cooperation with neighbouring countries, ultimately enhancing Malaysia's security (Dollah & Joko, 2015). Former Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir introduced and advocated for this concept in 1997.

“...about win-win-win strategies, about the multitude of opportunities in Asia for everyone... I would like to explain again that it simply means if you help your neighbour to prosper you will prosper along with it. When countries are prosperous, they become more stable and their people need not emigrate to your country. Instead, their prosperity

provides you with a market for your goods, with opportunities to invest and to enrich yourself even as you create jobs and wealth for them". (Dollah & Joko, 2015: 80)

Hence, the discussion in this paper underscores the significance of Malaysia-Indonesia relations within the framework of interdependence. By examining various instances that illustrate the interactions and connections between the two nations, the authors contend that this interdependence will exert a notable influence on the future trajectory of their relationship.

### **Navigating Complex Interdependence in Malaysia-Indonesia Relations**

The bilateral relations between Malaysia-Indonesia are a perennial concern predating as early as the formation of Malaysia until the present day (Maksum & Bustami, 2014; Maksum, 2017). In the specific context of Sabah, the relationship has experienced fluctuations over time for both countries (Dollah *et. al.* 2019; Joko *et. al.* 2019). Therefore, a comprehensive examination is necessary to harness the model of complex interdependence to gain a thorough understanding of this relationship. In the remainder of this article, we examine five sectors utilising the framework of complex interdependence, highlighting various actors through which Malaysia and Indonesia may closely cooperate. These sectors include people-to-people relations, cultural and kinship ties, Sabah's economy and Indonesian migrant workers, consumer goods, security dynamics and cross-border crime, and haze and environmental challenges. Each of these issues demonstrates the complexity of Sabah-Indonesia relations, involving diverse actors and a myriad of concerns. In doing so, we seek to clarify how this complex interdependence in these sectors could potentially transform the dynamics of the relations towards greater cooperation rather than competition.

#### *Bonded Connections: People-to-People Relations, Cultural Affinities and Kinship Ties*

The cross-border movements of people form a crucial aspect in understanding the Sabah-Indonesia relationship. Historically, prior to colonial-imposed territorial borders, the Borneo region had fluid interactions due to the absence of defined boundaries (Mat Kib, 2017). Colonisation led to the establishment of territorial borders,

dividing kinship ties among clans and communities. The Sabah-Kalimantan border division has separated populations in areas like Sebatik Island, Kalabakan, Sook, Keningau and Nabawan creating challenges for border communities (Karulus & Suadik, 2010; Othman, 2019). Notably, on Sebatik Island, residences are divided by the border, presenting unique challenges in border community's daily life (see., Dollah et. al 2019). The need for valid documentation for border crossings within the contemporary nation-states of Malaysia and Indonesia has resulted in a crisis affecting both nations, emphasising the complexities of relationship in Borneo's border area. Attention must be given to the welfare of border communities, which often lack development and essential human necessities. Despite these challenges, both Malaysia-Indonesia demonstrate commitment to improving the well-being of border communities. Various agreements, including the Basic Arrangements on Border Crossing signed in 1967, showcase the dedication to securing and facilitating the processes for border communities in both countries' territorial spaces. Balancing human needs with legal frameworks remains crucial in this collaborative effort (Dollah et. al 2019).

After *Konfrontasi* between Malaysia-Indonesia, both countries began to take practical steps in easing the cross-border movements of people. Both countries introduced the Cross Border Pass (PLB, "*Pas Lintas Batas*") as an alternative to the legal documentation replacing the use of international passports in the border area. The issuance of PLB by the Malaysian government is targeted at Malaysian communities in the border areas. Based on the website of Malaysia's Immigration Department, the PLB is specifically issued for Malaysian citizens who reside for more than six months in several districts in Sabah. These districts in Sabah are Pensiangan, Tenom, Sipitang and Tawau. Meanwhile, in the state of Sarawak, these districts consist of Lundu, Bau, Kuching, Serian, Simanggang and Lubok Antu. The document is valid for a year from the issuance date, and it can be used for several journeys across the borders. The permission to stay in Indonesia should not be more than 30 days for each entry (for further information, please refer to Malaysia's Immigration Department, 2020).

The close relationships among border communities on both sides play a pivotal role in facilitating the movement of goods into Sabah. Tawau, situated strategically near Indonesia and coastal areas, serves

as a key gateway for Indonesian citizens entering Sabah. This district's advantageous location enhances its potential for a substantial increase in people's movements and could emerge as a primary gateway for both the entry and exit of goods and individuals if the capital city relocation takes place (Gulasan et al., 2021). The entry of people from the border necessitates a comprehensive analysis of the longstanding interdependence between Malaysia and Indonesia. Warren (1985) for example explores economic relations and people's movements in the Sulu archipelago and Sulawesi Sea, dating back to the colonial era. Additionally, specific east coast districts in Sabah, such as Sandakan, Lahad Datu, and Tawau, have historically been focal points for copra traders and seafood from North Borneo, Indonesia. This relationship is further strengthened by factors like kinship ties, social relationships, the demand for labor in Sabah's economic sectors, and the demand for Malaysian goods in Indonesia.

#### *Cross-Border Labour Dynamics and Indonesian Migrant Workers*

The demand for cheap labour has increased significantly since decades ago and this result in the Sabah state accepting a large scale of migrant workers from Indonesia. As a result, it is not surprising that one of the most prevalent and contentious issues concerning interdependence between both countries are the demands of the labour workforce for all economic sectors in Sabah. Moreover, Indonesia has the highest population, and the country could provide the need for a labour workforce. This has resulted in Sabah being a destination for migrant workers from Indonesia who arrived in the state both through legal and illegal channels. The crisis can be traced back to the time prior to Sabah achieving its independence after North Borneo joined the Federation of Malaya in 1963. The situation became direr when Sabah was hailed as a booming economic power in the 1960s, which led to an influx of migrant workers in the state (Kurus et al., 1998; Dollah & Abdullah, 2018; Syed Mahadi, 2014; Hugo, 2000; Kassim, 2005, 2012; Wan Hassan & Dollah, 2011; Maksum, 2022; Dollah, 2023). This scenario distinctly illustrates how the movements of people have strengthened the interdependence across various economic sectors in the state of Sabah, prompting an increased need for migrant workers.

The influx of Indonesian workers into Sabah, especially Tawau is not a recent development; its historical trajectory traces back to the

origins of Indonesian arrivals in the region, spanning from the colonial period through the post-colonial era (Sintang, 2007; Goodlet, 2010; Kahin, 1947; Tregonning, 1965; Kaur, 1989). This challenge is notably pronounced in the forestry and other major commodity sectors, where a persistent labour shortage has been an ongoing concern until today (Kurus et al., 1998; Syed Mahadi, 2014; Dollah & Abdullah, 2018; Wahab & Dollah, 2023). The Second Malaysia Plan (1971-1975) underscored a critical labour shortage crisis in Sabah.

“...unless employers can manage to raise wages to a more attractive level, which, unless commodity prices rise substantially, seems unlikely given their high costs, estates will find it difficult to have sufficient workers without large immigration of foreign workers who are prepared to work for lower wages.” (Rachagan, 1987: 259)

In the plantation sector, dominant companies like Felda and Kretam rely heavily on migrant workers, constituting over 90 percent of their workforce (Dollah & Abdullah, 2018; Peters, et. al. 2022; Dollah, 2023). Despite the issuance a significant number of licenses, the labour demands in Sabah persisted, leading the state to explore alternatives such as sourcing labour from China (Dollah, 2023). Notably, Tawau experienced a substantial influx of Indonesian migrant workers, reaching 1,070,771 between 2003 and 2005, with subsequent years seeing fluctuations, revealing the interdependence between labour demand in Sabah and the availability of Indonesian workers. Sectors like palm plantations are particularly impacted, and the recent closure of borders has heightened concerns about labour shortages, especially in small-scale farming and plantations (Joko *et. al* 2019). This scarcity poses challenges, affecting economic and social development in Sabah, with the 5D sectors witnessing a concentration of migrant workers sectors in Sabah where the local are not keen to work in these challenging and demanding sectors.

Following the resolution of the Covid-19 threat, Sabah faces an ongoing challenge of labour shortage, particularly in the plantation, construction, and agriculture sectors, risking economic decline by 2024 if not addressed (Utusan Borneo, 28 Jul. 2022). The scarcity is intensified in the plantation sector due to increased demand driven by rising cooking oil and commodity prices globally (EMPA, 2023). Adeline Leong, Chairman of IDS (Sabah), expresses concern over this

post-Covid-19 development, highlighting that “The shortages of migrant workers have also led to a significant decline in crop production, with many planters unable to harvest their crops” (Borneo Post, 21 Mar. 2023). Consequently, this post pandemic nature on reliant on migrant workers underscoring the post-pandemic situation’s alignment with the interdependence framework.

This complex interdependence extends beyond the influx of migrant workers from Indonesia to Malaysia. Simultaneously, from the Indonesian perspective, the expansive labour market in Malaysia represents an opportunity for the country to export its labour surplus and address challenges related to employment opportunities domestically (Hugo, 1995). Djafar (2012) emphasises income and unemployment levels as pivotal factors shaping Indonesian migration patterns to Malaysia, highlighting the enduring priority of this policy for the Indonesian government. Sabah serves as a crucial source of employment for Indonesian citizens, demonstrates the economic interconnection between Indonesia and Sabah within the complex interdependence model.

#### *Symbiotic Relationship of Supply and Demand of Consumer Essential Goods*

A major concern in the state is the interdependence of essential consumer goods that can be easily and affordably brought from Sabah to Indonesia. This will significantly affect the source of goods and potential imports from Sabah to Kalimantan, considering Jakarta’s considerable distance from the region. Both countries are interdependent, particularly in terms of accessing daily goods and necessities imported from Sabah. Previous studies also aim to explore the movement of goods and services, highlighting Tawau’s geographical location as a key area connecting Malaysia and Indonesia.

On the Indonesian side, the country relies heavily on nine types of basic goods (known as *Sembilan Bahan Pokok* - SEMBAKO) such as rice, sugar, vegetables, fruits, meat, cooking oil, eggs, salt, oil, and gasoline (Dollah, 2023). As such, it is not surprising that smuggling activities, other illicit and Gray-economic activities as well as the dynamics of labour have become a pressing concern in the region (Sarjono, 2022). The demands for nine types of essential goods (SEMBAKO) reinforced the trade involving these goods including subsidised goods from

Malaysia. There are also movements of money in a form of remittance either through online as well as informal mechanisms, and exchange of goods from Malaysia to Indonesia (Mahmood *et. al* 2013). In this regard, Dollah & Mahmood (2006), Omar et al. (2005), Dollah, Maraining, & Abas (2019), argue that the economic exchange of goods between Malaysia and Indonesia has also become a concern that contours the relationship between both countries.

Similarly, Sabah actively engages in the importation of goods from Indonesia, with a particular focus on basic goods such as vegetables, fruits, used clothing, and fisheries. These goods are transported between Tawau and Kalimantan or Sulawesi, establishing a mutual exchange. Conversely, Malaysia imports high-quality fisheries from Kalimantan, meeting market demands for items such as milkfish, golden snapper, and white fish. On the other hand, Indonesian demands for fisheries tend to concentrate on smaller fish varieties like sea bass. Upon observing the Tawau market, it is evident that the enforcement of the Movement Control Order (MCO) in March 2020 to curb the spread of Covid-19 resulted in a significant surge in the prices of goods in Tawau and along the Indonesia-Malaysia borders. Brown sugar, typically priced at RM5.00, experienced a substantial increase ranging between RM10.00 and RM14.00, while chilli prices soared from an average of RM20.00-RM25.00 to RM70.00 per kilogram. Additionally, the closure of borders and heightened border controls, particularly along sea and land routes, contributed to shortages of various goods in certain areas of Sabah. The escalation in the prices of goods in key markets such as Tawau, Kota Kinabalu, and other districts in Sabah vividly illustrates the interdependence inherent in the relationship between both countries.

Therefore, the plan to move of the Indonesia capital city to Kalimantan posed a comparable situation. In this regard, the shift of the capital city of Indonesia from Jakarta to Kalimantan will not halt the movement of goods between both countries. It anticipates the emergence of a new trend in the movement of goods, with a notable increase in quantities flowing from Indonesia to Sabah. Even though many argue that the relocation from Jakarta to Kalimantan will not change the existing economic patterns in Indonesia, the shift alongside the movement of people and government headquarters will certainly lead to the rise of demands for essential goods. As a consequence of heightened demand for goods, there is a potential risk of oversupply, necessitating

the exploration of new markets to mitigate the looming crisis. Sabah emerges as one such potential destination, given its substantial demand for goods. The ability of Indonesia to produce a large quantity of products at a lower cost, owing to reduced labour expenses, serves as a catalyst for the importation of goods from Indonesia to Sabah. Notably, key clothing producers in Tanah Abang, Jakarta, could be identified as potential primary suppliers in this context.

Moreover, the discernible nature of interdependence becomes particularly evident in matters concerning border communities. Recognising its importance, both the governments of Malaysia and Indonesia have taken proactive steps by implementing various measures and policies to promote border economic cooperation. An exemplar of this cooperative dynamic manifests in the practice of barter trade within the Malaysia-Indonesia borders, notably prominent between Tawau (Malaysia) and various provinces such as Nunukan, Tarakan and Banjarmasin in Kalimantan, as well as other provinces in South Sulawesi. As for the state of Sabah, the practice of barter trade through import and export is a perennial trade activity. The barter trade can be traced back as early as the colonial period involving three colonial powers of the British, the Dutch, and the Spanish in the region. Trade activities have been practised traditionally in the region through the barter trade. Warren (1985) for example, through his writing, argues that the trade relations between Mindanao, Sulawesi, and several districts in Sabah such as Sandakan and Lahad Datu can be traced back as early as the pre-colonial period of colonisation in the region. The strategic location of Sabah under the rules of the Sultanate of Brunei and Sulu has made the state an important centre of routes of barter trade in the region (Dollah & Mahmood, 2004). The traders often did not reside very long in Sabah, as they often travelled from one port to another to access goods. The Maranos people from Lanao, for example, brought goods from Sabah and then imported these goods to Mindanao for commercial activities. As such, it is not surprising that there is a significant number of speed boats operating in Zamboanga, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and other locations for barter trade in Sabah (Omar et al., 2005; Dollah et al., 2019).

To ensure the smooth movement of goods, Malaysia and Indonesia cordially signed the Basic Arrangement on Border Crossing on May 26, 1967 in Kuala Lumpur. The agreement further known as the Border Trade Agreement (BTA) is to strengthen the trade relations throughout

the borders between the Republic of Indonesia and Malaysia on August 24, 1970. This trade agreement was further enhanced by the Agreement on Travel Facilities for Sea Border Trade Between the Government Republic of Indonesia and Malaysia signed on October 16, 1973, and the Basic Agreement on Trade and Economic Relations in May 1976 (Dollah *et. al*, 2019). Several efforts that have been taken by both governments to evaluate all previous border agreements enable strategic improvements for the population residing throughout the borders (for further information, see, Damajanti, 2020). As an illustration, in July 2023, both nations reached a mutual agreement to amend the border trade agreement, aiming to streamline and enhance support for the border community (Strangio, 09 Jul 2023). In addition, several agreements emphasise regional cooperation such as the BIMP-EAGA (Dent & Richter, 2011) and the Socio-Economic Cooperation between Malaysia and Indonesia (SOSEK-MALINDO) (Sudiar & Irawan 2019). The welfare and survival of the local communities along the borders are one of the pressing concerns that have orchestrated the issues of interdependence between both countries.

#### *Enhancing Security Cooperation Amidst the Dynamics of Cross-Border Crime*

In the realm of security, the longstanding establishment of interdependence between Sabah and Kalimantan has undeniably played a significant role in fortifying the border's security measures. During the colonial period, both regions enhanced cooperation in dismantling the threat of maritime piracy that often disrupted the barter trade throughout the sea routes used by commercial boats (Warren, 1985). The threat of piracy in the region has become a significant threat to sea commercial activities. As of May 1961, there were 13 cases of piracy attacks reported on the Sulawesi Sea involving 10 deaths and 23 injuries. As a result, the British colonial power sent two vessels, the HMS Houghton and HMS Fiskerton to the Sulawesi Sea. Following this, two pirate boats were captured in the coastal areas (Straits Times, 13 May 1961).

The emerging trends of the non-traditional security threats such as kidnapping for ransom, terrorism, religious extremism, and smuggling of prohibited goods, have even further reinforced the regional cooperation to deal with the varieties of security threats. While there is an establishment of enforcement in the region particularly in the

coastal seas of Sulu and Sulawesi, the capacity of this enforcement is also limited to dealing with these emerging security threats (Dollah *et al.* 2019; Nor Ahmad, *et al.* 2021). Examples of the emerging security threats include radicalism and religious extremism that began to expand in the region in the 1990s. In the context of Sabah, the cooperation among various radical groups indicates their capacity to destabilise both countries without any preventive security measures.

Past arrests reveal that extremist groups in the region have exploited the state of Sabah as a transit route. These radical organisations, spanning both countries, have infiltrated and utilised routes along porous borders, including Philippines-Sandakan-Lahad Datu-Tawau-Nunukan. In Nasir Abas' book "*Membongkar JI*," a former JI member, various instances and locations along the East Coast of Sabah are highlighted as routes frequently exploited by extremist groups (Abas, 2005). Indonesia's major newspapers in early 2006 reported that radical extremists have been roaming around the region freely, particularly in East Kalimantan, Indonesia to Sabah, Malaysia, and Mindanao in the Philippines. Hambali, the main leader of JI also announced Sabah as one of the JI's main areas in Southeast Asia (Nor Ahmad, *et al.* 2021). Moreover, JI aims to establish an Islamic state involving three locations (known as "*wilayah*") consisting of Mindanao-Sabah-Sulawesi. Consequently, the JI's threat and its geographical expansion highlight the fact that Indonesia and Malaysia must enhance their cooperation to enhance the security of both countries. In 2003, several JI members were arrested in Sabah as announced by the Malaysian former Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohammad. The Commissioner of Sabah Police, Ramli Yusuff in 2003 also confirmed that there were six members of JI that have been arrested by the police in Sabah. Other radical groups that emerged in Sabah such as Darul Islam Sabah (DIS) in 2006 were found in Sandakan and Tawau aimed at establishing the Islamic State. The existence of DIS shows that extremist groups in the region can potentially exploit the east coast of Sabah.

Although Sabah is only used as transit, these groups could potentially recruit the local population to serve their interests. For example, Amin Baco, a member of DIS and a Malaysian is a wanted man after the incident of Marawi Siege in the Philippines. He was also perceived as a "tri-border emir of Southeast Asia" (Singh, 30 Nov. 2017). As such, the representation of these security threats also depicts the interdependence

between both countries to mitigate the security threats in the region. Nevertheless, both countries showed their mutual commitment to preventing security threats. Following this, an agreement known as the Trilateral Cooperation Agreement (TCA) was signed by both countries in July 2016 (Febrica, 2017).

Following the signing of the TCA, the Trilateral Maritime Patrol (TMP) was initiated on June 19, 2017, deploying warships from all member countries. Up until August 2023, TMP has successfully carried out 47 patrols since its inception. However, the Covid-19 led to a temporary halt in TMP activities from 2020 to early 2023. Simultaneously, Trilateral Air Patrols (TAP) were introduced to enhance capabilities and security systems in the shared maritime area. Launched from the RMAF Base in Subang, Malaysia, TAP operations commenced in the Sulu-Celebes Sea on November 8, 2017. By June 2023, 81 series of patrols had been completed. To improve coordination, Maritime Command Centres (MCCs) were established in each member countries to oversee maritime and aerial patrols, enabling intelligence sharing, and facilitating Quick Response. MCCs have proven instrumental in addressing security threats, including Kidnapping for Ransom, sea piracy, smuggling, and illegal migration.

Over the years, Malaysia and Indonesia have grappled with challenges in their relationship, particularly concerning territorial disputes. The most notable contention revolved around Ligitan and Sipadan Islands, prompting both nations to present the case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) (Haller-Trost, 1998). Despite the ICJ awarding both islands to Malaysia in 2002 based on the effectiveness factor (Nik Mahmud, 2003), tensions lingered. In 2005, a fresh disagreement emerged with the ND6 & 7 dispute in the Celebes Sea (Schofield & Storey, 2005). To address the Ambalat crisis, Malaysia and Indonesia chose diplomatic channels (Druce & Baikoeni, 2016; Meng & Chrisnandi, 2013; Maksum, 2016; Arsana, 2010). In March 2005, both countries agreed to resolve the issue through dialogue and cooperation (Wan Hassan *et al.*, 2017). In mid-2023, the issue resurfaced as Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim and Indonesian President Jokowi reportedly signed a cooperation agreement to address the dispute diplomatically (Tan & Mahavera, 08 Jun. 2023; Strangio, 09 Jun. 2023). While official details of the agreement are pending (Sinar Harian, 24 Aug. 2023), many perceive it as a collaborative effort toward joint development for

resource exploration in the contested area (CNBC, 13 Jul. 2023). In this context, bilateral security collaboration and cooperation in the Celebes Sea exemplify the interdependence between the two nations.

### *Collective Action in confronting Haze and Environmental Challenges*

Environmental pollution, particularly haze in Southeast Asia, is one of the pressing concerns between both countries. Since the 1980s, the crisis of wildfire has contributed to haze in the region. In 1983 alone, Indonesia incurred a financial loss of nearly USD9 million due to the destruction of 3.6 million acres of forest in East Kalimantan, equivalent to 56 percent of Singapore's land area. Meanwhile, the 1997 haze crisis had far-reaching environmental consequences that affected neighbouring countries, rendering it a historically noteworthy occurrence of regional pollution (Heil & Goldammer, 2001). The crisis compelled President of Indonesia, Suharto to openly apologise for the environmental hazards as he acknowledged responsibility for exacerbating the haze crisis (Cotton 1999: 342).

Similarly, Malaysia also faced haze crises in 1997, 2005, 2006, 2010, 2013, and 2015. Several domestic and regional factors led to environmental hazards in the region, such as the El-Nino phenomenon. Scholars argue that the environmental hazards in the region are caused by several factors. The first factor is that the plantation chooses the cheapest option in terms of cost by opening large farming through wildfire; second, this is followed by the transfer of agricultural activities by small- and large-scale industries that led to deforestation in rural areas in Sarawak (Malaysia), Sumatra and Kalimantan (Indonesia) (Cotton, 1999; Rosenberg, 1999; Ahmad & Md Hashim, 2006; Mahmud, 2014; Latif, Othman & Kamin, 2017). In the haze incident in 2015 for instance, it was estimated that nearly 206 million acres of forest and plantation in Indonesia had to undergo the process of deforestation through open fire between June and October 2015 for agricultural purposes.

The substantial alteration in land usage bore extensive consequences, culminating in the dispersal of hazardous haze to neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia. Indonesia recorded the worst hazard with the Air Pollution Standard Index (ISPU) exceeding 2,000 and the country suffers loss worth USD 33.5 billion (Mat Seman & Mustafa, 2019). In the context of Malaysia, the wildfire posed negative consequences for its environmental sustainability. In August 2005, the haze incident led to

the declaration of a National Emergency on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia. On August 10, 2005, the Kelang Port located in Selangor faced severe air pollution with the worst air pollution record of 392  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  in the morning, which increased rapidly at 5 pm with 424  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . A body of statistics recorded that a haze particle in Klang Valley exceeded both standard ratings by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which is 50  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , and the Malaysian Department of Environment (JAS), which is 90  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . This is particularly alarming in Klang Valley during the haze season. Two locations recorded the lowest particle in the air that did not exceed 100  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , indicating an average pollution level (Ahmad & Md Hashim, 2006).

Several efforts were taken within both the regional and domestic contexts. The ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (THPA) signed on June 10, 2002, signalled an important milestone in mitigating the crisis (see, Varkkey, 2012; Heilmann, 2015). Despite this initiative, all countries should partake and establish the cooperation to enhance the environmental hazards in the region. Due to the proximity of Sabah and Kalimantan, environmental issues clearly illustrate the need for the enhancement of cooperation between both countries. From the plan to relocate of Indonesia capital city, policymakers in Sabah should provide a strategic risk assessment related to the environmental issues and their hazards, especially during the preliminary stage of the proposal to relocate the capital city from Jakarta to Kalimantan.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, this comprehensive analysis sheds light on the complexity that shapes the interdependence dynamics between Sabah (Malaysia) and Indonesia. The reciprocal nature of this relationship is evident, with certain sectors highlighting Sabah's significant reliance on Indonesia, while others underscore Indonesia's dependence on Malaysia. Moreover, there are sectors that demonstrate a mutual interdependence, illustrating the complex web of connections binding both nations. These symmetric interdependent dynamics have significant consequences, paving the way for a more extensive cooperation between the two countries. As we delve into the nuances of these interdependencies, it becomes clear that these factors contribute significantly to the potential for enhanced cooperation and a strengthened relationship between the two countries. From a broader perspective, these identified area of interdependency

align with liberal principles, emphasising cooperation and mutual reliance. Examining the prospective landscape using the interdependence point of view, we anticipate a trajectory marked by harmony rather than conflict in the relations between Indonesia and Malaysia. The robust connection between these two nations is expected to play a pivotal role in ameliorating longstanding issues that historically strained their bilateral relations. In essence, the interdependence framework offers a promising avenue toward fostering sustained harmony and cooperation between Sabah and Indonesia. This, in turn, lays the groundwork for a more resilient and mutually beneficial relationship in the years to come.

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# **Averting the Existential Threat of the Planet: Islamic Environmental Ethics to Address the Contemporary Environmental Crisis**

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**Abstract:** This research paper explores Islamic Environmental Ethics (IEE), emphasising collective human responsibilities to manage environmental resources and protect the universe from functional degradation. It provides an overview of Islam and modern environmental discourse, aiming to offer a holistic perspective on IEE that encompasses Islamic faith, Islamic religious law, and Islamic ethics. The study is significant as it provides a moral framework and responsibility for humans to avert the existential threat to our planet. Focusing on a comprehensive methodological approach, it addresses the adoption of IEE in the Muslim world and beyond. Utilising an integrative literature review methodology, the paper synthesises diverse theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and sociocultural and political developments. This approach creates a cohesive body of knowledge that is theoretically robust, incorporating intersectional analyses of social, economic, and cultural factors within Muslim communities. The article concludes with three suggestions: capacity building, good governance, and collaboration.

**Keywords:** Environment, Ecological Crisis, Integrative Literature Review Methodology, Islamic Environmental Ethics, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*

**Abstrak:** Kertas penyelidikan ini membincangkan Etika Persekitaran Islam (IEE), menekankan tanggungjawab kolektif untuk mengurus sumber alam

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sekitar dan melindungi alam semesta daripada kerosakan fungsinya, dan memberikan gambaran keseluruhan Islam dan wacana alam sekitar di arus moden. Matlamat kertas kerja ini adalah untuk menyediakan pembaca dengan perspektif holistik tentang IEE yang meliputi akidah Islam, Undang-undang Islam, dan akhlak. Kajian ini penting kerana ia menyediakan manusia dengan unsur moral dan tanggungjawab terhadap ancaman kewujudan planet ini. Kertas kerja ini memberi tumpuan kepada pendekatan metodologi yang komprehensif untuk pelaksanaan IEE di dunia Islam. Kaedah yang digunakan dalam kajian ini ialah metodologi kajian literatur integratif yang mensintesis pelbagai perspektif teori, penemuan empirikal, politik dan sosiobudaya. Ia mewujudkan satu badan pengetahuan yang padu yang secara teorinya kukuh dengan menggabungkan analisis persimpangan isu-isu yang bersilang faktor sosial, ekonomi dan budaya dalam masyarakat Islam. Artikel ini diakhiri dengan tiga cadangan iaitu pembinaan kapasiti, tadbir urus yang baik dan kerjasama.

**Kata kunci:** Alam Sekitar, Krisis Ekologi, Etika Alam Sekitar Islam, Metodologi Kajian Literatur Integratif, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*

## Introduction

Our planet is undergoing radical environmental and social changes. Environmental sustainability is now being questioned in terms of consumption patterns, loss of biodiversity, resource depletion, and imbalanced and exploitative power relations (Islam, 2013; Islam and Hossain, 2016). On a global scale, humans on a daily basis consume 54% of the accessible runoff water, mine more materials than natural erosion processes replace, add over 100 million tons of carbon to the atmosphere, destroy 180 square miles of tropical rain forest, create over 60 square miles of desert, eliminate at least 74 animal or plant species, erode 70 to 80 million tons of topsoil, and add approximately 1,400 tons of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) to the stratosphere, causing various cancers and other health problems (Frey, 2001; Islam, 2013). Given the apparent ecological and social limits to globalisation and development, the current levels of consumption are unsustainable, inequitable, and inaccessible to the majority of humans today (Islam and Hossain, 2016; McMichael, 2017).

One apparent environmental crisis is known as the ecological climacteric, which is a result of liberalisation and development that includes exploitation of Southern resources, massive population displacements, and elimination of staple foods for subsistence dwellers,

who make up most of the world (McMichael, 2017). The depletion of our physical environment is directly connected to the current neoliberal modernity, in which 1 million acres disappear annually due to urban-industrial development, 2 million acres of farmland are lost annually due to erosion, soil salinisation, and flooding or soil saturation by intensive agriculture, which consumes groundwater 160 percent faster than it can be replenished, 80 countries experience severe water shortages with more than 1 billion people lacking clean water, and by 2025, 2/3 of the world's people will face water stress (Islam, 2013; McMichael, 2017). One of the long-term impacts of neoliberal modernity is rupturing humans' long-term relationship with nature and society that, along with other factors, pose an existential threat to this planet (Islam, 2013; Islam and Hossain, 2016; McMichael, 2017).

Given the contemporary environmental challenges affecting millions worldwide, it is imperative for Muslims to refer to Islamic sources, such as the Qur'an and Sunnah, and the works of Muslim scholars like Al-Faruqi, Osman Bakar, Hashim Kamali, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr. These sources help conceptualise an ethical framework to halt and reverse the planet's destruction. Islam's stance on sustainable development is rooted in its principle of recognising the ecosystem's unlimited capacity to support life. Fundamentally, Islamic teachings guide land development and human activities, forming the basis of Islamic ethical principles (Bakar, 2007; Helfaya et al., 2018; Gade, 2019). The Islamic view of human development and economic growth is not driven by the exploitation of natural and social resources, market controls, or technological misuse. Governments are responsible for distributing natural resources, while social institutions must preserve ecological spheres, with both working towards sustainable development goals.

Islam regards the Earth's resources and wealth as divine gifts, emphasising the collective human responsibility to manage these resources and protect the universe (*'alam*) from functional degradation. The universe offers humans boundless ideas for governance, with intellect (*'aql*) serving as a crucial tool guiding human actions on Earth. Islamic teachings on the environment and their associated ethical principles align with the concepts of balance (*mīzān*) and moderation (Khan and Haneef, 2022). Furthermore, Islamic jurisprudence provides

guidance to social institutions on environmental ethics, stressing the importance of avoiding harm (*darar*) to the Earth (Karia, 2022).

“Al-Mīzān: A Covenant for the Earth,” published in 2019 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and leading organisations and scholars, offers a foundational overview of the role of faith in environmental stewardship but lacks a clear focus on contemporary applications in the Muslim world. Similarly, Gada (2024) delves into the theoretical foundations of environmental ethics in Islam but does not propose practical solutions to adapt to socio-economic changes in the Muslim world. Kamali (2016) provides an in-depth examination of the Islamic jurisprudence framework, emphasising the higher objectives of the *Shari‘ah*, yet overlooks the socio-cultural aspects of its adoption. Helfaya and Hanafi (2018) highlight the theological perspective and Quranic ethics in business, mentioning ethical elements without addressing the intersection of environmental justice within and between Muslim communities. Khan and Haneef (2022), on the other hand, discuss the role of Islamic ethics in the economic sphere, but neglect integrated socio-political factors and environmental practices in Islamic countries. These studies largely overlook the methodological aspects necessary for developing a comprehensive and actionable framework for Islamic environmental ethics.

The current research on Islamic Environmental Ethics (IEE) showcases its strength through an integrative literature review method, synthesising diverse theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and sociocultural political spheres to address gaps left by previous studies. This approach combines the strengths of earlier research, creating a cohesive body of knowledge that is both theoretically robust and practically relevant to the contemporary Muslim world. By consolidating foundational insights from Muslim scholars and supportive elements from other works, this research bridges the gap between theory and practice, offering a nuanced understanding of how IEE can inform environmental policies. For this, we outline the limitations of modern environmentalism in the second section (below) and then discuss Islamic perspectives on the current ecological crisis in the third section. The fourth section details Islamic Environmental Ethics (IEE), focusing on three fundamental principles: faith, Islamic religious law, and Islamic ethics. The final section concludes by explaining how IEE can help avert

the existential threat to our planet by restoring humanity and enhancing the relationship between humans and the environment.

### **Islam and Modern Environmental Discourse**

This section addresses the contemporary ecological crisis, highlighting key events that have created a rift between humans and nature and emphasising the importance of reconnecting humanity with the Creator, God. It explores the limitations of modern environmentalism, which often fails to challenge the mindset driving the ongoing destruction of our planet. Crucially, it reminds us that the crisis is deeply rooted in humanity's egocentric relationship with nature, lacking a fundamental connection to the Creator of nature itself. By examining these factors, we aim to foster a deeper understanding of the spiritual and ethical dimensions necessary for addressing environmental challenges.

Human societies exist within a world shaped by businesses and enterprises that have collectively constructed powerful socioeconomic spheres, political administrations, and the built environment. With the advent of neoliberal modernity, there is potential for further expansion of our living landscapes. Humans, endowed with technological prowess and collective commitment, possess the means to alter the state of the world. This human intelligence has led to unprecedented progress, rendering societal systems increasingly complex and unpredictable. The main concern in this era of modernity is that it poses significant risks to the modern environment and the social fabric. The rapid advancements and changes have the potential to cause irreversible impacts, threatening both ecological balance and social cohesion (Ardelt, 2004; Aljayyousi, 2016). This necessitates a critical evaluation of our current trajectory and the development of sustainable practices to safeguard our planet and societies for future generations.

The profound crisis threatening human existence and the entire fabric of life on Earth is disrupting communities worldwide. In response, there has been a rise in modern discourse on environmentalism. Scholars have developed various frameworks to understand the complex interactions between societies and the environment, drawing on a broad base of indigenous knowledge, religious principles, and social practices (Mistry and Andrea, 2016; Mu et al., 2016). However, a dominant inclination toward anthropocentrism persists in many of these frameworks, emphasising human-centred perspectives and often

overlooking the intrinsic value of the natural world (Dunlap and Catton, 2015). This anthropocentric view limits our ability to fully address the environmental crisis, as it prioritises human needs and desires over ecological balance and the well-being of all life forms. To effectively tackle the environmental challenges we face, it is essential to incorporate more holistic approaches that recognise the interdependence of humans and the environment. This includes integrating ecological perspectives that value the natural world for its own sake and fostering a deeper sense of stewardship and responsibility towards the planet. By moving beyond anthropocentrism, we can develop more sustainable and ethical practices that support the long-term health of both human societies and the Earth.

Human dominance frequently centres people within a complex network of systems, influencing discussions around economic advancements, financial resources, and cutting-edge technology. This anthropocentric ideology suggests that solving environmental problems primarily depends on technical knowledge, which disproportionately affects societies in the global south where access to advanced technology is limited (Buttel, 1987; Harding, 1998; Davey, 2009). Moreover, modern environmental discourse often overlooks the deeper, systemic issues such as the metabolic rift between humans and nature, and the alienation from our Creator, God. This disconnect is a critical aspect of environmental sustainability. The metabolic rift refers to the disruption of natural cycles and the degradation of ecosystems due to human activities, which modern discussions frequently neglect. Similarly, the spiritual dimension, which involves recognising and respecting the divine creation and our role as stewards of the Earth, is often missing from contemporary environmental conversations. Addressing these gaps requires a shift from a purely technical approach to one that integrates ecological, spiritual, and ethical considerations. By acknowledging the interconnectedness of all life and the spiritual responsibility to care for our planet, we can foster a more holistic and sustainable approach to environmental stewardship. This broader perspective can help bridge the divide between technical solutions and the fundamental need to reconnect with nature and the Creator, promoting a more balanced and inclusive strategy for addressing global environmental challenges.

For many decades, the prioritisation of people over nature has been a significant barrier to the development of comprehensive ecological

frameworks (Islam, 2012). This human-centred paradigm, compounded by relentless economic progress within social spheres, has exacerbated environmental degradation (Hardin, 1998). The continuous emphasis on human needs and economic growth has led to significant ecological harm, creating an imbalance that further damages our natural systems.

Additionally, the repeated failures to reverse environmental damages, such as flooding and climate change, have prompted societies to increasingly question the sustainability of consumerism culture (Figueroa et al., 2016). These environmental crises highlight the limitations of a consumerist approach, which prioritises short-term economic gains over long-term ecological health. To develop more effective ecological frameworks, it is crucial to shift away from an anthropocentric perspective and towards a more integrated approach that values nature intrinsically. This involves recognising the interconnectedness of human well-being and environmental health and adopting sustainable practices that promote ecological balance.

In response to alarming environmental incidents, nations have introduced various rules and implemented regulations aimed at reversing, mitigating, and adapting to environmental problems. However, these interventions to prevent socio-ecological disasters do not necessarily lead to national sustainability (Ostrom 1990a, 2000b; Thorp, Stewart, and Heyer, 2005). Often, the presence of environmental laws and regulations amounts to little more than a “green delusion,” characterised by minimal efforts to address environmental catastrophes (Lewis, 1994). Many of these regulatory measures are superficial, offering the appearance of action without enacting meaningful change. This tokenism fails to address the root causes of environmental degradation and instead provides a false sense of security that environmental issues are being effectively managed. Consequently, these efforts often fall short of promoting genuine sustainability and resilience.

To achieve true sustainability, it is essential for nations to move beyond superficial regulations and adopt comprehensive strategies that integrate environmental, social, and economic considerations. This involves fostering a deeper commitment to sustainable practices, investing in green technologies, and encouraging community participation in environmental stewardship. By addressing the root causes of environmental degradation and fostering a cultural shift

towards sustainability, we can create a more resilient and equitable future. This requires rethinking our economic models, reducing consumption, and embracing a stewardship ethic that respects the limits of natural systems. Only through such a holistic approach can we hope to mitigate the ongoing environmental crisis and ensure the well-being of both current and future generations. Additionally, policies must be enforced consistently and backed by robust scientific research to ensure they are effective. By adopting a holistic approach that prioritises long-term ecological health over short-term economic gains, nations can better address the pressing environmental challenges and work towards a sustainable future for all.

### **Islamic Perspective on the Current Ecological Crisis**

Muslim societies are not immune to the ecological crisis faced by the planet. According to Kamali (2010), environmental discourse rose into prominence during a time of rapid expansionist policies, industrial powers, carbon emissions, and abusive applications of technology. Scholars have marked this period as the root cause of environmental crises (Bakar 2006a, 2007b; Islam 2012; Anna 2019). Although modern environmentalism gained traction in Western nations during the industrial period, the same predicaments traverse to other parts of the (Muslim) world. The native lands of Muslims experienced a similar ecological crisis after their colonial masters departed (Kamali, 2010).

Changing weather patterns and their impacts on local and global societies have resulted in a series of climate change declarations appearing in public discourse (Hens, 2005). For Muslims, these incidents have shaped new directions in environmental discourse. To them, understanding the crisis and its solutions is rooted in their own faiths. They have also formed alternative views on the importance of solutions from the perspective of Islam (Mangunjaya, 2011a; Mangunjaya, 2019b).

Seyyed Hossein Nasr's pioneering works on the contemporary ecological crisis (See Nasr, 2009) have stimulated an interest in Islamic tenets and the environment. Studies on spiritual resources in environmental care add value to this new topic (Bakar, 2007; Bakar, 2012; Islam, 2012). Muslim scholars have also drawn on the spiritual and metaphysical dimensions within Islamic sources, proposing an alternative paradigm to mark the important position of Islam in

the environment and human relationships (Khalid, 2002a, 2010b; Baharuddin, 2011; Abdullah and Abdullah, 2017). Many others work on various topical issues, such as animal welfare (Islam and Islam, 2015), happiness or contentment (Ali, 2014), environmental education (Fathil et al., 2015), and haze (Abdullah and Shaleh, 2018), in which contemporary environmental discourse is a critical and crucial topic in contemporary Muslim scholarship Islam. The emergence of eco-activists' movements in modern times invites Muslim societies to demonstrate an unequivocal interest in conversations about environmental conservation (Alam, 2020; Nilan, 2021; Islam, 2012). Hence, Islamic environmental discourse evolves from mere development of theory to a strong groundwork through a series of activities aimed at overcoming the urgent and serious threats of human-induced environmental problems (Fathil et al., 2015; Ningrum and Soesilo, 2018).

The negative consequences of the contemporary environmental crisis emanate largely from naked self-interest and individuals' desires to exploit land and other natural resources. The freedom to make choices in the age of modernity does not translate into actions that are supposed to make the Earth sustainable. God says in *Sūrah* 30, verse 41: "mischievousness has appeared on land and sea because of (the deed) that the hands of men have earned, that (God) may give them a taste of some of their deeds." Therefore, God may give them a taste for some of their own deeds in order for them to take heed and retract. In the words of Osman Bakar:

Modern man learns the wisdom of ecological equilibrium and environmental health the bitter way. It is also the expensive way. Not until he has seen with his own eyes the bitter fruits of his scientific and technological culture and extravagant lifestyle does he come to realise how important ecological equilibrium and environmental health are to the survival of humankind on earth. The names of these bitter fruits include environmental pollution and ecological disasters (Bakar, 2006a: 27).

Thus, today's rapid age in consumerism, industrialisation, and ecological degradation transcends nations. This Anthropocene age, where ecological changes are induced by human actions, calls for an integrated framework in environmental discourse. The state of the present environmental changes and identical calamities are felt by

wealthy nations in the global North and developing nations in the South. The fact remains that modern consumerist culture, along with “ego-centric” nature rather than an “eco-centric” worldview of wealthy nations, threatens environmental sustainability. With the ethos of unbridled consumption, individual freedom, and unlimited appetite for wealth and power, the culture of modernity aggressively focuses on economic progress and destructive technologies in the present time, showing an apparent audacity to ignore its ramifications in the future. The incumbent ecological issues produced by modernity are profound, as these threats disrupt lives, are agonised by many societies, and have diminished social value.

Gareth Hardin (1967) echoed modern humans’ self-interest and unlimited desires on the land and spaces, which led to what he described as the “tragedy of the commons.” According to him, “each man is locked in a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit. Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, pursuing their best interest in society that believes in the freedom of common. Freedom in a common brings ruin to all’ (Hardin 1967: 1147).

### **Islamic Environmental Ethics**

Islamic environmental scholarship currently encompasses established Islamic principles to address environmental discourse. Examples include Islamic doctrines (Baharuddin, 2011), Islamic laws (Auda, 2008), grassroots faith-based institutions (Mangunjaya, 2011), and community-based activities (Yuliana and Sanjaya, 2017). Central to the Islamic theoretical interpretation of humans and the environment is the relationship between humans and their Creator, God. Building on this foundational principle, Islamic scholars have developed a profound understanding of the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature. This scholarship emphasises that humans are stewards of the Earth, entrusted by God to care for and protect the environment. This stewardship is not merely a responsibility but a form of worship, reflecting a deep spiritual and ethical commitment to preserving the natural world

Islamic doctrines provide guidance on maintaining this balance, advocating for moderation, conservation, and respect for all forms of life. Islamic laws offer a framework for implementing these principles, promoting sustainable practices, and prohibiting actions that cause harm

to the environment. Grassroots faith-based institutions and community-based activities play a crucial role in translating these principles into action, mobilising communities to engage in environmental stewardship and conservation efforts. Moving forward, it is essential to continue expanding and deepening this scholarship, integrating contemporary environmental challenges with Islamic teachings. By doing so, Islamic environmental ethics can provide a comprehensive and actionable framework for addressing the global ecological crisis, fostering a harmonious coexistence between humans and nature grounded in faith and ethical responsibility.

IEE derives Islamic concepts from the *Qur'ān*, Prophetic *Sunnah*, and scholars' opinions about daily obligations, social duties, transactions in businesses, and core principles associated with common practices to build a cohesive and sustainable social structure. It also focuses on understanding the importance of social norms and value systems in society (Knoerl, 2008). Based on these epistemological and ontological foundations of Islam, we can discern at least three fundamental principles or ethos of IEE: *al-'Aqīdah*, *al-Sharī'ah*, and *al-Akhlāq*<sup>1</sup> (figure 1). These profound concepts in Islam encompass, among other things, humans' inherent transcendental relationship with God, their purpose in life on this planet, and the ethical principles to follow as the vicegerents of this ephemeral earth.



Figure 1: Islamic Environmental Ethics (IEE)

<sup>1</sup> *al-Akhlāq* is an Arabic term referring to practice virtue, morality and good manners and character in Islam. In this article, Islamic Environmental Ethics is an extension of *al-Akhlāq*, where the authors discuss key principles and concepts that have or are closely associate the morality, good manners and virtue.

### 1. *al-‘Aqīdah (Faith)*

This section discusses Islamic Environmental Principles through the lens of faith and its various components (see Table 1). The components are discussed below.

*a. Tawhīd (monotheism):* Muslims accept God’s absolute supremacy in the universe. Al-Faruqi (1998) emphasises that *al-Tawhīd* is the recognition of the truth, and man lives on purpose, enjoying goodness and happiness for the sake of Allah. Although nature has been created for human beings, it should not be abused or exploited, and must be used in line with divine purposes. A fundamental aspect of Aqīdah is that Muslims believe that there is a higher grand for the entire scheme on Earth, in which God knows all creations. God says in *Sūrah 2*, verse 115: “whithersoever ye turn there is the presence of God.” Muslims testify *Tawhīd* in the *Shahādah* as they witness that there is only one God (Allah) and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His messenger.

As trustees on earth, Muslims perform their daily manifestations, including interactions with fellow human beings, based on this fundamental belief. For Muslims, God has created all lives, and all living beings, which He has endowed with ecological functions and social duties that are carefully measured. He allocated attributions to the universe and its ecosystem to create a balance for all living. God says in *Sūrah 13*, verse 8: “every single thing is before His sight, in (due) proportion.” In *Sūrah 15*, verse 19: “and the earth We have spread out (like a carpet); set thereon Mountains firm and immovable; And produced therein all kinds of things in due balance.”

*b. Khalīfah (stewardship):* Khalifah posits that human beings serve as God’s viceregent on earth. God says in *Sūrah 2*, verse 30: “behold thy Lord said to the angels: I will create a vicegerent on earth.” The key principle is that they govern the earth’s natural resources with moderation and, at the same time, carefully organise human activities in order to benefit socio-ecological systems. The Khalifah relationship with nature includes meditation, contemplation, enjoyment of its beauties, and restoration of (*mizan*) or the proportion God has attributed to all creations. This *Tawhīdic* view of humans’ relationship with the universe comes together with other compelling doctrines, including *Amānah* (trust), *‘Ubūdiyyah* (serving), and *Fiṭrah* (natural belief in God). The term *Khalīfah* distinguishes humans from other creations

because the former is endowed with the faculty of intellect (*‘Aql*) to build and manage the earth. Thus, they are responsible for safeguarding fellow humans and inhabitants of the Earth.

*c. Amānah (trust and responsibility):* *Amānah* forms an integral part of Muslims’ lives. It highlights the role of humanity in resource care and social obligations on earth. This implies that humans are not dominant in other creations. It deters the desire to abuse the given power and creates a social contract to prevent disturbances and imbalances in the universe. In addition to *Amānah*, there are also concepts of justice (*‘adl*), doing of good (*ihsān*) towards fellow humans, and the natural environment as integral religious principles in Islam. God says in *Sūrah* 11, verse 61: “it is He Who hath produced you from the earth and settled you.” Furthermore, these principles encourage human progress in developing the earth without compromising the health of the environment and the well-being of other species and their habitats. The Prophet (peace be upon him) sees nature as a gift and encourages humans to build, manage, and maintain it. Some of the good actions on the land include planting trees, growing flora and fauna, fruits, and vegetables, and building houses, hospitals, and industries for human well-being (Islam, 2012).

*d. Fiṭrah (original state of the creation):* The concept of *fiṭrah* originates from its root, “*faṭara*,” which means to originate something; therefore, the word is exclusively an attribution to God (Abdullah and Abdullah, 2017). There is a chapter in the Qur’an about *al-Fāṭir* (The Originator) who invites human beings to observe natural creation to recognise the omnipotence of its Creator. Muslims believe that the universe, which has the same meanings as the cosmos, world, and realm, is a sign of God’s existence in the lives of all creations. The theological foundation of environmental protection from the lens of *‘Aqīdah* embodies God’s absolute power, human responsibilities to benefit from it, and their efforts to manage the ecosystem. Hence, the earth is perfect for all living, maintaining a balance (*Mīzān*) within the natural and social world.

*e. ‘Ubūdiyyah (servitude):* For Muslims, servitude is a comprehensive term strengthening the assertion of serving God. In *Sūrah* 1, verse 5, God clearly said about servants: “Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek.” Muslims see the doctrine of servitude as an expression of the status of humans in front of God (*‘abd Allāh*). This means that they have no power to self-proclaim the dominant figure on Earth. In addition,

the concept of *‘Ubūdiyyah* accentuates the doctrines of stewardship and responsibility in Muslim faith. In Islam, the slave role means that humankind has limited power on earth. Muslims see it as the means to carry out important roles on earth that include obeying God’s laws, the care of nature and the ecosystem, and dealing with resources on earth properly.

*f. Mīzān (balance)*: The Arabic term *Mīzān* refers to balance, equilibrium, and scale. Islamic environmental ethics are translated as an ecological balance or a middle way. This principle calls for the conservation or restoration of balance on Earth, both in terms of harmony within nature and in terms of human justice and morality in day-to-day dealings. God created the earth and everything in it as perfect, free from faults, and balanced. However, it is the task of human beings to keep this way.

Table 1: Islamic Environmental Principles:  
Aqidah and its various components

	Components	Explanations
a.	<i>Tawhīd</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unity of God as opposed to polytheism, and Trinity</li> <li>• Unity of God with all creations: everything in the world is part of creation and is related to everything else, which makes the entire world significant, valuable, and worthy of protection</li> </ul>
b.	<i>Khalīfah</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God has entrusted humans with responsibility for creation, and has entrusted the earth to humans</li> <li>• Calls in humankind to assume the role of the steward and to stop subjugating nature to itself</li> </ul>
c.	<i>Amānah</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linked to the doctrine of <i>khilāfah</i>, <i>amānah</i> stands for the fulfilment of responsibility in all dimensions of life</li> <li>• It is a “moral burden” rooted not in the power and authority over creatures but in accountability that only humankind has towards God</li> </ul>
d.	<i>Fiṭrah</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The natural state of humans in harmony with nature</li> <li>• Necessity that humankind protects the environment to re-establish the state of <i>fiṭrah</i> and to conserve the earth</li> </ul>

e.	‘ <i>‘Ubūdiyyah</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of the slave restricts the power of humankind</li> <li>• As servants of God, humans have to obey laws, including the care of Nature and ecosystems dealing properly with its resources</li> </ul>
f.	<i>Mīzān</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restoration of balance on earth (both ecological and social)</li> <li>• God has created the earth and everything in it as perfect, free from fault and in balance. The task of humans is to keep it that way.</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from “Islamic Environmentalism: The Call to Eco-Jihad” (Zbidi, 2013)

## 2. *Al-Sharī‘ah (Islamic Religious Law)*

The *Sharī‘ah* is a practical expression of religious conviction, as it guides Muslims to accomplish their divine goals. In Muslim countries, the influence of *Sharī‘ah* rulings and legal systems vary in advocacy, public policy, education, and businesses (Mangunjaya, 2019). The religious edict (*fatwā*) provides legal guidance that is purported by the *Muftī* of the state and his religious subordinates. Notably, *Sharī‘ah* rules are not limited to common practices in business, marriage, and prayers. For example, in IEE, *fatwā* is made for Muslims, so they understand the importance of nature conservation (Mangunjaya, 2019), community empowerment in environmental care (Maimunah et al., 2019), and structural components of Islamic governance in Muslim communities (Marsuki, 2009).

Environmental rulings can also be seen in Muslims’ obligations for self-care or purification. In *Sūrah* 2, verse 222, God says: “for God loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean.” Regarding their spiritual significance in Muslims’ lives, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “God is beautiful, and He loves beauty” [Reported by Muslim, #131]. Another example of environmental care through the ambit of *Sharī‘ah* is *Waqf*. Seen as philanthropic deeds, there is well-documented evidence of the role of fixed assets (land donors) that offer a perpetual contribution to societies worldwide. Charitable institutions following Islamic rulings provide a means to alleviate poverty (Atan and Fuadah, 2017) and social innovations to overcome environmental problems (Budiman, 2011; Yaakob et al., 2017). Islamic Environmental Law intends to inform

policymakers of the key principles for managing resources and making judgements through public consultation in order to safeguard public interest. In this regard, *Sharī'ah* rules are implemented to minimise harm and risk in public goods (Mangunjaya, 2011).

The above innovations and solutions to social issues are not devoid of divine purposes, because Muslims' eventual aim is to serve God. Hence, the purpose of Islamic ruling is to fulfil goodness for human beings and other creations. This understanding of the divine purposes and objectives of laws and rulings is called *Maqāṣid Shar'īyyah* (Auda, 2008). The term "*Maqāṣid*" in Arabic is plural to the word "*maqṣud*" which refers to a purpose, objective, principle, intent, or end. The general objectives of Islamic legislation consist of deeper meanings and inner aspects of wisdom, which is considered by the lawgiver (Allah) in areas and circumstances of legislation (Maimunah et al., 2019).

*Sharī'ah*'s general rules and specific proofs indicate that the all-purpose principle of Islamic legislation is to preserve social order and ensure the welfare of God's creations. The overall objective of the *Sharī'ah* is to remove corruption in all kinds of human activity (Bakhashab, 1988) and to protect the following five essential goals: faith (*dīn*), life (*naḥs*), progeny (*nasl*), intellect (*'aql*), and property (*māl*). Al Ghazali considered everything that safeguards these five fundamental objectives to be a *maṣlahah* (goodness), whereas the abandonment of these five essentials to be destructive. Its five associated values are obligatory (*wājib*), commendable (*mandūb*), permissible (*mubāḥ*), disapproved (*makrūh*), and forbidden (*ḥarām*). These Islamic tenets are established categories for assessing societal activities pertaining to environmental impact (Auda, 2008; Sandisi, 2020).

*Sharī'ah* rulings encourage greening the earth as a collective obligation (*Farḍ Kifāyah*), whereas plans for long-term sustainable solutions are an absolute requirement (*Darūriyyah*) for the survival of planets and the spiritual well-being of human beings (Auda, 2008). Humans are trustees and guardians of the environment (Mangunjaya 2011; Islam, 2012). Muslim scholars have concurred that human beings have personal, societal, and spiritual obligations to curb the spread of environmental degradation (Nasr, 2009; Sandler, 2013). This spiritual stand comes together with the Shariah rulings that have precipitated Muslim nations to pursue environmental preservation (*ḥifẓ al-bi'ah*) in the context of the existential threat of this planet (Mangunjaya, 2011).

### 3. *Al-Akhlāq (Ethics)*

Ethics are concerned with the proper conduct of human beings, entailing what is morally good and bad or morally right and wrong (Palmer et al., 2014). As an indispensable doctrine of IEE, *akhlāq* has played a pivotal role in shaping environmental policies in Muslim countries (Maimunah et al. 2019). Islamic moral principles shape behavioural changes and the direction of environmental sustainability in Muslim countries (Shaleh, 2017). On the other hand, social values eventually create social norms that dictate a vision of sustainability for Muslim societies in Indonesia (Magunjaya, 2011).

The Qur'anic verses reveal numerous important moral principles of Muslims. Deeply rooted in the Qur'anic paradigm, the concept of moderation teaches humans to oppose extravagance (*isrāf*). God says in *Sūrah* 7, verse 31: "O children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but waste not by excess for God loveth not the wasters." In terms of sharing resources, Muslims encourage others to share the water supply with others, a sign of good conduct between humans. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "whoever doesn't allow the access water or pasture for others will not share in the blessings of Allah on the day of judgment" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi', # 6436). Anas has narrated: "the Prophet used to take a bath with one Sa (about 2.5 kg) or up to five Mudds of water and used to perform ablution with one Mudd of water" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, # 201). Prophet (peace be upon him) passed by a companion (Sa'ad) while he was performing ablution next to a river. The Prophet said, "What is this squandering?" Saad replied, "Can there be a (*isrāf*) in ablution?" He (peace be upon him) replied, "yes, even if you are by the side of a flowing river" (Musnad Aḥmad, # 7065).

Ethics have also brought Muslims closer to moral education. Islam encourages Muslims to develop good life traits. The conduct of good traits is a testimony to Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) message to the people. He said, "I have been sent for the purpose of perfecting morals" (al-Muwaṭṭa', # 1614). According to Al-Attas (1980), the teaching of morality (*adab*) encompasses the spiritual and material aspects of life. The formation of good traits in IEE moves along with human-to-human and natural relationships. Good characteristics include compassion, generosity, enjoining the good, social justice, courage, and

wisdom to benefit society and the environment (Pfattheicher et al. 2016; Yuliana and Sanjaya 2016).

The incorporation of moral education encourages Muslim parents to teach Muslim children the wisdom found in the Qur'an, Ḥadīth, and *Sharī'ah*. These practices, as a result of moral education, are demonstrated in the formation of good characters and the appreciation of ecological wisdom found in other societies. God says in *Sūrah* 2, verse 269: "He granteth wisdom to whom He pleaseth; and he to whom wisdom is granted receiveth indeed a benefit overflowing; but none will grasp the message but men of understanding."

The Islamic concept of wisdom aligns with moral teachings. Through the exploration of diverse intellectual, moral, cultural, and religious realms, it matures from childhood to teenage years, and as students are connected to nature, they acquire skills to analyse natural facts and begin to appreciate the holistic understanding of human and environmental relationships (Ningrum and Soesilo, 2018). This enables learners to increase their sensitivity to environmental change. In turn, this gift may have a positive impact on conservation efforts as it is deeply rooted in a sensitive, ethical, and holistic view of nature (Hayes, 2009). They value world resources and do not indulge in activities that could prevent others from enjoying the benefits of natural resources, such as water and energy (Cobb, 1977; Stone and Zenobia, 2009; Putrawan, 2017).

Islamic ethical norms are invested in collective action. People cooperate in localities to guard against common resources. This qualitative trait is critical for the survival of human progeny and their welfare. It promotes more conservation of nature, which benefits people's livelihoods, and mitigates the impact of climate change on earth. Many studies have attested to this crucial aspect of the collective formation of ethics through the lens of social capital, where societies have displayed innovative ways to develop social governance in their environments (Mu et al., 2016; Yuliana and Sanjaya, 2017).

A society that inhibits social norm and cares for the environment has always been active in addressing the existing and impending environmental problems. The integration of communal values into agricultural activities in Muslim majority nations in Southeast Asia, for example, have promoted goodness to the environment (Bakar,

2007). In this regard, IEE perceives collective responsibility as a good norm in all cultures. Social bonds create a set of human behaviours, customs, traditions, trust, and social institutions, which are collectively constructed to overcome environmental issues in many societies.

Indeed, the trove of knowledge developed by different societies across the globe has provided unequivocal evidence of the stewardship of the environment and its ecosystems. For instance, studies on indigenous people have promulgated ideas about experiential knowledge that give rise to a sustainable relationship between humans and their natural environment (Shaleh, 2017). Scholars have found that indigenous medicinal knowledge, traditional sustainable fishing practices, and forest protection demonstrate a profound human-nature relationship and are largely in line with environmental protection and sustainability (Raymond et al., 2010; Mistry and Berardi, 2016).

These macro-level activities encourage public participation and community empowerment in environmental management. With regard to community empowerment in the Muslim world, Muslim environmental duties aim to empower imams and local communities, creating mutual bonds and relationships with nature. The advice of imams to Muslims is a strong religious direction where they provide answers to ambiguities that occur regarding religion. Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) explicitly mentioned scholars as fundamental source of reference in this regard, when he explicitly said that "the scholars are heirs to the prophets" (Al-Tirmidhī, # 2682).

A holistic view of Islamic environmental ethics provides integrated community-oriented solutions for addressing environmental problems. In this regard, Islam collates local knowledge and its cultural wealth for the needs of the general public (*maṣlaḥah 'āmmah*), which is to be harnessed within the scope of *Tawḥīd* and *Sharī'ah*, to construct a new model for sustainability. One is to make people aware of their responsibilities. "If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds and then a bird or a person or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charitable gift" (Bukhārī, # 513).

## **Conclusion**

Today, the environmental crisis affects the global natural ecosystem, human environments, the air we breathe, the food we consume, the water we drink, and our bodily functions. Eco-theologians have

developed theological foundations and Islamic doctrines to address nature and the environment. The doctrine of unity (*Tawhīd*) is a crucial aspect of Islamic Environmental Ethics (IEE), motivating individuals to be exemplary servants of God. This reflects the powerful and persuasive spiritual teachings of Islam regarding the natural world and the human relationship with it. In practical terms, community empowerment through piety and awareness aligns with the concept of mercy for all mankind. This approach incorporates justice under human stewardship, leveraging social capital to unite people with shared values, thereby fostering a strong social fabric within society.

Islamic Environmental Ethics (IEE) integrates religious elements into a conceptual model through the lens of *Sharī'ah*, which prohibits retaliation and other negative behaviours in our environments. *Sharī'ah* rulings on purity, cleanliness, and water resources are designed to prevent disruptions to the lives of many societies and their ecosystems. These objectives align with the moral values of nations and promote economic and social stability. Practical implementation of these rulings drives behavioural changes, resilience, and adaptation in Muslim nations.

IEE is fundamentally linked to *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, encompassing the Islamic worldview of the Creator, creation, the universe, and the environmental responsibilities of Muslims. This framework encourages exploring the purposes of *Sharī'ah* laws and rulings in addressing evolving economic development and environmental crises in the Muslim world. By revisiting the changing relationships between humans and the environment, leaders and communities can better understand the general principles of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and their relevance to current environmental discussions and crises.

In IEE, Muslims strive to restore humanity and enhance the relationship between humans and the environment. This understanding is essential for upholding the concept of *Khalīfah* (stewardship) on Earth, which demands responsible management of natural resources and a sense of love and care for nature. The trust that God has placed in people means they must fulfil their duty, which is key to overcoming contemporary environmental crises. Muslims are entrusted with this divine duty and responsible for safeguarding society and the environment by fostering an attitude of environmental care.

Practically, the role of social capital in developing a collective understanding of modern environmental change is integral to IEE. First, Islam's comprehensive approach encourages collaboration between partners to achieve shared environmental goals. Second, IEE transcends physical, cultural, and national boundaries to address the relationships between humans, the environment, God, and the universe. Third, IEE condemns behaviours lacking cooperation, empathy, and moderation, and rejects social values that promote the exploitation of nature without regard for sustainability. To address the main limitation in our theory-based work, we suggest the following practical collective responsibilities for current and future generations:

- Build capacity for environmental awareness through community-based conservation projects.
- Promote social justice and environmental stewardship through good governance.
- Showcase successful environmental initiatives in Muslim countries by collaborating with mosques, art centres, national galleries, and educational institutions.

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# Causes of Climate Change: A Neglected Dimension

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**Abstract:** Climate change is one of the most disturbing challenges faced by humankind due to the profound threat it poses to human life and livelihood, affecting almost every aspect of life negatively. A comprehensive grasp of the causes of climate change is imperative for effective mitigation strategies. However, the most prevalent causes of climate change are advanced within the Western scientific perspective. This article aims to provide a cross-cultural comparison between the Islāmic and Western scientific perspectives on the causes of climate change. Based on the review of scientific literature and other relevant documents, the article argues that both the Islāmic and the secular perspectives on the impacts of climate change are in accord. However, the causes of climate change extend beyond the material scientific explanation. The mischief and sins of human beings on earth are fundamental causes that should not be ignored. The article concludes that mitigation efforts will remain one-sided unless these two dimensions of human activities are perceived as the causes of climate change.

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**Keywords:** Climate Change, Cross-cultural Comparison, Islāmic Perspectives, Mitigation Strategies, Western Perspectives.

**Abstrak:** Perubahan iklim adalah salah satu cabaran yang paling membimbangkan yang perlu dihadapi oleh manusia. Ini kerana perubahan iklim dapat memberikan ancaman serius kepada kehidupan dan mata pencarian manusia, bahkan ia hampir menjejaskan semua aspek kehidupan secara negatif. Pemahaman menyeluruh tentang punca perubahan iklim adalah penting untuk strategi mitigasi yang berkesan. Walau bagaimanapun, punca perubahan iklim yang paling popular adalah kemajuan mengikut perspektif saintifik Barat. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menyediakan perbandingan silang budaya antara perspektif sains Islam dan Barat tentang punca perubahan iklim. Hujah menunjukkan bahawa walaupun kedua-dua perspektif Islam dan sekular terhadap kesan daripada perubahan iklim adalah selaras namun punca perubahan iklim adalah melampaui penerangan saintifik yang material. Kerosakan dan dosa manusia di muka bumi juga menjadi asbab utama yang tidak boleh diabaikan. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahawa usaha mitigasi akan kekal berat sebelah melainkan kedua-dua dimensi aktiviti manusia ini diambil kira sebagai punca kepada perubahan iklim.

**Kata Kunci:** Perubahan Iklim, Perbandingan Rentas Budaya, Perspektif Islam, Strategi Mitigasi, Perspektif Barat.

## Introduction

According to an extensive empirical study, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change surmised that global warming emanating from climate change (CC) is one of the most disturbing challenges faced by humanity ever. This is because of the profound threat CC poses to human life and livelihood, negatively affecting almost every aspect of life (Malhi et al., 2021).

The implications of CC and its harmful effects on the ecosystem have garnered significant attention in recent decades (Zhao & Li, 2015). Its impacts on human lives, plants, and animals make it a global emergency (Gabric, 2023). Researchers, policymakers, and practitioners are focused on understanding the causes and impacts of CC, and are developing adaptation and mitigation strategies (Abbass et al., 2022). Scientifically, human activities, such as fossil fuel burning and deforestation, foster greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere, contributing to global warming. However, another often neglected

dimension is the religious and spiritual aspects of human activities as contributors to CC.

This article argues that both the Islāmic and the secular perspectives are in consonance regarding the impacts of CC. However, the causes of CC extend beyond the material scientific explanation. The mischief and sins of human beings on earth are fundamental causes that should not be ignored. Against this background, this article aims to provide a cross-cultural comparison between the Islāmic and Western scientific perspectives on CC causes. Consequently, an effort is made to respond to the question: What are the points of convergence and divergence between the Islāmic and the Western scientific perspectives on the reasons for changes in the climate?

### **An Overview of Climate Change**

Climate change, sometimes referred to as global warming or the greenhouse effect, has been defined differently by scholars (Benson, 2008). However, all the definitions agreed to express CC as an adverse change in the weather. For instance, Krueger et al. (2015) defined CC as increased standard temperatures and variability in temperature and precipitation levels. Similarly, Brooks et al. (2014) defined CC as extreme temperatures beyond average that result in unexpected weather changes.

In addition, other definitions airmarked the time that the changes could be characterised as CC. It is further defined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as “a change in the state of the climate that can be identified ... by changes in the mean or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer” (IPCC, 2018, p. 544).

Some definitions emphasise the cause(s) of these changes (see Table 1.1). For example, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defined CC as the change that can be ascribed “directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere, and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods” (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992). The UNFCCC tries to differentiate between CC due to human actions and one caused by natural antecedents. The latter was climate variability,

while the former was climate change (Benson, 2008). Nevertheless, this difference is disputable. Many scientists refer to climate variability as yearly changes in climate, whether it is caused by natural or human activities (Koubi, 2017).

Despite CC's several definitions, the scientific world appears to have come to an agreement that the term refers to a rise in temperature variability that causes an increase in extreme weather events, including droughts, heat waves, floods, cold snaps, etc., within a particular period (Brooks et al., 2014; Weems & Subramaniam, 2017). Thus, Benson (2008) offers a better definition of CC as "any systematic alteration or statistically significant variation in either the average state of the climate elements such as precipitation, temperature, winds, or pressure; or in its variability, sustained over a finite time period (decades or longer)" (p. 210).

Perhaps a comprehensive definition that elaborates on CC causes is offered by (Chakraborty et al., 2014). They define it as:

Drastic or secular changes in the heat balance of the earth-atmosphere system, moisture, cloudiness and precipitation caused by external factors such as variations in orbital characteristics of the earth, solar variability (fluctuations in radiation from the photosphere of the sun), tectonic processes (mainly plate tectonics, displacement of continents and ocean basins), vulcanicity, changes in atmospheric composition in terms of concentration of atmospheric aerosols and carbon dioxide contents etc. or by internal factors such as exchanges of energy between the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere and cryosphere (ice-covered surfaces of both lithosphere and hydrosphere) or by both, at local, regional and global levels.

However, the only drawback of this definition is that it underplayed the time dimension of CC. These definitions have four essential elements: causes/factors, period, spatial scope, and the changes.

Nevertheless, as we proposed, a cross-cultural approach to CC is strongly advocated. In this regard, we attempted a much more comprehensive definition of CC as any statistically significant decadal changes in the earth's atmospheric heat balance, moisture, cloudiness, and precipitation caused naturally by God through disparities in the orbital features of the earth, tectonic process, solar variability,

vulcanicity, and by other variables, such as energy exchanges between the hydrosphere, cryosphere, lithosphere, and atmosphere brought on by human activity (environmental and spiritual) at any location.

Table 1.1 Summary of Perspectives on the Definitions of Climate Change

Author	Definition	Comment
(UNFCCC, 1992)	Any change in climate ascribed “directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere, and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.”	Emphasis is on the causes/factors of CC.
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	CC is “a change in the state of the climate that can be identified ... by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer.”	The time dimension of the changes is defined. But the cause(s) is not.
Benson (2008).	“CC is commonly used to describe any systematic alteration or statistically significant variation in either the average state of the climate elements such as precipitation, temperature, winds, or pressure; or in its variability, sustained over a finite time period	Emphasis on CC’s meaning without pointing out the causes/factors.
Krueger, Biedrzycki & Hoyerter (2015)	CC refers to “increased average temperatures and variability in the levels of both temperature and precipitation.”	The causes, space, and time dimensions were unscored.

Brooks et al., (2014)	CC refers to the extreme temperatures beyond average, that result in unexpected weather changes.	This definition restricted the meaning of CC without regard for the other elements.
Chakraborty et al. (2014).	“A drastic or secular changes in the heat balance of the earth-atmosphere system, moisture, cloudiness, and precipitation caused by either external factors such as variations in orbital characteristics of the earth...by internal factors (exchanges of energy between the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and cryosphere) or by both, at local, regional and global levels.”	Emphasis was on the natural process of climate change/ variability, the space dimension was considered but the time dimension was not.

## The Implications of Climate Change

Experts, policymakers, and governments are greatly concerned about CC due to its far-reaching implications, both directly and indirectly, on the environment, biodiversity, socio-economic well-being, and the lives and well-being of humans (Siddiqui et al., 2022).

### *Environmental impacts*

Climate change has globally impacted almost every region. Extreme weather events like heat waves, droughts, storms, floods, and cold snaps are more frequent, severely affecting lives and livelihoods. These events have led to numerous environmental disasters. Rising temperatures have caused glacier and ice melt, excess rainfall, rising sea levels, flooding, and community destruction, forcing migration. Higher temperatures also result in heat waves, wildfires, droughts, wetland loss, and desert expansion. These factors contribute to biodiversity loss, water shortages, saltwater intrusion, declining agricultural output, and increased pests and diseases (Benson, 2008; Fankhauser & Stern, 2016; Reay et al., 2007; Zegeye, 2018).

In tropical areas, climatic changes will likely cause significant reductions in water levels and the salinisation of inland freshwater. However, this trend may be countered in regions with higher anticipated precipitation or those affected by the overflow from melting glaciers. These changes will significantly impact the structure, productivity, and biodiversity of inland aquatic ecosystems (Jeppesen et al., 2023; Lemi, 2019).

### ***Socio-economic impact***

The socio-economic effects of CC include food insecurity, displacement, poverty, health challenges, and conflicts. Extreme weather events and natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, and landslides often destroy human settlements, leading to displacement and an increase in climate migrants or internally displaced persons. This results in the loss of lives, livelihoods, and assets, subjecting individuals to desperate conditions and increasing government expenses to alleviate suffering (Dupont, 2008). Alterations in rainfall patterns and rising temperatures affect food production, as most agricultural outputs depend heavily on climatic variables. Consequently, changes in temperature and rainfall can threaten food availability and survival (Lemi, 2019; Malhi et al., 2021).

Researchers found that CC can lead to conflict through migration, large-scale climate-induced displacements, food shortages, and poverty (Busby, 2018; Ghimire et al., 2015; Ghimire & Ferreira, 2016; Koubi, 2019). Variations in average rainfall patterns, associated with droughts and floods, impact political behaviour and increase the likelihood of disruptive activities such as protests, riots, strikes, inter-communal strife, and anti-government violence (Busby, 2021; Hendrix & Salehyan, 2012).

Climate change also adversely affects human health. It increases the risk of illnesses related to high temperatures, air pollution, vector-borne diseases, allergies, and other ailments (Adamo et al., 2022; Siddiqui et al., 2022). The IPCC (2021) attributes global warming to various health changes, including the prevalence of tropical diseases like dengue and malaria, heat exhaustion, starvation-related illnesses, and storm-related injuries and drownings worldwide.

## ***Biodiversity***

Climate change has caused irreversible effects such as extreme weather events, wildfires, and rising sea levels, devastatingly affecting biodiversity, food security, species displacement, ecosystem function changes, and even extinction (McElwee, 2021; Muluneh, 2021). Species are becoming extinct because of CC, caused by climatic factors that heavily influence the distribution patterns of several species and communities (Saklani & Khurana, 2019). According to Muluneh (2021), the accelerated rate of species extinction is estimated to be 100 to 1000 times faster than usual. Consequently, the natural distribution boundaries for species or communities will shift due to changing climatic trends (Bhaskar, 2022). Lemi (2019) suggests that some detrimental consequences of temperature change on soil quality are the rise in insect and disease cases.

Climate change also affects crop cultivation, leading to losses in some regions and gains in others, and decreasing crop yields increases the risk of hunger and affects food prices. For example, Sintayehu (2018) observed that smaller habitats and fragmentation hinder species' ability to adapt, leading to potential extinctions and decreased genetic diversity in Africa. Moreover, economic growth is linked to biodiversity loss, but good governance practices can help reduce it (Habibullah et al., 2022). Addressing these challenges requires policy reforms, land use changes, and investment in mitigation measures limiting global temperature to below 1.5°C (Nunez et al., 2019).

## **How Climate Change Occurs: The Scientific Overview**

Regardless of CC's causes, researchers have a near consensus about how climate changes occur. The debate centres on the "why," some attributing it to natural phenomena and others to human activities. Nonetheless, understanding the scientific rationale behind the "how" of CC is crucial.

According to well-established scientific consensus, earth's surface is warmed by solar radiation, with about 30% of sunlight reflected into space. The oceans, atmosphere, and land absorb the remaining energy, creating life-supporting conditions. Greenhouse gases regulate earth's thermal equilibrium by managing infrared radiation transmission in the atmosphere. However, human activities have increased greenhouse gas

emissions, leading to global warming (Abouelfadl, 2012; Arora, 2020; Means & Lallanilla, 2021; Pandit, 2020).

### **Western Perspectives on Causes of Climate Change**

CC theories can be broadly categorised into natural and human-induced explanations. Natural causes include the Bio-thermostat, Cloud Formation and Albedo, Ocean Current, Planetary Motion, and Solar Variability theories. These attribute CC to factors like oceanic circulation, solar radiation variations, plate tectonics, volcanic eruptions, earth's shape, Milankovitch Cycles, land and water distribution, differential heating of land and water, ocean currents, air masses, and hurricanes (Bhaskar, 2022; Harris, 2023).

Essentially, climatic changes are driven by natural forces such as continental drift, significant volcanic eruptions, and earth-ocean-atmosphere interactions (Adamo et al., 2022). Earth scientists, oceanographers, and geographers collectively show that differential solar heating produces processes that redistribute heat, resulting in a more uniform climate across the earth's surface (Harris, 2023).

In contrast, the anthropogenic CC theory focuses on the effects of atmospheric carbon dioxide and attributes climate changes primarily to human activities (Harris, 2023). According to the IPCC (2014), about 95% of CC incidents are human-induced. This theory, now predominant, suggests that activities in sectors such as agriculture, transportation, mining, and industry drive global warming (Harris, 2023). The primary GHGs include water vapour (36-90%), carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) (1-26%), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) (4-9%), and ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) (3-7%). Recently, human activities like burning fossil fuels and deforestation have increased atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels by about 50%. If these activities continue, CO<sub>2</sub> levels could double in the next 100 years unless natural sinks increase proportionately (Abouelfadl, 2012).

Climate change is also influenced by external factors such as solar radiation and earth's orbit. However, anthropogenic global warming (AGW) proponents argue that these factors alone do not explain the steady temperature rise over the past thirty years. AGW theory suggests positive feedback mechanisms amplify greenhouse gas effects by two to four times. Even a minor increase in temperature can lead to more atmospheric water vapour, intensifying warming. Additionally, global

warming causes ice and snow to melt, exposing less reflective surfaces that absorb more heat from the sun. Advocates of AGW assert that the temperature increase of 0.7°C over the past 150 years and 0.5°C over the last 30 years is mainly due to human greenhouse gas emissions. They reject the idea that this increase could be attributed to the recovery from the Little Ice Age (1400-1800). Using computer models based on scientific principles, they predict that doubling atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> will lead to an additional 3°C increase in global temperature by 2100 (Forster et al., 2021).

In addition, there are three primary ways human actions contribute to global warming: industrialisation and consumption patterns, deforestation and land-use changes, and other pollutants such as those from transportation and electricity generation.

### ***Industrialisation and Consumption Patterns***

The increased industrialisation and changing global consumption patterns have led to significant emissions of fossil fuels and greenhouse gases. Over the past 800,000 years, levels of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) have never been higher than they are today, primarily due to human activities. Industrial activities, crucial for producing goods and raw materials to meet human needs, significantly contribute to these emissions. Burning fuel for electricity and heat and chemical reactions during the production of chemicals, metals, and minerals result in direct emissions from industrial facilities. Additionally, leaks from these facilities release GHGs. Off-site activities, such as power plants using fossil fuels to generate industrial electricity, also indirectly impact global warming.

Commercial and residential activities, including heating, cooking, waste management, and power use, also contribute to CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and N<sub>2</sub>O atmospheric emissions. Methane is produced through the anaerobic digestion of organic waste in biogas facilities during wastewater treatment. Fluorinated gases are emitted from leaking machinery while servicing air conditioners and refrigerators. Energy use for equipment, external lighting, and buildings further contributes to emissions in the commercial and residential sectors.

### ***Deforestation and Land-Use Changes***

Deforestation and land-use changes contribute to warming in several ways. The release of CO<sub>2</sub> is sourced from biological sequestration when fields are cleared of vegetation for human use. Land management practices, such as converting farmland to grassland, result in emissions of CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O. Using biological feedstocks, such as wood or energy crops, for building, manufacturing liquid fuels, or generating electricity can also lead to emissions or CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration (Yoro & Daramola, 2020).

Historically, agricultural practices are a significant source of emissions and still account for up to one-third of all anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions (Gabric, 2023; Malhi et al., 2021). Crop production and livestock rearing contribute to greenhouse gas emissions using synthetic and organic fertilisers emitting N<sub>2</sub>O, and ruminant animals, particularly cattle, produce CH<sub>4</sub> through enteric fermentation. Similarly, manure management and storage release N<sub>2</sub>O and CH<sub>4</sub>. Other agricultural emissions arise from rice cultivation, crop residue burning, and liming and urea application emissions. The decomposition of biomass, animal waste, and landfills produces methane, while various nitrogen-based fertilisers contribute to nitrous oxide emissions (Arora, 2020; Siddiqui et al., 2022).

### ***Other Pollutants: Transportation and Electricity Generation***

Other sources of pollution, such as transportation and electricity production, are significant contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and global warming. The use of automobiles, trucks, trains, ships, aeroplanes, and other types of transportation leads to the release of CO<sub>2</sub> when petroleum-based goods like diesel and gasoline are burned in internal combustion engines (Aminzadegan et al., 2022). The generation of electricity for homes, businesses, and industries is another major contributor. Fossil fuel burning (coal, oil, and natural gas) for electricity production, transmission, and distribution results in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Dehner et al., 2023).

The main contention remains whether human activities on earth are scientifically significant enough to cause climatic changes. The evidence from various studies suggests that these activities are an important factor in global warming and CC trends.

## **Islāmic Perspectives on Causes of Climate Change**

Like the scientific world, there are two main perspectives on CC's causes: natural and anthropogenic. However, the explanation differs.

### **The natural causes of climate change: the Islāmic perspective**

At the onset, evidence from the Islāmic perspective does not entirely reject the scientific explanation of how CC occurs. However, science neglects a dimension that counts most in the Islāmic or theological viewpoint: divine intervention. It could be argued that, while sciences explain the 'how' of CC, only theology provides adequate reasons for the 'why' of CC.

In the Islāmic creed, everything including CC, is under the control of Allāh, and therefore, nothing changes without His consent and approval. Several verses buttress this assertion, including His saying, "And He it is Who sends down the rain after they have despaired and spreads His Mercy. And He is the Wali (Helper, Supporter, Protector, Lord), Worthy of all Praise" (Q 42: 28). In another verse, He says:

See you not that Allāh drives the clouds gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap of layers, and you see the rain comes forth from between them; and He sends down from the sky hail (like) mountains, (or there are in the heaven mountains of hail from where He sends down hail), and strikes there with whom He wills, and averts it from whom He wills. The vivid flash of its (clouds) lightning nearly blinds the sight (Q24:43) (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983).

From the verses above, it could be deduced that regardless of any human activity on the earth or engaging in any environmentally friendly practice, it is only by the will and control of Allāh that climate became stable or adversely affected in any part of the universe. At the same time, this does not mean that Islām encourages a careless attitude towards the environment.

It is a fundamental pillar of the Islāmic creed that the world will some time come to an end. Consequently, the end of time's signs include changes in the earth's climatic conditions. In the Qur'ān (Q86: 1-5), the end of time was described as follows:

When the heaven is cleft asunder. And when the stars have fallen and scattered. And when the seas are burst forth... (Then) a person will know what he has sent forward and (what he has) left behind (of good or bad deeds) (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983).

It is explained in another set of verses (Q87: 3-14).

And when the seas become a blazing fire or overflow... And when the heaven is stripped off and taken away from its place; ... (Then) every person will know what he has brought (of good and evil) (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983).

In the verses above, environmental disasters and global warming will reach a stage where rivers will be ablaze. The sun, the principal source of light and energy to the earth, will be lost, and the environment will freeze, making existence impossible. However, these events must have some signs and signals to lay the foundation for their occurrence.

To this extent, as time moves on, climatic conditions will worsen, and environmental disasters will keep increasing. In a hadith transmitted by Al-Bukhāri (1036) and Muslim (157), the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

“The Hour (Last Day) will not be established until (religious) knowledge will be taken away (by the death of religious learned men), earthquakes will be very frequent, time will pass quickly, afflictions will appear, murders will increase, and money will overflow amongst you.”

Perception of CC causes based on this viewpoint suggests that since CC is merely the fulfilment of end-time prophecy, humans are not to blame. This opinion is prevalent among the local populace in Sub-Saharan Africa (Koehrsen, 2021; Shehu & Molyneux-Hodgson, 2014).

### **The anthropogenic causes of climate change: the Islāmic perspective**

Islāmically, everything created on the earth was meant for the benefit of humans. Allāh says (Q2: 29): “He is Who created for you all that is on earth, then He rose over towards the heaven and made them seven heavens and He is the All-Knower of everything” (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983). However, the use of such things must be without extravagance. Islām, therefore, discourages wastage of any kind, including natural resources. Allāh says (Q17: 26-27), “...But spend not wastefully (your

resources) in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily, the spendthrifts are brothers of the Shayāṭīn (devils), and the Shayṭān (Devil – Satan) is ever ungrateful to his Lord (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983). In another verse (Q7: 31), Allāh prohibits extravagance and any kind of destruction. He says, "... eat and drink but waste not by extravagance; certainly He (Allāh) likes not Al- Musrifūn (those who waste by extravagance)" (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983). Allāh says (Q6: 56), "And do not do mischief on the earth, after it has been set in order, and invoke Him with fear and hope. Surely, Allāh's Mercy is (ever) near unto the good-doers" (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983).

Simultaneously, Islām encourages the protection and conservation of the environment and enjoins its cleanliness (Arauf, 2021). For instance, indiscriminate logging and bush burning are discouraged in Islām, whereas planting trees and plants is a rewardable act. Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Even if the Resurrection were established upon one of you while he has in his hand a sapling, let him plant it." Similarly, in a letter Abu Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him) conveyed to his army while sending it on a mission, He said:

"Stop, O people, that I may give you ten rules for your guidance on the battlefield... Bring no harm to the trees, nor burn them with fire, especially those which are fruitful. Slay not any of the enemy's flock, save for your food. You are likely to pass by people who have devoted their lives to monastic services; leave them alone..." (Abdul Hamid, 2008).

Therefore, the Islāmic perspective and the Western view on anthropogenic CC are aligned, recognising that excessive human exploitation of the environment, such as burning fossil fuels and deforestation, causes CC. Adebayo (2012) argued that CC results from humans' excessive exploitation of nature, likening it to embezzlement. He suggested that if humans exert their technological power on nature, they must be prepared to face its consequences, stressing that anything that "worships" God should not be exploited. Muslim scholars (Hussain, 2007; Khalid, 2010) also blame the contemporary economic system for excessive production for profit and extravagant consumption. Koehrsen (2021) found this viewpoint to be the most common among Muslim leaders regarding the causes of CC.

Views that ascribe CC to divine retribution blame human immorality for environmental deterioration. This viewpoint holds that God responds to mischievous actions by local communities (such as theft, lying, greed, and injustice) or political leaders (such as corruption, war, and destruction of the environment) with various natural calamities or degradations. Studies have noted that Muslim populations in many Sub-Saharan African regions and parts of Asia have this opinion (Abegunde, 2017; Haron, 2017; Merli, 2010; Shehu & Molyneux-Hodgson, 2014; Watson & Kochor, 2012). Even where the environment is preserved, but sins are persistent, the wrath of Allāh is bound to befall such communities. Therefore, for the climate to be fully preserved, humans must observe two things: preserve the environment and abstain from major sins.

Broadly, the fundamental causes of CC are ascribed to the mischiefs of human beings on earth. In other words, change in climatic conditions and its accompanying negative impact is a consequence of the sins incurred by humans. According to the Islāmic theological perspective, Sins could be categorised broadly into major sins (*al-kabā'ir*) and minor sins (*al-aṣghā'ir*). *Al-Kabā'ir* are considered the most dangerous sins contributing to environmental disasters. Al-Dhahabi (1988) provided a relatively long list of the major sins. However, the most common and as well rampant around the globe include *Shirk* (polytheism), murder, homosexuality; *zinā* (adultery and fornication); consumption of intoxicants; taking or paying interest (*ribā*); gambling, etcetera.

Islamic scholars have extensively discussed the effects of sin and transgression on societies and nations (Askary, 1997; Attuwaijiry, 2006). Evidence from the Qur'ān, citing examples from past nations, clearly shows extreme weather events such as floods, famine, earthquakes, hurricanes, etcetera, are caused by human mischief on the earth. The emissaries of Allāh to nations and towns warned their people of the wrath of Allāh that could follow if they did not repent from disbelieving in Allāh, evil acts, and wrong doings. For example, Nuh and Hud (peace be upon them) admonish their people to repent from their sins and mischiefs on the earth to avert environmental disasters (famine, drought, etc). Allāh says (Q71: 10-13).

“I [Nuh (Noah)] said (to them): ‘Ask forgiveness from your Lord, verily, He is Oft-Forgiving. He will send rain to you

in abundance. And give you increase in wealth and children and bestow on you gardens and bestow on you rivers.’  
 “What is the matter with you, that [you fear not Allāh (His punishment), and] you hope not for reward (from Allāh or you believe not in His Oneness)?” (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983).

However, they did not heed his warnings and persisted in disbelieving until Allāh destroyed them with the great deluge of *Tufan* (Q54: 9-16).

Similarly, the people of Hud (AS), ‘Ād, were enriched with agricultural advancement in food and livestock, industrialisation, building technology, physical strength, and population (Q26: 128-135). However, they were the first to introduce polytheism in the form of idol worshipping after the great *Tufan* deluge (Ibn-Katheer, 1988). Prophet Hud was sent to them, calling them to monotheism, but was rejected (Q7:65-71; Q11:59; Q41:15).

Consequently, they experienced drought causing famine and food insecurity. That was why Hud admonished them, saying (Q11: 52), “And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him, He will send you (from the sky) abundant rain, and add strength to your strength, so do not turn away as *Mujrimun* (criminals, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allāh)” (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983). Nevertheless, they rejected his advocacy and persisted in their sins. Hence, ‘when they saw it as dense clouds coming towards their valleys, they said (Q46: 24): “This is a cloud bringing us rain!” Nay, but it is that (torment) which you were asking to be hastened - a wind wherein is a painful torment!’ (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983). Instead of rain, an intense hurricane with an unprecedented sound, non-stop for a week, was sent to destroy them for their sins (Q51:41-42; Q54:18-22).

Equally, the people of Lūṭ (Lot) rejected monotheism and were the first to introduce sodomy among humankind besides their bad attitude of robbing the wayfarer (Q 29: 28-29).

And (remember) Lūṭ (Lot), when he said to his people: “You commit *Al-Fahishah* (sodomy - the worst sin) which none has preceded you in (committing) it in the ‘*Alamin* (mankind and jinn).” “Verily, you practise sodomy with men, and rob the wayfarer (travellers)! And practise *Al-Munkar* (disbelief

and polytheism and every kind of evil wicked deed) in your meetings...” (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983).

Consequently, unusual rain was sent down on them, destroying them. Allāh says (Q27: 58), “And We rained down on them a rain (of stones). So evil was the rain of those who were warned” (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983).

Likewise, the people of Madyan rejected Prophet Shu’ayb, who warned them about a series of mischievous practices they were doing, including polytheism, shortening of measurements and weights, robbery, injustice, and denying others to accept Allāh. Thus, they were destroyed by a strong earthquake accompanied by a thunderous sound. Qur’ān relates (Q 29: 36-37),

And to (the people of) *Madyan* (Midian), We sent their brother Shu’ayb. He said: “O my people! Worship Allāh (Alone) and hope for (the reward of good deeds by worshipping Allāh Alone, on) the last Day (i.e., the Day of Resurrection), and commit no mischief on the earth as *Mufsidun* (those who commit great crimes, oppressors, tyrants, mischief-makers, corrupters). And they belied him [Shu’aib]: so, the earthquake seized them, and they lay (dead), prostrate in their dwellings (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983).

Also, Pharaoh and his people were warned by Musa (Moses) to stop oppressing/enslaving the Children of Israel, believe in Allāh, and administer justice. Instead, Musa was rejected and threatened. What followed was a series of environmental disasters, namely, flood, crop failure, and famine, so they repent. In the Qur’ān (Q7: 130-133), it was mentioned that:

“And indeed, We punished the people of *Fir’aun* (Pharaoh) with years of drought and shortness of fruits (crops), that they might remember (take heed) .... So, We sent on them: the flood, the locusts, the lice, the frogs, and the blood (as a succession of) manifest signs, yet they remained arrogant, and they were of those people who were *Mujrimūn* (criminals, polytheists, sinners) (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983).

Another striking example is the nation of Saba’ (Sheba), which lived in peace and prosperity. However, they turned down by disbelieving in

Allāh and committing prohibited acts. Qurʾān relates (Q34: 15-16) the case thus:

Indeed, there was for Sabaʾ (Sheba) a sign in their dwelling place - two gardens on the right hand and the left; (and it was said to them:) “Eat of the provision of your Lord and be grateful to Him.” A fair land and an Oft-Forgiving Lord! But they turned away (from the obedience of Allāh), so We sent against them Sail Al- ‘Arim (flood released from the dam), and We converted their two gardens into gardens producing bitter bad fruit, and tamarisks, and some few lote-trees (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983).

In the same vein, when the people of Makkah rejected the message of Muhammad (ﷺ), environmental disaster was part of the punishment they faced. Qurʾān says (Q16:112),

And Allāh puts forward the example of a township (Makkah) that dwelt secure and well-content: its provision coming to it in abundance from every place, but it (its people) denied the Favours of Allāh (with ungratefulness). So, Allāh made it taste extreme hunger (famine) and fear, because of that (evil, i.e., denying Prophet Muhammad) which they (its people) used to do (Al-Hilālī & Khān, 1983).

Likewise, in the sunnah, evidence buttresses the idea that human sins are factors in CC. It was narrated that ḲAbdullah bin ḲUmar said:

“The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) turned to us and said: ‘O Muhajirun, there are five things with which you will be tested, and I seek refuge with Allāh lest you live to see them: Immorality never appears among a people to such an extent that they commit it openly, but plagues and diseases that were never known among the predecessors will spread among them. They do not cheat in weights and measures, but they will be stricken with famine, severe calamity, and the oppression of their rulers. They do not withhold the Zakah of their wealth, but rain will be withheld from the sky, and were it not for the animals, no rain would fall on them. ... Unless their leaders rule according to the Book of Allāh and seek all good from what Allāh has revealed, Allāh will cause them to fight one another.»

The above examples demonstrate that climatic and environmental disasters are not limited to the activities of humans in the form of burning fossil fuels, deforestation, etcetera, but engaging in mischievous acts such as polytheism, atheism, murder, injustice, robbery, homosexuality, adultery, etcetera, are also causes of adverse climatic conditions in the past and the present.

This critique of the AGW theory suggests expanding the scope of anthropogenic causes of CC to include human misdeeds and sins. Therefore, climate mitigation strategies should also advocate for reducing such behaviours. Actions like injustice, greed, embezzlement, mass killings, promoting atheism, corruption, and unjust wars should be curtailed as part of these strategies. Thus, a comprehensive understanding of CC causes, including moral and ethical considerations, is essential for an effective solution.

### **Similarities and Differences between the Islāmic and Western Perspectives on the Causes of Climate Change.**

The preceding section analysed the differing perspectives of Islam and science on CC causes. Thus, this section compares the two perspectives.

While both agree that natural and anthropogenic activities contribute to climate change, they interpret these causes differently. From a scientific standpoint, “natural causes” refer to earthly phenomena such as variations in earth’s orbit, tectonic movements, solar radiation variations, and volcanic eruptions. Conversely, the Islāmic interpretation of “natural” implies that CC is a creation of God, occurring either by His will or as a sign of the world’s end.

Both viewpoints concur that human activities—such as excessive use of fossil fuels, GHG emissions from transportation, industry, residential buildings, modern agriculture, deforestation, and land use—contribute significantly to CC. However, the Islāmic perspective adds that CC is also a result of transgressing God’s moral and spiritual laws. It emphasises that extreme weather events, indicative of CC, are caused by committing major sins (*alkabā’ir*) by both leaders and the public. These include *Shirk* (idolatry), *zinā* (adultery), *ribā* (usury), murder, unjust wars, gambling, alcoholism, drug abuse, and pornography, among other transgressions.

Table 1.2: Similarities and Differences between the Western and The Islāmic Perspective

Similarities	Differences
Both perspectives believe that the activities of humans induce CC.	CC causes are not only restricted to human physical activities but are caused by their spiritual and immoral behaviours towards the laws of God.
Natural forces could cause CC.	God naturally causes CC.
Both perspectives agree that the excessive burning of fossil fuels and other activities, such as deforestation, agriculture, and industrial activities, are the primary causes of CC.	The Islāmic perspective also added that besides these human activities, mischievous acts such as disbelieving in God, blasphemy, murder, unjust wars, usury, pornography, fornication/adultery, etcetera, are fundamental causes of extreme weather events resulting from CC.

Source: Compiled by authors.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has aimed to bridge the gap between the Western scientific perspective and the Islāmic viewpoint regarding the causes of CC. Comparative analysis shows that while both perspectives recognise the severity of CC and its harmful impacts on humanity and the environment, they differ in their understanding of the root causes.

The Western scientific perspective focuses on materialistic explanations, attributing CC mainly to greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, and industrialisation. While these factors are significant, the Islāmic perspective adds a complementary dimension by emphasising human behaviour's moral and spiritual aspects as contributing factors to CC. Islāmic teachings highlight that actions such as mischief on earth, greed, and neglect of environmental stewardship contribute to environmental degradation.

This study highlights the importance of a holistic approach to addressing CC by integrating both perspectives. Relying solely on scientific explanations and technological solutions may be insufficient for effectively mitigating the crisis. A comprehensive strategy that incorporates ethical considerations and emphasises the responsibility of individuals and societies towards the environment is essential.

Mitigation efforts must go beyond technological interventions to include profound human behaviour and transformations of societal values. Embracing principles of sustainability, conservation, and ethical conduct, as advocated by both Islāmic and secular worldviews, is crucial for fostering a harmonious relationship between humanity and the environment.

Future research should focus on cross-cultural comparative studies exploring religious and cultural perspectives on CC. Community-based research initiatives, policy analysis, and environmental education within religious and cultural communities can help cultivate a deeper understanding of the moral imperatives for environmental stewardship, contributing to inclusive strategies for environmental conservation and sustainability.

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# Do We Really Have to Talk about That? Avoiding COVID-19 Topics with Close Contacts

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**Abstract:** As COVID-19 spread globally in 2020, it culminated in distress, anxiety, and uncertainty in dealing with a global health pandemic. Paramount during this period was the dissemination of accurate and updated information about COVID-19, as a means to reduce negative emotions. Close contacts also play a vital role; in disseminating information, they must ensure that they disclose their health status, to avoid infections from spreading. However, individuals may be reluctant to seek information from close contacts, due to many reasons. Accordingly, this study seeks to examine information avoidance on COVID-19 with close contacts among young adults from the perspective of the Theory of Motivated Information Management (TMIM). Specifically, we explored factors influencing COVID-19 information avoidance, including anxiety discrepancy, outcome expectancy and close contact's target efficacy among young adults. Through a cross-sectional survey distributed online in November 2020, we targeted undergraduate students in Klang Valley, Malaysia ( $N = 483$ ). Overall, the study found support for TMIM. Only two hypotheses were not supported; anxiety did not influence outcome expectancy or target efficacy. Target efficacy also mediated the relationship between outcome expectancy and information avoidance. The repercussions of these findings

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on TMIM, as well as other factors that may influence health information management will be deliberated.

**Keywords:** Close contacts, COVID-19, health communication, information avoidance, theory of motivated information management

**Abstrak:** Apabila COVID-19 merebak ke seluruh dunia pada tahun 2020, timbul kesusahan, kebimbangan dan ketidakpastian dalam menangani wabak kesihatan global. Perkara utama dalam tempoh ini ialah penyebaran maklumat yang tepat dan terkini tentang COVID-19, untuk mengurangkan kebimbangan dan ketidakpastian. Hubungan rapat juga memainkan peranan penting; mereka mempunyai tanggungjawab dalam memastikan mereka mendedahkan status kesihatan mereka, untuk mengelakkan jangkitan daripada merebak. Walau bagaimanapun, individu mungkin keberatan untuk memperoleh maklumat dari hubungan rapat disebabkan pelbagai faktor. Sehubungan itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengelakan maklumat mengenai COVID-19 dengan kenalan rapat, dari perspektif Teori Pengurusan Maklumat Bermotivasi (TMIM). Secara khusus, kami meneroka faktor yang mempengaruhi pengelakan maklumat COVID-19, termasuk percanggahan kebimbangan, jangkaan hasil dan keberkesanan sasaran hubungan rapat. Melalui tinjauan keratan rentas yang diedarkan dalam talian pada November 2020, kami menyasarkan pelajar universiti sarjana muda dari Lembah Klang, Malaysia ( $N = 483$ ). Secara keseluruhan, kajian ini memperoleh sokongan untuk TMIM. Hanya dua hipotesis tidak disokong; kebimbangan tidak mempengaruhi jangkaan hasil atau keberkesanan sasaran. Keberkesanan sasaran juga menjadi pengantara hubungan antara jangkaan hasil dan pengelakan maklumat. Kesan daripada penemuan ini terhadap TMIM, serta faktor lain yang berkemungkinan mempengaruhi pengurusan maklumat kesihatan akan dibincangkan.

**Kata kunci:** Hubungan rapat, COVID-19, komunikasi kesihatan, pengelakan maklumat, teori pengurusan maklumat bermotivasi

## Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) classified the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic in early January 2020, after the infection spread to numerous nations simultaneously. Based on the COVID-19 dashboard data managed by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE), it led to more than 4.9 million deaths and has infected approximately 244 million people worldwide (Coronavirus Resource Center, 2021). Historically, COVID-19 emerged from Wuhan

City, China. Reports claimed that the initial outbreak began in December 2019, in one of the markets in Wuhan, which is reportedly known to be a hub of exotic animal exchange (The Guardian, 2019). The transmission of the virus has affected the people of Wuhan where 66% of them were workers from the market. By 1 January 2020, the market was forced to shut down after the declaration of an epidemiologic alert by the local health authority (Wu et al., 2020). The number of cases infected by this virus took only three months to reach one million worldwide ever since the first case was reported in China earlier in 2020 (Issa, 2020).

Malaysia is no stranger to this global pandemic. COVID-19 showed no sign of rest in Malaysia at the time, as cases increased daily (Choudhury, 2021). The first case occurred when a 41-year-old man experienced COVID-19 symptoms after returning from Singapore in 2020 (Elengoe, 2020). Since then, the number of positive cases surged in March 2020 due to a religious gathering event in Sri Petaling. Consequently, the Prime Minister of Malaysia declared the imposition of the Movement Control Order (MCO) for 14 days starting from 18th to 31st March of 2020. This order is premised on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988 and the Police Act 1967 with the hope of reducing COVID-19 cases in Malaysia (New Straits Times, 2020). Afterward, initial steps such as closing borders and restricting international flights were accompanied by limiting domestic travel, applying curfews, and prohibiting mass movement. As a result of these stringent measures, the community's everyday life was in a complete shutdown, and economic activities were forced to halt. By mid-2021, Malaysia faced its most severe surge, prompting stricter lockdown measures. Malaysia entered the fourth phase in the COVID-19 National Recovery Plan, with 2.8 million COVID-19 cases and 32,000 deaths recorded (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2022). Through a combination of vaccination campaigns, testing, and public health measures, Malaysia navigated through the pandemic challenges by striving towards a resilient and sustainable future.

Paramount during this period was the dissemination of accurate and timely information about COVID-19, to ensure that the Malaysian public are equipped with the latest information. Part of the Malaysian government's efforts in disseminating information and controlling the number of positive cases is through contact tracing. Patients who tested positive for COVID-19 and their close contacts are required to

quarantine themselves at home, and to update their health status using the Home Assessment Tools (HAT) through *MySejahtera*, the mobile app for contact tracing (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2021). Close contacts must ensure that they disclose their health status to others to ensure that the virus does not spread. Avoiding honest discourse on COVID-19 status could be detrimental to others. However, despite all these efforts to control the pandemic outbreak, some individuals may resort to avoiding information on COVID-19 from close contacts due to stress, other negative emotions, information overload or due to their low coping ability.

In the present study, we examine factors that motivate individuals to avoid COVID-19-related information from close contacts, from the Theory of Motivated Information Management (TMIM) perspective. As TMIM is a relatively new theory in health information management, more empirical works are needed to understand how information avoidance can occur in a global pandemic context, such as COVID-19. This study will also extend understanding on how health communication can be improved by focusing on how reliance on information avoidance among young adults can be mitigated during a global pandemic. The next section of this paper reviews relevant literature, followed by a brief description of the methodology used in this study.

## **Literature Review**

### *Nature of COVID-19 information*

As health researchers worked around the clock to find a viable cure for COVID-19, information on COVID-19 is constantly evolving as new research findings emerge, policies change, and the situation develops. The dynamic nature of COVID-19 information can create uncertainty and anxiety as the public attempt to keep up with the latest updates and guidelines. With information coming from multiple sources, such as governmental agencies, news outlets, social media, and word-of-mouth, this may create confusion and frustration for individuals who do not know which source to trust.

Also, not all information related to COVID-19 is reliable or accurate; misinformation and disinformation spread easily, particularly on social media platforms and this leads to difficulty in controlling the situation (Caceres et al., 2022). To exacerbate the issue, social media

algorithms may prioritise sensational or emotionally charged content, further accentuating the emotional impact of COVID-19 information. Further, differentiating between credible and unreliable sources requires critical thinking, which not everyone possesses.

Some researchers found that there are emotional responses such as fear, anxiety, frustration, anger, and sadness, to COVID-19 information (i.e., Jones et al., 2021). For instance, exposure to COVID-19-related news can exacerbate anxiety. However, others suggest that negative emotional responses to COVID-19 information can be reduced when the information is perceived to be credible (Lep et al., 2020). Overall, the impact of COVID-19-related information on emotions can be significant and diverse based on individual circumstance, coping strategies and source characteristics (i.e., credibility and efficacy). Other factors such as the severity of the outbreak, personal experiences with the virus or its consequences, and the effectiveness of public health measures can all influence emotional responses in managing information related to COVID-19. The next section will examine specific factors that may lead to health information avoidance.

### *Health information avoidance*

In assessing how to manage health information, individuals may seek information from significant others, mediated sources, and health care providers (Brashers, et al., 2002). Individuals may rely on supportive others such as family members, romantic partners, or close friends when seeking health-related information (e.g., Afifi et al., 2006; Chang, 2014; Gettings & Kuang, 2021). Mohamad et al. (2020) found that Malaysians mainly relied on television for updated information on COVID-19, followed by the Internet and news portals. Maon and Seman (2004) found that the existence of mediated sources such as new media technologies has made it easier for individuals to proactively seek for updated information quickly.

Obtaining relevant and crucial health information certainly has its benefits. In one study that examined conversations about end-of-life (EOL) preferences with their spouses, those who engaged in direct conversations on EOL reported improved communication and quality care (Teno et al., 2007). Wakefield et al. (2010) also found that obtaining information from the Internet facilitates them in making key health care decisions by connecting with those who have access to health

information and interacting with health professionals and social support groups.

However, despite the importance of health information seeking, avoidance may sometimes be the preferred strategy when managing health-related information. Health information avoidance occurs when people engage in any action that is designed to prevent or delay access to information that is available but may not be desired (Sweeney et al., 2010). Several studies have examined information avoidance related to health issues (Afifi & Afifi, 2009; Howell et al., 2020; Rafferty et al., 2014; Soroya, et al., 2021; Tannebaum et al., 2015). When difficult conversations on health issues are anticipated, information avoidance is likely to occur instead of active information seeking behaviours (Rafferty et al., 2014). Specifically, in examining EOL preferences with spouses, researchers found that topic avoidance occurred due to difficulty in navigating process of dying, leading to a culture that normalises avoidance on topics related to death and dying. Anticipating negative outcomes from speaking directly about EOL and anxiety about information discrepancy also influenced information avoidance.

Additionally, information avoidance may also occur if the said health information is perceived as threatening and overwhelming, and avoidance can help reduce stress (Babrow, et al., 2000). For instance, when information from the Internet and social media on efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines gets overwhelming, the public may perceive avoidance as a maladaptive strategy to reduce distress (Siebenhaar et al., 2020). Some who initially choose to avoid information only changed their minds after being persuaded by their significant others to seek crucial health information (Brashers et al., 2000). Further, information avoidance may be influenced by the ability to cope with the said health information; those with high coping efficacy are less likely to avoid information (Hua & Howell, 2020).

Further, young adults may be reluctant to seek information from close contacts due to concerns with privacy issues, lack of confidence in their communication ability to discuss health issues, cultural or social stigma related to disclosures of health issues, and limited awareness, where seeking information is not prioritised when there is no clear benefit to seeking information, and when they underestimate the potential severity of their health concerns. Thus, younger adults who perceive COVID-19

as low risk may not seek information on COVID-19 as they did not anticipate it would have a severe impact on their health.

Finally, in the online context, findings indicate that when seeking information on COVID-19, information overload predicted information anxiety, and this in turn led to information avoidance (Soroya et al., 2021). In this study context, COVID-19 was still in its infancy stages, where not much is known about how to manage the illness, including how to prevent infection and the cure available. Individuals may hesitate to approach close contacts in seeking information about COVID-19 due to stigma, and uncertainty about whether close contacts will disclose their status, and whether they are able to fully communicate information about COVID-19. Thus, it easier to rely on other sources, such as mediated platforms to find out more about COVID-19, instead of approaching a close contact.

In sum, numerous factors may lead to information avoidance when dealing with uncertainty and health information management, particularly if that strategy is perceived as more advantageous than direct or indirect information seeking. The next section reviews antecedents that may lead to COVID-19 information avoidance, as predicted by TMIM.

### *Theory of Motivated Information Management (TMIM)*

TMIM is a relatively new framework in explaining information management and is concentrated on information occurring through interpersonal sources (Afifi & Weiner, 2004). TMIM is relevant in understanding COVID-19 health information management, where people's responses and behaviours to health information may vary on several aspects. Overall, TMIM provides a theoretical framework in understanding how people navigate the vast amount of information surrounding COVID-19 and how their motivations influence their information-seeking and processing behaviour. In this study, we examined factors that would influence how individuals may engage in information avoidance on COVID-19 from the TMIM framework.

In examining health information management, TMIM proposes that the sequence of the theory is achieved when a three-phase process is followed. First, in the interpretation phase, the individual is in the state of awareness that uncertainty discrepancies exist in each challenging

situation. In this phase, they assess uncertainty discrepancy based on what they know and what they want to know. Higher levels of uncertainty discrepancy will result in an emotional response (Afifi & Afifi, 2009). Several studies on TMIM have established a significant relationship between uncertainty discrepancy and emotions, such as anxiety and fear (Afifi et al., 2006; Afifi & Weiner, 2006; Rafferty et al., 2014; Tannebaum, 2015). Therefore, individuals with high uncertainty discrepancy related to COVID-19 are likely to experience greater anxiety. Further, the larger the uncertainty discrepancy, the less likely it is for individuals to anticipate positive outcomes from doing nothing about COVID-19 information seeking. Consequently, the following hypotheses are predicted:

H1: Uncertainty discrepancy is positively associated with anxiety.

H2: Uncertainty discrepancy is negatively associated with outcome expectancy (to do nothing).

Next, in the evaluation phase, individuals contemplate possible realities or outcomes, anticipating either negative or positive outcomes (Afifi et al., 2006). Consequently, the experience of anxiety is expected to negatively affect the expected outcomes (outcome judgements) of the information search in the evaluation phase and the perceived ability to procure the information sought (efficacy judgements). Past research on TMIM have established the role of emotions, such as anxiety, fear, nervousness, and distress (Afifi & Weiner, 2006; Afifi et al., 2006; Rauscher & Hesse, 2014; Tannebaum, 2015). Specifically, TMIM proposes negative relationships between anxiety and outcome expectancy of information seeking and efficacy (Afifi & Weiner, 2004). Thus, in this context, a significant increase in anxiety related to COVID-19 information discrepancy is expected to influence the following outcomes: (a) increased anticipation of positive outcomes from doing nothing, as it provides temporary relief from anxiety, and (b) access to a close contact and belief in the target's ability to produce the information sought, where greater anxiety leads to doubts about the target's efficacy to self-disclose their status. Specifically, the following hypotheses are put forth:

H3a: Anxiety is positively associated with outcome expectancy (to do nothing).

H3b: Anxiety is negatively associated with target efficacy.

Further, perceptions about the outcome of an action (for example, positive and negative outcomes from information avoidance) will influence the perceptions about the target's ability and honesty to self-disclose (Afifi et al., 2006). In this context, when the individual perceives doing nothing about COVID-19 information search as being advantageous, they are more likely to engage in inaction and have decreased belief in the accessibility to the close contact and their ability to be honest about their COVID-19 health conditions. Therefore, we suggest the following:

H4: Outcome expectancy (to do nothing) is negatively associated with target efficacy.

As individuals transition from evaluation phase to decision making, they are presented with various factors and decisions as a management strategy in accordance with the level of emotion caused by the uncertainty discrepancy. The outcomes and target efficacy judgements in the earlier phase will trigger the individual's action regarding the information they sought (Afifi et al., 2006). Studies have identified direct information seeking, indirect information seeking, and information avoidance as main strategies in health information management (i.e., Afifi et al., 2006; Rafferty et al., 2014; Rauscher & Hesse, 2014; Tannebaum, 2015). More recent studies have also focused on mediated information seeking as an information management strategy (i.e., Kanter et al., 2019; Li et al., 2020).

Health topic avoidance is likely to occur if uncertainty is high, issue is considered of low importance or irrelevant, or if the conversation with target is unlikely to generate an effective outcome (Rafferty et al., 2014). In this context, those who perceive positive outcomes from doing nothing regarding COVID-19 information search are more likely to engage in information avoidance on COVID-19 from close contacts. Thus, young adults who perceive low priority on obtaining COVID-19 information, are more likely to engage in information avoidance. Also, decreased belief in target efficacy's ability to self-disclose information on COVID-19 are likely to increase frequency of engaging in information avoidance, where those who feel that close contacts are not accessible or honest about their COVID-19 status, are more likely to engage in

information avoidance. Finally, heightened anxiety about information discrepancy is also expected to lead to an increase in information avoidance on COVID-19.

Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H5: Outcome expectancy (to doing nothing) is positively associated with COVID-19 information avoidance.

H6: Target efficacy is negatively associated with COVID-19 information avoidance.

H7: Anxiety is positively associated with COVID-19 information avoidance.

Further, Afifi and Weiner (2004) suggested that efficacy assessments may function as a partial mediator in information management decisions. Consistent with TMIM's assumptions, efficacy judgements mediated the relationship between outcome expectancy and topic avoidance among spouses who were deciding to discuss end-of-life preferences (Rafferty et al., 2014). A similar relationship is hypothesised here, where target efficacy functions as a mediator in the COVID-19 information management decision process. It is predicted that those who wish to avoid information on COVID-19 will anticipate positive outcomes from doing nothing about COVID-19 information search, but target efficacy will also be given due consideration. If the target is accessible and honest with their disclosures on COVID-19, this will influence if one chooses to avoid or seek information about COVID-19. However, since they already anticipate positive outcome in doing nothing about the information search, target efficacy is expected to only play a smaller role. Specifically, the following mediating hypothesis is proposed:

H8: Target efficacy mediates the relationship between outcome expectancy (to do nothing) and COVID-19 information avoidance.

### *Conceptual Framework*

The present study focused on the relationship between TMIM variables in the COVID-19 health information management among young adults. Figure 1 displays the predictions of the present study based on the TMIM framework.

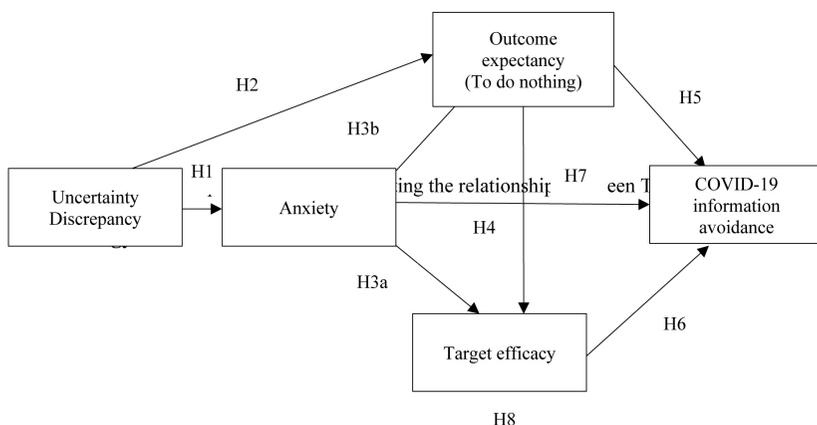


Figure 1. Conceptual framework depicting the relationships between TMIM variables

## Methodology

### *Sampling*

The main sample for this study consists of young adults who are undergraduate students from two public universities in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. Klang Valley was chosen as the study location as COVID-19 cases in this area were relatively high during the data collection period (Code Blue, 2020) and the study required that respondents identify a “close contact” who tested positive for COVID-19 in order to answer the research instrument. The second university was chosen to increase participation from non-Malays as the first target location consisted of only Malay students.

Since we did not have access to the sampling frames, non-probability purposive sampling was chosen for this study with respondents needing to identify a close contact to participate in the study. The use of power analysis is recommended for researchers who are considering the use of non-probabilistic sampling technique in the absence of available sampling frame (Memon et al., 2014). According to Hair et al. (2019), to perform the data analysis in PLS-SEM, the sample must be ten times the study paths and this criterion was fulfilled for this study. The G\*power software is recommended in recent studies (e.g., Memon et al., 2020), and determined the minimum sample size based on the

number of predictors ( $N = 129$ ). The final number of valid responses exceeded the minimum sample size required for data analysis ( $N = 483$ ).

### *Procedures*

To collect data, an online survey was constructed using Google Form. The questionnaire was distributed online to the main target respondents from November 2020 to January 2021. Respondents must be actively registered for undergraduate courses during the time of data collection. The survey took 10–15 minutes for each respondent to complete. Throughout the survey, the respondents were instructed to respond to the items in the survey, while selecting a close contact who had tested positive for COVID-19, and their behaviour in avoiding COVID-19-related topics with that close contact. The respondents were briefed on informed consent in the survey instructions, and by proceeding with the first section of the survey, they consented to participate in the study.

### *Measures*

The independent variables of this study are the TMIM variables, including uncertainty discrepancy, anxiety, outcome expectancy (of doing nothing), and target efficacy. The dependent variable is information avoidance from a close contact who supposedly tested positive for COVID-19. Target efficacy and outcome expectancy (of doing nothing) are mediating variables in this study. The following paragraphs outline specific details of each scale used in the study.

Close contact is a person the individual has been in contact with and meets the following criteria: while in contact they were closer than six feet or two meters apart for a total of 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period while that person was infectious, which starts two days before any symptoms begin and continues until they have recovered (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). Examples of close contact include someone the individual lives with (e.g., family member, housemate), someone the individual is intimate with (i.e., spouse), or someone the individual shared a car with.

Uncertainty discrepancy is measured using the scale that is consistently used in numerous other applications of TMIM in the health context (e.g., Dillow & Labelle, 2014). Two items measured the discrepancy between the knowledge that a person has about a close contact's health and what they want to know about the close contact's

health. All items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 (*Nothing*) to 7 (*Everything*). An example of the item for uncertainty discrepancy is: “how much information do you want to know about your close contact’s current health condition?” (UD1). As with other previous applications of uncertainty discrepancy, a single score was computed by subtracting the level of information they want to know (UD2) from the level of information they already know about the close contact’s current health condition and COVID-19 status (UD1). Scores for this construct may range from -6 to +6. Higher scores reflect greater uncertainty about a close contact’s current health condition, and vice versa. A positive score reflects a larger need for information regarding a close contact’s current health condition, whereas a negative score reflects less need for information.

As previously applied in other studies (e.g., Afifi & Weiner, 2006), anxiety is defined as anxiety discrepancy about a close contact’s current health condition. Five items were used to measure the respondent’s anxiety about the discrepancy they experienced regarding knowledge of their close contact’s health. These items were measured on a 7-point scale, with responses ranging from 1 (*Not at all anxious*) to 7 (*extremely anxious*). A sample item for this construct is “rate your anxiety about how little/how much you know about your close contact’s current health status.”

To measure outcome expectancy (to do nothing), this study adopted the 3-item scale used by Tannenbaum (2015). Outcome expectancies reflect beliefs about the outcomes of a specific information management phase. In the present study, we focused on outcomes anticipated from doing nothing with when dealing with COVID-19 information management. It was measured using a 7-point Likert scale, with the responses ranging from 1 (*A lot more negatives than positives*) to 7 (*A lot more positives than negatives*). A sample item states, “doing nothing to figure out my close contact’s COVID-19 status would produce...”.

To measure target efficacy, this study adopted the scale consistently used by previous researchers (Afifi & Weiner, 2006). Target efficacy measures the belief about whether the target individual has access to the desired information and would be candid with this information. Target efficacy consisted of six items (items 2 and 6 were reverse coded). All items were measured using a 7-point scale, with responses ranging

from 1 (*Extremely Disagree*) to 7 (*Extremely Agree*). An example of an item used for target efficacy is, “if asked, my close contact would be completely honest about my risk for COVID-19”.

Information avoidance is also adopted from previous measures, with three items (e.g., Afifi & Afifi, 2009; Tannebaum, 2015). It occurs when individuals choose to avoid relevant and important information related to the issue. In this study context, respondents are asked to respond to the likelihood of avoiding information from a close contact on COVID-19-related topics. These items were also measured using a 7-point scale, with the responses ranging from 1 (*Completely false*) to 7 (*Completely true*). An example of an item for information avoidance is “I will ignore information from my close contact about his or her COVID-19 health status.” Data analysis to assess both the structural and measurement model was performed using SMARTPLS 3.3.3.

## Findings

### *Demographic background*

The survey respondents were mainly young adults ( $M = 21.48$ ,  $SD = 2.05$ ), and females (68%). Almost a majority stayed off campus during the period of data collection (73%), while close to one third stayed on campus (27%). They also reported to be living in the same residence with an average of at least four people ( $M = 4.39$ ,  $SD = 2.03$ ). Only 21% lived with six or more people in the same residence. Close to half were more than willing to get tested if they suspected they had COVID-19 (47%). More than half perceived that they had adequate information on COVID-19 (71%).

### *Common method bias*

Since the data were collected from a single source, based on the following suggestions (i.e., Kock & Lynn, 2012; Kock, 2015), the data were tested for common method bias by conducting full collinearity testing. In this method, all variables were regressed against a common variable, and if the variance inflation factors (VIF) is less than or equals to 3.30, there is no bias in the study based on a single source data. Because the analysis resulted in VIF values of less than 3.30, for the present study, there is no issue with bias coming from a single source data. Table 1 shows the full collinearity testing.

Table 1: Full Collinearity Testing

Construct	UD	ANX	OE	TE	IA
VIF	1.057	1.051	1.404	1.447	1.741

Note: UD = uncertainty discrepancy, ANX = anxiety, OE = outcome expectancy (to do nothing), TE = target efficacy, IA = information avoidance

*Measurement model*

The measurement model depicts the relationship between the constructs and the indicator variables. In evaluating the measurement model, indicators with low factor loadings (i.e., values < 0.60) were removed (Gefen & Straub, 2005). Only three items were removed from the analysis due to low factor loadings, i.e., anxiety item 4 (ANX4), target efficacy items 1 (TE1) and 2 (TE2). Further, two components, namely composite reliability, and Cronbach’s alpha, were assessed to examine reliability. First, the composite reliability was inspected. The desirable cut-off value is .70 (Ringle et al., 2018), and this criterion was met. Hence, all the latent constructs of the model achieved adequate composite reliability. Also, the Cronbach’s alpha values for all constructs in this study, with a minimum of 0.85, are well above the threshold of .70 (Chin, 2010). These outcomes reflect adequate reliabilities of the latent constructs, implying their suitability for further analysis. The complete results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Factor Loadings, Reliability, and Validity

Items	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
<i>Uncertainty discrepancy (UD)</i>		NA	NA	NA
UD	SIM			
<i>Anxiety (ANX)</i>		0.864	0.908	0.712
ANX1	0.874			
ANX2	0.893			
ANX3	0.831			

ANX5	0.771			
<i>Outcome Expectancy (OE)</i>		0.915	0.946	0.854
OE1	0.899			
OE2	0.934			
OE3	0.939			
<i>Target Efficacy (TE)</i>		0.767	0.837	0.563
TE3	0.728			
TE4	0.793			
TE5	0.743			
TE6	0.735			
<i>Information Avoidance (IA)</i>		0.859	0.874	0.780
IA1	0.837			
IA2	0.907			
IA3	0.904			

Note: CA = Cronbach's alpha, CR = Composite reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted, SIM = Single Item Measure. Items ANX4, TE1, and TE2 were deleted due to low loadings

Further, convergent validity was examined to assess the measurement model. The average variance extracted (AVE) and the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio procedure were included in the convergent validity assessment. Based on recommendations by Ringle et al. (2018), the threshold for the AVE is .50, and this was met. Thus, the constructs in the study demonstrated convergent validity. To assess discriminant validity, the HTMT ratio procedure was employed. Henseler et al. (2015) emphasised that in determining discriminant validity, the most conservative threshold values of the HTMT ratio should be  $\leq .90$ . All the HTMT values in this study were below the threshold value of .90, indicating that discriminant validity was achieved (refer to Table 3).

Table 3: Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. ANX					
2. IA	0.088				
3. OE	0.087	0.584			
4. TE	0.248	0.564	0.356		
5. UD	0.157	0.149	0.145	0.055	

Note: UD = uncertainty discrepancy, ANX = anxiety discrepancy, OE = outcome expectancy (to do nothing), TE = target efficacy, IA = information avoidance

*Structural model*

Having obtained acceptable reliability and validity, the next step of the analysis is to test the hypotheses of the study using the structural model. Multivariate skewness and kurtosis were assessed, as suggested by Hair et al. (2017) and Cain et al. (2017). The results revealed that the data collected were not multivariate normal, based on Mardia’s multivariate skewness ( $\beta = 3.427, p < 0.001$ ) and Mardia’s multivariate kurtosis ( $\beta = 41.630, p < 0.001$ ) values. Therefore, following the recommendations given by Hair et al. (2019), the path coefficients, the standard errors, *t*-values, and *p*-values in the structural model are reported. We used a sample resample of 5,000 bootstrapping procedures, as suggested by Ramayah et al. (2018).

The structural model displays the relationships (paths) among the constructs of the proposed study model. The adjusted *r*<sup>2</sup> value for the three exogenous constructs (i.e., outcome expectancy to do nothing, target efficacy, and anxiety) explains 42% of the variance in information avoidance. The predictive relevance (*Q*<sup>2</sup>) value for the part of the model predicting information avoidance is 0.318, indicating moderate predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2017).

The model’s standardised path values, *t*-values, standard deviation, confidence intervals, effect sizes, and *p*-values are displayed in Table 4. First, we tested the direct effect of UD on A. The path coefficient between UD and ANX indicates a significant and positive relationship

between UD and ANX ( $\beta = 0.148, t = 2.530, p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, H1 is supported. Next, H2 examines the direct effect of UD on OE, where a negative relationship was hypothesised. Results indicate that there is a negative, significant relationship between UD and OE. Therefore, H2 is supported ( $\beta = -0.142, t = 2.282, p < 0.01$ ). H3a measures whether ANX has a positive impact on OE. The results show that ANX has no significant impact on OE, although it was in the hypothesised direction ( $\beta = 0.028, t = 0.266, p = 0.395$ ). Thus, H3a is not supported. H3b examines whether ANX is negatively related to TE. The path values revealed that ANX does not have a significant impact on TE ( $\beta = 0.084, t = 0.266, p = 0.103$ ). Consequently, H3b is also not supported.

Next, H4 examines the effect of OE on TE; results display a negative relationship between OE and TE. Thus, H4 is also accepted ( $\beta = -0.361, t = 8.214, p < 0.001$ ). For H5, the analysis measures the relationship between OE and IA; the path values indicate a significant relationship ( $\beta = 0.377, t = 8.642, p < 0.01$ ). Hence, H5 is accepted. Next, H6 examines the effect of TE on IA; and the results indicate a negative relationship between TE and IA ( $\beta = -0.404, t = 10.965, p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, H6 is accepted. Finally, H7 focuses on the direct effect of ANX on IA; there is a positive relationship between ANX and IA. Therefore, H7 is accepted ( $\beta = 0.092, t = 2.176, p < 0.05$ ).

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	SD	t-value	p-value	BCI LL	BCI UL	f <sup>2</sup>	VIF
H1: UD → ANX	0.148	0.053	2.796	0.006	-0.028	0.156	0.022	1.000
H2: UD → OE	-0.142	0.050	2.282	0.002	-0.023	-0.059	0.179	1.023
H3a: ANX → OE	0.028	0.104	0.266	0.395	-0.168	0.179	0.001	1.023
H3b: ANX → TE	0.084	0.084	1.264	0.103	-0.028	0.190	0.008	1.000
H4: OE → TE	-0.361	0.044	8.214	p<.001	-0.430	-0.285	0.151	1.000
H5: OE → IA	0.377	0.044	8.642	p<.001	0.486	0.636	0.024	1.151
H6: TE → IA	0.404	0.037	10.965	p<.001	-0.463	-0.341	0.243	1.159
H7: ANX → IA	0.092	0.042	2.176	0.015	0.015	0.150	0.014	1.008

Note: UD = uncertainty discrepancy, ANX = anxiety, OE = outcome expectancy, TE = target efficacy, IA = information avoidance.

*Mediation analysis*

To test the mediating analysis, we followed the guidelines by Preacher and Hayes (2004; 2008) by bootstrapping the indirect effect. H8 evaluates whether TE mediates the relationship between OE and IA. Results are significant, OE à TE à IA ( $\beta = 0.146, p < 0.001$ ). In this analysis, the confidence intervals bias corrected 95% also did not show any intervals straddling a 0, thus confirming our findings. Thus, H8 is accepted (refer to Table 5).

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing Indirect Effects

Hypotheses	Relationship	Path coefficient	SD	t-values	p-values	BCI LL	BCI UL
H8	OE → TE → IA	0.146	0.020	7.249	<0.001	0.114	0.179

*Note: OE = outcome expectancy (to do nothing), TE = target efficacy, IA = information avoidance*

**Discussion**

In the present study, we propose to identify factors that influence COVID-19 information avoidance from close contacts among young adults. To test the hypotheses, we used SMARTPLS 3.3.3 to analyse the measurement and structural models. First, results indicate the existence of a positive relationship between uncertainty discrepancy and anxiety (H1). Uncertainty discrepancy also negatively influenced outcome expectancy (H2). However, there is no significant relationship between anxiety and outcome expectancy (H3a), and between anxiety and target efficacy (H3b). Next, there is a negative relationship between outcome expectancy and target efficacy (H4). Outcome expectancy, target efficacy, and anxiety also significantly influenced information avoidance (H5-H7). Finally, target efficacy functioned as a mediator in the COVID-19 information management process (H8). Overall, the study does lend some support to TMIM as a useful framework in understanding COVID-19 information management. The followings paragraphs will deliberate specific details related to the results of the study.

The important role played by uncertainty discrepancy in the interpretation phase of information management is a valuable input for the government, health agencies, medical professionals, and front liners. As COVID-19 is a newly discovered pandemic, uncertainty levels surrounding how to manage it is still relatively high. Consistent with previous studies (Afifi et al., 2006; Afifi & Weiner, 2006; Rafferty et al., 2014; Tannebaum, 2015), high uncertainty discrepancy appears to trigger negative emotions (i.e., anxiety) (H1). It also leads to decreased belief in the positive outcomes of doing nothing (H2). Thus, to facilitate individuals to evaluate and assess the information that they have, the Malaysian government and other health agencies should continuously provide updated, crucial, and timely information, to reduce uncertainty and to highlight positive outcomes from obtaining information. Consequently, this will help ease anxiety and encourage individuals to perceive direct information seeking, instead of avoidance, as advantageous to manage their own health.

The failure of anxiety in influencing outcome expectancies and target efficacy is puzzling (H3a-H3b), considering previous research indicate that negative emotions such as anxiety would trigger anticipation to certain outcomes related to information management, and belief in information provider's ability to honestly self-disclose pertinent information related to their health (e.g., Tannebaum, 2015). This could be attributed to fluctuating levels of anxiety on COVID-19 corresponding to different phases of COVID-19 in Malaysia. Anxiety may have reached its peak at the start of the pandemic and fluctuated after. At the time the data was collected, panic and anxiety may have subsided compared to the early onset of COVID-19. The Malaysian government was also lauded for their earlier success at breaking the chain of infections and stringent rules regarding movement control orders (Passeri, 2020). Therefore, perhaps anxiety did not play a more prominent role in influencing evaluations on appropriate strategies to manage COVID-19 information (i.e., efficacy and outcome expectancies).

Further, the importance of outcome expectancy in the evaluation phase of information management is also evident, where it led to decreased belief in close contact's target efficacy (H4). Those who perceive doing nothing as advantageous are less likely to approach close contacts for information. Finally, H5-H7 identified significant

factors that influenced information avoidance, where target efficacy negatively influenced information avoidance, and outcome expectancy and anxiety positively influenced information avoidance. This is also a valuable input in improving COVID-19 information management. Although Malaysia is now in the recovery phase for COVID-19, there are still plenty of grey areas. In July 2021, emerging data on new COVID-19 variants such as *Delta* by Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2021) suggest that it is more infectious and may lead to higher transmissibility compared to other variants. Thus, there are still information gaps regarding the availability and efficacy of post-vaccination booster shots. Most recently, there are concerns with the side effects of *AstraZeneca* COVID-19 vaccines (Kathirasen, 2024). As such, health campaigns should continuously provide updated information on COVID-19 through various platforms to reduce anxiety and empower others with accurate knowledge. Campaigns should highlight the importance of quick preventive measures as opposed to avoidance, in the effort to curb the spread of the pandemic, or to prevent recurring infections.

Based on evidence pointing to target efficacy as a mediating variable, close contacts are an important component in the decision-making phase of COVID-19 information management process. Thus, they should be encouraged to share their story with others. When close contacts engage in full and honest disclosures about their health, this may reduce inaccurate stereotypes and exaggerated stigma about being a COVID-19 patient, and make it more likely for others to approach them for information. However, as this study only focused on the role of target efficacy of close contacts on information avoidance, future studies could examine other aspects of efficacy in dealing with COVID-19, such as communication efficacy and coping efficacy, as suggested by Afifi and Weiner (2004). Perhaps low communication ability (i.e., not wanting to navigate difficult conversations on COVID-19 with close contacts) and low coping efficacy (i.e., not being able to cope with the risk of being COVID-19 positive) will trigger individuals' propensity to engage in information avoidance, where avoidance may be perceived as the only viable option to manage COVID-19-related information. As this sample is also relatively educated, choosing a different population, such as those with no formal education and income (i.e., B40 population from rural areas) may shed light into how those with low communication and coping efficacy manage health information.

## Conclusion

This study has provided a small glimpse into how young adults may choose to avoid COVID-19 information from close contacts, as predicted by the TMIM perspective. However, it is important to note that this study has its limitations. First, although a large-scale survey does enable generalising the study finding, it precludes a deeper examination of motives that lead to information avoidance, when dealing with a global health pandemic situation. Future studies could also extend the findings of this study by employing the mixed methods approach (i.e. survey and focus group interviews) to qualitatively and quantitatively examine motives that may lead to COVID-19 health information avoidance, such as information dissonance or information overload. The study's findings must also be interpreted with caution in terms of representativeness as it falls short of the Malaysian demography by ethnic composition, with only 58% being Malays, and the remaining were other minority groups.

Additionally, more recent research on TMIM has highlighted the role of direct information seeking on health issues using online platforms instead of interpersonal sources only (e.g., Kanter et al., 2019; Li et al., 2020). As such, considering the ubiquity of social media and new communication technology (i.e., artificial intelligence) as a preferred source of health information, future studies could examine the contribution of TMIM variables that lead to information avoidance of COVID-19 information disseminated through various technological platforms, including social media accounts of health care providers, professional health websites (i.e., WebMD), virtual communities, online support groups, or the government mandated mobile application for contact tracing. Further, as anxiety did not significantly trigger outcome expectancy and target efficacy, future research could perhaps adopt a longitudinal approach in examining more precisely, the long-term and fluctuating effects of a wider range of negative emotions, such as anxiety, fear, guilt, panic, or distress in evaluating strategies to manage COVID-19 information.

Based on the present study, there is no doubt that health communication is an important prospective in managing a global pandemic, particularly from the individuals' interpersonal interaction with close contacts, such as their family members and others in their local communities. As such, it is important that the government, front-liners, and other health agencies continuously educate the public and encourage them

to be more proactive in managing their health, as preventive actions and quick decision-making could help break the spread of the disease and safeguard the health of individuals, neighbours, and families, in a community that is still presently dealing with the devastating impact of COVID-19.

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# Revisiting the Relevance of Religion in the Post-Covid-19 Pandemic: A Critical Analysis through the Lense of Religious Scholarship – Freud, James, and Dewey

**Mohammad Syifa Amin Widigdo\***

**Abstract:** The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic provides not only challenges the current states of economy, health, and society, but also the relevance of religion. Some scholars observe that Covid-19 pandemic triggers the rise of religious beliefs and attitudes that tend to deny scientific explanation of the pandemic and its rational coping. This unscientific religiosity is deemed irrelevant in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, others maintain that religious values and experiences are useful to cope with the consequences of the pandemic. In these two instances, religion's relevance in the modern world is revisited, whether religion should be ignored or considered to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic. Through the lens of religious scriptural and scholastic tradition of Sigmund Freud, William James, and John Dewey, this paper weighs in the relevance of religion and shows which aspects of religion are irrelevant and which elements of religion are relevant to cope with the pandemic and its ramifications.

**Keywords:** religion, Covid-19 pandemic, Freud, James, Dewey

**Abstrak:** Wabak pandemik Covid-19 bukan sahaja memberi cabaran kepada keadaan ekonomi, kesihatan, dan masyarakat semasa, tetapi juga kepada kaitan agama. Seseengah sarjana memerhatikan bahawa pandemik Covid-19 mencetuskan kebangkitan kepercayaan dan sikap agama yang cenderung menafikan penjelasan saintifik tentang wabak itu dan penanganuan rasionalnya.

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Keagamaan yang tidak saintifik ini dianggap tidak relevan dalam menangani pandemik Covid-19. Sementara itu, yang lain berpendapat bahawa nilai dan pengalaman agama berguna untuk menghadapi akibat pandemik. Dalam kedua-dua keadaan ini, kaitan agama dalam dunia moden dikaji semula, sama ada agama harus diabaikan atau dipertimbangkan untuk menghadapi pandemik Covid-19. Melalui lensa Sigmund Freud, William James, dan John Dewey, makalah ini menimbangankan kerelevanan agama dan menunjukkan aspek agama mana yang tidak relevan dan unsur agama mana yang relevan untuk menghadapi pandemik dan akibatnya.

**Kata kunci:** agama, pandemik Covid-19, Freud, James, Dewey

## Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic puts religious scholars, institutions, and adherents in an uneasy position. They are challenged to answer a series of questions regarding how religions explain why and how the pandemic happens and what religions can do to deal with it. They are also forced to adjust their rituals and religious practices according to health-protocols and are imposed to accept the reality in which science, technology, and medical knowledge become the main reference and “guidance” of human life (Phuong, 2021; Regus, 2021). Some scholars maintain that some religious communities are causing a rapid spread of the coronavirus since they are reluctant to follow health protocols in their religious gatherings and suspending rational-scientific judgment in their behaviours (Al-Rousan & Al-Najjar, 2020; Begović, 2021; Singh, 2020; Vermeer & Kregting, 2020; Widiyanto, 2020). In this regard, religion is deemed irrelevant and obsolete in coping with the Covid-19 pandemic implications. Some others believe that religious teachings, values, and connections are helpful to prevent the spread of the virus and enable people to cope with the Covid-19 consequences (Chow et al., 2021; Dutra & Rocha, 2021; Hassan et al., 2021; Kowalczyk et al., 2020; Modell & Kardia, 2020; Molteni et al., 2021). Therefore, according to them, religion is still relevant and useful to overcome the pandemic Covid-19 and its adverse effects.

This debate on the role and fate of religion in the society has a precedence in the works of Sigmund Freud (1961a, 1961b, 1967), William James (2002), and John Dewey (1962). Sigmund Freud (d. 1939), the founder of psychoanalysis theory in psychology, provides

several critiques of religion. He examines various aspects of religion, ranging from its origin to its role in human civilisation. Religion for him is primarily a result of Oedipus complex, of a relationship between the son and the father. In the end, according to Freud, this kind of religion imposes an external-moral authority that is too demanding. This authority represses the human ego and leads to both individual and civilisational unhappiness. However, according to prominent philosophers and psychologists, namely William James (d. 1910) and John Dewey (d. 1952), this criticism of religion does not eliminate the significance of certain qualities and aspects of religion. They attempt to show that every individual has certain religious qualities of experience in life regardless of the sources of such experience. Religious experience can be derived from either one's relation with supernatural beings or with worldly ideal ends ranging from scientific, aesthetic, to civic ideals. In contrast to Freud criticism that religion produces human discontents because of the external forces, James and Dewey in their own way try to prove that human beings have a control over their own demands and wants. For James, through a healthy-minded perspective in life, religious experience can be used for solving human problems and uneasiness. This kind of healthy-mindedness eventually results in human happiness. In a similar vein, Dewey maintains that religious experience can be directed to effect a positive life adjustment and orientation (Dewey, 1962, p. 13).

In this regard, this study examines critically each intellectual position regarding the relevance of religion in the advancement of science and technology in dealing with a pandemic and provide a critical assessment of which aspects of religion that can be used to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic and which elements that cannot be employed through the lens of Freud, James, and Dewey. Knowledge and understanding of the relevance of religion will enable us to identify which aspects of religion should be strengthened and promoted to deal with the pandemic and its negative consequences.

### **Religion and Disaster**

Disaster is viewed differently in religious normative and scholarship traditions. In the Islamic context, for example, there are several terms associated with the notion of disasters. The first term associated with disaster is *al-muṣṭibah*. This refers to unpleasant occurrences that

happen to human beings. The *muṣībah* generally happens due to human wrongdoings and sins that trigger God's wrath and decree to happen in the forms of disasters. The Qur'an employs this term in several places in the Qur'an, namely 42:30, 04:79, 07:100, 64:11, 02:157, and 57:22. The second term is *al-balā'* or *al-fitnah*, which means a test. Both terms are used to denote God's Will that is embodied in the forms of pleasant and unpleasant events, uneasiness, and sufferings to test human beings, forge their characters, raise their standings, forgive their sins, or purify their souls like what happened to Prophet Ibrahim, when he was commanded to slaughter his son, Isma'il. The key for the elevation of spiritual state and soul purification, according to prominent Islamic mystic, Jalāluddīn al-Rūmī (d. 1273), is the virtue of patience (*ṣabr*) and contentment (*riḍā*) (Rouzati, 2018). The third term is *al-'adhāb*, which is defined as a divine punishment. The Qur'an usually uses this word to designate a harsh punishment inflicted to a person, community, or even a nation for their sins and disbelieving acts such as what befell the people of Prophet Nuh and Prophet Lut (Aksa, 2020, p. 2; Zainuddin, 2013, pp. 48-57).

In Judeo-Christian scholarship, the understanding of disasters can be found in the dialectics between the notion of loving God and the reality of human sufferings: why loving God allows disasters to happen and make human beings suffer? Leibniz introduced the terms "theodicy" in 1917 to depict such problem and to understand further the concept of divine justice (Leibniz, 2007). Within Leibnizian tradition, there are three important models of theodicy, namely: the free-will, the best-possible of all possible worlds, and the retributive (Chester et al., 2019, p. 4). Chester et al. (2019) explains further that the free-will theodicy perceives human sufferings as a result of human freedom granted by God to human beings. With the freedom of action, humans are able to choose righteous deeds that result in happiness or sinful actions that end up in human sufferings. The sufferings (including disasters) in this context is not caused by God's action but triggered by human sinful deeds. Meanwhile, "the best-possible of all possible worlds" theodicy holds that universal laws of physics control the universe. The earth is the best possible worlds and sufferings (including disasters) occurs to achieve the greater good (Chester et al., 2019, p. 5). Volcano eruption or earthquake, for instance, happens for a purpose, which is not only to maintain balance in the universe but also to allow human spiritual

growth through dealing with sufferings. Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), a prominent medieval Muslim theologian, introduces the phrase “there is not in the possibility anything more wonderful than what it is (*laysa fī al-imbkān abda<sup>c</sup> min mā kān*)” to describe the concept of the best of all possible worlds in the Islamic cosmology within the realm of divine unity and trust in God (Rouzati, 2018, p. 7). Lastly, the retributive theodicy maintain that human sufferings and disasters happen due to humans’ disobedient, disbelieving, and sinful acts that make God punish them in the forms of natural disasters. This is a prevalent narrative in the religious scriptures and religious adherents (Chester et al., 2019, p. 5; Joharry, 2023, pp. 226-228).

From the above exposition of religious normative and scholarship tradition, it can be inferred that disaster in religious traditions is perceived as events in human life that cause human sufferings and happen due to human sinful and harmful acts or due to God’s Will either to test or to punish human beings for their own betterment and spiritual development. This religious understanding of disaster and other forms of human sufferings is challenged and responded critically by the following influential scholars of religion and psychology, namely: Sigmund Freud, William James, and John Dewey.

### **Freud, Critiques of Religion, and the Covid-19 Phenomenon**

Unlike religious theological and scholastic tradition that perceives human problems and sufferings as originating from God (either due to human sinful conduct or God’s will), Freud argues contrarily from anthropocentric and empirical perspectives. To him, it is essentially human problems and sufferings that create “religion.” He writes, “God was the exalted father, and the longing for the father was the root of the need for religion” (Freud, 1961b, p. 28). Human beings are destined to live in the world facing the force of nature, the coming of death, and the occurrence of sufferings in human civilisation. They are helpless in the face of these natural phenomena. They cannot rely on themselves to solve this problem, so they create a more powerful authority, the exalted and powerful fathers, with the aims of defending themselves against those natural threats. The formation of religious ideas according to Freud is exactly coming from this feeling of helplessness and the construction of the idea of the father who allegedly can provide the necessary security help (Freud, 1961b, p. 38).

The above security reason becomes a psychological foundation for Freudian concept of religion. To Freud, religious ideas including the existence of the exalted gods (or fathers) are illusions. They are illusions because their existence is constructed by human wishes that need to be fulfilled. Human beings wish that there is an authoritative and powerful being out there who can protect them from childish helplessness in front of the superiority of nature. He writes:

As we already know, the terrifying impression of helplessness in childhood aroused the need for protection—for protection through love—which was provided by the father; and the recognition that this helplessness lasts throughout the life made necessary to cling to the existence of a father, but this time a more powerful one (Freud, 1961b, p. 38).

In addition to the above security reason (i.e. a defence against natural forces) and psychological foundation (i.e. a wish fulfilment) for the emergence of religion, Freud also presents an interesting neurotic explanation. If a human child grows through neurotic process—from early trauma, defence (repression), latency, to the outbreaks of the neurosis including a partial return of the repressed materials—the formation of religion has an analogous neurotic phenomenon (Freud, 1967, pp. 101-107). He explicitly says, “Religion is the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity, like obsessional neurosis of the children” (Freud, 1961b, p. 55). The idea of God, for example, emerges not only as a wishful fulfilment but also a result of human neurotic development. After disposing and killing the father by violence, in the scheme of neurosis symptoms, children have a sense of guilt. This happens in the early trauma period of neurosis. As a reaction to that impious deed, they repress their sense of guilt by punishments. They feel deserved to be punished as a consequence of their mischievous action and at the same time as a sign of respect towards their father’s wills (Freud, 1961b, p. 54). In this defence stage of neurosis, the children begin to fear the father and at the same time to honour him as an example to follow.

In this regard, the Covid-19 pandemic posits what Freud calls “the force of nature, the coming of death, and the occurrence of sufferings” that make humans cling to God and religion for the purpose of finding answer and help. God and religion provide a sense of security for humans to face those natural problems and sufferings. This psychological and religious attitude can be seen in societies in dealing with Covid-19

pandemic. For example, Muslims in Aceh, Indonesia, still celebrate *Meugang* (a family fest welcoming the holy month of Ramadan and Eids), *Nuzulul Qur'an* (the night of the Qur'an's revelation), and *Eid al-Fitri* in a gathering, overlooking official health protocols and gathering restrictions from the central government in Indonesia and local government of Aceh (Desfandi, 2021). The Acehnese's incomppliance with the health protocols and restrictions is not due to their disobedience or resistance to the government nor their ignorance of the danger of Covid-19 virus, but they rely more on God and religious practices to deal the Covid-19 pandemic. They believe that obeying God's commands, remembrance of God, reciting the Qur'an, and prayers can avoid them from any disasters, including sufferings rendered by the Covid-19 pandemic (Desfandi, 2021, p. 10).

In addition to criticism towards religion that is used as an escape vehicle to find a psychological security and comfort, Freud also launches series of criticism towards God's rules or commands and civilisation that it produces. To Freud, the norms and the rules to build a civilisation are not instituted by God, but by human beings. For civilisation to work, human beings need some rules and norms to regulate their behaviours. These norms need authority, an aura of demandingness, and a degree of sanctity so that human beings are willing to obey them. In this respect, human beings then attach authority to these norms and rules, give them a hollow of sanctity, and call them "a divine command." The divine command, according to Freud, contains a high degree of moral demands that are peculiar to monotheist religions. Among those moral demands are those related to the doctrines of love commandments; first, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" and second "Love thine enemies" (Freud, 1961a, pp. 65-67). These two doctrines of love imply the necessity of universal, non-preferential, non-discriminatory, selfless, and self-sacrifice love. According to the love commands, we are expected to love our neighbours regardless of their distance (close or distant neighbours), strangers who have no relation to us at all, and even our enemies.

Freud considers this kind of love too demanding and repressive. It only creates greater frustration that requires us to repress our instinct for self-love. Those repressed instincts are going to return in various symptoms, much like sexual repression. In addition, we learn to love in families, not by loving neighbours indiscriminately. We learn love

by having received it, through the process of giving and receiving in a school of affection. This love is very concrete. It arises from an experience of being loved. In this respect, Freud goes on to question, how is it possible that we love strangers and enemies who are in fact unworthy of love? For him, one's love is too valuable to throw away without any consideration as to who deserves to receive it. Strangers in fact tend to render injury and harm to us. He writes:

I must honestly confess that he (i.e. a stranger) has more claim to my hostility and even my hatred. He seems not to have the least trace of love for me and shows me not the slightest consideration. If it will not do him any good he has no hesitation in injuring me, nor does he ask himself whether the amount of advantage he gains bears any proportion to the extent of the harm he does to me (Freud, 1961a, p. 67).

Furthermore, the price of civilisation is also too high for love commandment engenders unhappiness. According to Freud, the development of the individual is a product of the interaction between two urges: the urge towards happiness, which is called "egoistic" urge and the urge towards union with others in the community, which is called "altruistic" or "cultural urge" (Freud, 1961a, p. 105). The first aims towards personal happiness, while the second imposes certain restrictions so that an individual can fit and unite with other human beings in human civilisation. Love command, along with its religious authorisation and demandingness, plays a role of a cultural command that represses the egoistic urge towards individual happiness. As a result, there would be a cultural neurosis and unhappiness of the masses. Freud asserts, "if more is demanded of a man, a revolt will be produced in him or a neurosis, or he will be made unhappy..." (Freud, 1961a, p. 109).

In the face of Covid-19 pandemic, religious obligations and rituals are still observed in different ways. It means that God's commands, rules, and instructions are not waived in the time of calamities and difficulties. Some conservative Muslims in Indonesia, for example, argue that one should fear God more than fear the Covid outbreak. In the case of Friday prayer (which is obligatory for Muslim men and should be carried out in congregation), the prayer should be carried out regardless of the circumstances. The argument used in this context is that one needs to be patient in obeying and observing religious duties (*al-*

*ṣabr ‘alā al-ṭā‘ah*) (Widiyanto, 2020, pp. 3-4). This God’s command, which needs a total obedience from religious adherents regardless of circumstances, is what Freud criticises as too demanding and resulting in unhappiness. The obedience to God’s command is deemed repressing one’s need for safety and overriding communal safety interest in the aims of adhering the divine command, which in the end leads to insecure and unhappy feelings. This was what happened when a small number of Muslims who are tested positive for Covid-10 still attended congregational prayers, which then spreads to other members of the congregation (Rachmawati, 2020). A large meeting held by Tablighi Jamaat in Gowa, South Sulawesi, in 19-22 March 2020 triggered the outbreak of Covid-19 in the region (Apriyono, 2020).

Similar cases happened in other parts of the world. In Pakistan, of 5,000 Shi’a pilgrims returning from Iran, 2,600 were tested, where 140 of them were infected with the Covid-19. In Qom, Iran, 1,300 people were dead, which reportedly due to religious rituals and festivals around the “saint” shrine that run day and night. In Malaysia, a large gathering that involves 1,600 members of the Tablighi Jamaat was deemed responsible for spreading the virus since 600 cases in Malaysia, 70 in Brunei, and 10 in Thailand were linked with this gathering. In South Korea, a 61-year-old woman with Covid-19 attended two large meetings—each with more than 1,000 attendees—held by a Christian sect known as Shincheonji Church of Jesus in Daegu. After these events, 4,800 cases of Covid were found spreading from Daegu (Singh, 2020). These events were held with the spirit of being patient in obeying God’s teachings, whereas, in fact, created larger hardship and safety issues.

In addition, Freud also argues that another reason for human disappointment with the existing civilisation is the advancement of science and technology. This advancement not only challenges the existing civilisation but also shows that religion as the basis for such civilisation is irrelevant and unscientific. As science gains a strong momentum, human worries with regard to the natural world are handled secularly by science and technology, not by using religion (Freud, 1961a, p. 39; 1961b, pp. 47-49). Religion in turn no longer has the same influence on people that it used to be (Freud, 1961b, p. 48). Religion is considered unscientific in the sense that religious ideas are based on the claim of belief (Freud, 1961b, p. 31). Their teachings and assertions about facts and reality are to be believed because human

primal forefathers believed. They cannot be proved. Raising a question about their authenticity is even forbidden (Freud, 1961b, p. 33).

A scientific approach towards reality is different. In Freud's view, science claims to be the only road that can lead human beings to knowledge of the reality of the world (Freud, 1961b, p. 40). By means of sciences and technology, the sources of human sufferings (i.e. the power of the nature, the feebleness of human body, and the inadequacy of regulations) are eliminated (Freud, 1961b, p. 37). The force of nature is no longer the factor frightening human beings. The phenomena of nature are known through measurable and empirical research, not by belief as religion claims. The feebleness of the human body is also overcome by a further development of science; for example, infant mortality is significantly reduced, and distant communication is bridged by internet-based devices. The high demand of religious regulations is also lowered and moderated by means of a more realistic, self-referring, and secular morality. The individual urge for happiness is no longer repressed. In this way, science improves the value and the scope of humanity. At the same time, too rigid religious morality is substituted by a more flexible, revisable, modest demand, non-repressive, and secular attitude of morality.

In relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, religion provides an explanation regarding the origin, the cause, and the cure for Covid-19 disease that is on some occasions different from scientific findings. When the nature of the Covid-19 disease is still a mystery and unknown to many, religious followers attempt to understand this phenomenon through various forms of religious lenses. Some believe that the Covid-19 is an act of God, others perceive that Covid-19 has nothing to do with God, and some others hold that God remains in control amid a devastating pandemic (Pieterse & Landman, 2021). The religious answers can be seen from the first and the third response categories, which state that the Covid-19 is an act of God and still within God's control. These religious responses perceive that the disease is either still within a divine plan (not coincidence), God's will, remainder of God's teaching, Godly test for humans (*muṣība* as *ibtilā'*), divine punishment, God's retribution to others, or a spiritual journey to be closer to God like the sufferings of Job (*Ya 'qūb*) (Gebretsadik, 2023; Pieterse & Landman, 2021; Sunarsa, 2021).

According to the data collected by Heron G. Gebretsadik (2023) in Ethiopia, 313 out of 1,118 (28%) Orthodox, Muslim, and Protestant respondents in Addis Ababa believed that the Covid-19 pandemic was God's punishment against the sinners and 278 of them (24.9%) believed that the virus was made in the laboratory by certain developed countries in the West to inflict harms and sufferings over the poor in developing countries, including those in Ethiopia. Some informants express a bold position on this issue, which is summarised in the following:

Covid-19 is a curse on our sins. All we have to do is wait for God Himself to stop it and end the curse. We should pray to him not to delay his punishment for too long. The disease is stopped when God has finished his punishment. Until then, we just wait; it doesn't help whether or not we adhere to human-recommended safety measures. If we are lucky, we will survive; we do not want to expose ourselves to the unimportant pressure of limiting our lifestyle, particularly to be told not to go church is unacceptable. We must pray together to curb the curse. Some did not comply with the recommendation to stay home to contain Covid-19 because they believed they could not be infected in churches. Some said that religion was above everything and claimed that they did not mind losing their lives for this cause (Gebretsadik, 2023, pp. 295-296).

This belief in God's punishment makes these religious positions susceptible to accept a conspiracy theory regarding the origin of Covid-19. Religious people who holds such belief (some labelled as fundamentalists or conservatives) tend to conceive that the origin of Covid-19 is the virus made by Westerners to attack opposing countries, tell people what to do to protect themselves, buy and use vaccine that the Westerners made, or put certain chips to control people's life (Gebretsadik, 2023, p. 296; Łowicki et al., 2022; Sriskandarajah, 2021).

The above religious and conspiracy explanations of the Covid-19 would be repelled by Freud. Those are deemed unscientific and unable to overcome human worries of the mystery of the natural world and human sufferings. Instead, he believes in scientific explanations and solutions to overcome sufferings resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Unlike those who maintain that Covid-19 originated from, and caused by, God's punishment and divine plan, Freud would accept scientific investigation and conclusion that the virus came from an animal in

Wuhan, China, and people need to comply with health restrictions and protocols to prevent the spread of the virus. Scientists, policy makers, and other related stakeholders work tirelessly and collaboratively to invent an effective vaccine to fight the Covid-19 virus and its mutations. Once the vaccine is invented, produced, and scientifically proven safe and effective, it needs to be applied to humans. When health protocols are obeyed and the vaccine is applied to a majority of the people, the Covid-19 pandemic will be gradually overcome. Freud would be satisfied when this scientific and technological solution can effectively put the Covid-19 pandemic to an end, including through forcing religious institutions and figures to comply with health restrictions and protocols and adjust their religious practices with the regulations regarding the Covid-19 health and safety policy. In this regard, Freud seems to be right. Science and technology replace religion (i.e. the doctrinal, legal, and institutional forms of religion) and make religious regulations lowered and moderated by a more realistic morality and practice in dealing with Covid-19. Some religious rituals and acts of worship that are normatively observed in congregation in public places are replaced with religious rituals that are performed privately at homes complying with health and safety procedures.

### **James' and Dewey's Responses: Religious Experience for Covid-19**

However, in his own account, Freud also maintains that psychoanalysis not only can be applied to argue against religion but also to argue for religion, especially a psychological or affective worth of religious doctrines (Freud, 1961b, p. 47). Freud chooses to use psychoanalysis to serve the first function whereas William James and John Dewey attempts to withstand Freud's critiques by explaining the second function, which is to argue for the affective significance of religion in the forms of religious experience.

William James refers religious experience to human emotions, feelings, and impulses that are derived from human connection with whatever human considers higher, divine, or all of which James called as the "more" (James, 2002, pp. 3, 512-513, and 524-525). Religion in the form of religious experience differs from religion in the sense of institution and of morality. The first concerns itself with the psychological fruits produced by human connection with the "more;" whereas the second concerns with intellectual, moral, and doctrinal aspects of

religion. Human feelings resulted from the union or connection with the “more” does not reside outside ourselves, but within the hither side of our sub-consciousness (James, 2002, p. 512). These feelings and emotions are experienced by human beings in a real and convincing way. He writes, “they are as convincing to those who have them as any direct sensible experiences can be” (James, 2002, p. 72). Human reactions towards such feelings are reflected in human solemn, serious, tender, and positive attitudes towards life (James, 2002, p. 38). People with such religious feelings usually adopt an optimistic turn of mind which engenders a healthy-mindedness. This turn of mind and attitude is transformative, in the sense that it can help an individual to cope with his/her wrongness, uneasiness, guilt, or deficiency (James, 2002, p. 502). This is also preventive and curative to certain diseases in the sense that this healthy-minded or mind-cure attitude provides human beings with serenity, moral poise, and happiness (James, 2002, p. 122). In the end of the day, in James’ view, human beings can attain happiness and will not suffer in life by means of religious experience.

The Covid-19 pandemic certainly engenders a severe impact on people’s lives in different degrees, including mental distress, insecurity depression, anxiety, trauma, psychological hardship, and despair (Chow et al., 2021; Dutra & Rocha, 2021; Lucchetti et al., 2020; Rababa et al., 2021; Szalachowski & Tuszyńska-Bogucka, 2021). Religion in the form of religious experience as defined by James, which is the connection with the “more,” helps the victims and people affected by Covid-19 in coping with their psychological problems. Research conducted on Pakistani British Muslim women with family responsibilities shows that belief in Allah’s decree and coping with supplication and prayers reduce the impacts of Covid-19 on their mental well-being. An informant named Nusret reveals how belief in Allah gives her a sort of protection and consolation:

The pandemic was a reminder that everything comes from Allah. The lockdown and Covid situation were reminders to me that no matter what we think or do, death is inevitable and comes to everyone. That bought me a lot of comfort during the pandemic (Iqbal et al., 2023, pp. 8-9).

Another participant of the research, Rifat, also states that praying, reading religious text, and supplication bring a sense of peace and strength to deal with uncertainties at a difficult time: “lockdown in

one way it was like, you know, stressful at the beginning but it was our religious readings and *namaz* (prayer) that brought more peace to ourselves (Iqbal et al., 2023, pp. 8-9).”

The psychological fruits of religious experience and devotion in the forms of positive attitudes toward life, healthy-mindedness, and ability to cope with uneasiness in life, can also be seen in the patients and healthcare workers who experienced hardship and difficulties during the Covid-19 pandemic. A group of researchers from Canada conducted research on 1,021 respondents of different religious backgrounds in the United States of America, and found that faith in God, personal worship and prayers, scriptural study, and other forms of religious devotion provide them with feeling of peace, belief in a brighter future, and gaining a sense of control and security. These psychological fruits of the religious experience can help them find meaning in life, alleviate stress and negative emotions, and navigate uncertainties due to Covid-19 (Leonhardt et al., 2023, pp. 15-16). The similar psychological effects are also found in the case of Malaysian healthcare workers and Italian families. Religious services, reading scriptures, prayers, and meditation can help them boost their mental health, reduce stress and anxiety, find comfort and solace, and cope with medical illness or have a positive reaction to illnesses (Chow et al., 2021, pp. 11-12; Molteni et al., 2021).

In this respect, John Dewey also differentiates religion from religiousness. Religion for him refers to a systematic body of beliefs and practices along with its institutional organisations, whereas religiousness signifies human attitudes with respect to certain objects, ends, or ideals (Dewey, 1962, pp. 9-10). Religious experience therefore is not related with deities and divinities of religion but it is inseparably linked with effects in the forms of an adjustment of human attitudes, conducts, and outlooks as results of human (imaginative) connection with certain ideals (Dewey, 1962, p. 14). The ideals are inclusive and compelling to the extent that they can render betterment and reorientation in human life. Dewey writes, “for all endeavours for the better is moved by faith of what is possible, not by adherence to the actual” (Dewey, 1962, p. 23). In fact, religious experience can only be “proven” and evaluated through the existence of what Dewey calls “an adjustment in life, an orientation that brings with it a sense of security and peace” (Dewey, 1962, p. 13). In other words, the religious quality of experience can be

seen in a better adjustment of human attitudes and conducts that occurs as a result of human's imaginative connection with the inclusive ideals.

Therefore, religious experience in Dewey's account does not refer to human feelings in solitude, but refers to human attitudes, outlooks, and conducts pertaining to human action. His concept of ideals is also closer to human experience compared to the "more" of James. This is more natural, signifying low-flying ideals that are not beyond human reach and understanding. In other words, he makes James' notion of religious experience more doable and secular. Religious quality of experience in Dewey's signifies something wider and more natural. It denotes the sense of dignity of human nature as well as the sense of awe and reverence to religious objects; designates a new attitude that resulted from a devotion to a cause, a new perspective after reading a poetry, and a fresh understanding through a philosophical reflection; and, also signifies all experience that resulted from aesthetic, scientific, moral, political, civil, and friendship activities (Dewey, 1962, pp. 25, 14, and 10).

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, Dewey's notion of religious experience can be found in different coping strategies to overcome psychological problems arising from the consequences of the pandemic. Religious experience is a psychological result of certain (imaginative) connections with low-flying ideals. These ideals can appear in the forms of arts, music, social support, social media, communication technologies, humour (comedy), games, spiritual services, sports and physical exercises, science-based health protocols, and many other instruments, which a connection with them engenders a better perspective, understanding, and attitude in dealing with the Covid-19 (Ahmadi et al., 2023; Bae, 2023; Basya, 2021; Cho et al., 2023; Lucchetti et al., 2020; Manap & Karadas, 2022; Oti-Boadi et al., 2022; Upenieks et al., 2022). For example, Leif Peng, a teacher of graphic design at Mohawk College, Canada, assigned his students to express how the Covid-19 pandemic affected them and how they coped with them. A student named Cassidy Scidmore wrote:

Isolation has been difficult at times because I've been alone with myself and my thoughts. I've chosen to focus and learn to be OK with uncertainty in my life. I've been painting, drawing, and reading, but my favourite pastime is taking my dog for a walk. I take this time to relax, listen to music, to

think/feel and let go. It has become a form of meditation for me and sometimes I even feel like I'm floating in the universe. I hope everyone can find a little peace and mindfulness in these crazy times! ("Coping, through art: Mohawk graphic design students reveal their coping strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic through words and art," 2020).

Meanwhile, another student, Rupal Kaur, shared her experience dealing with the Covid-19, lockdown, and isolation as follows: "it's been such a difficult time for everyone around the world. It is for me, too... However, I do feel better having the time to do the things I love, such as paint, sketch, dance, sing, bake and most importantly, even though I'm far away, talking to my family" ("Coping, through art: Mohawk graphic design students reveal their coping strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic through words and art," 2020).

The testimony of the above students reveals how certain healthy and better attitudes in dealing with Covid-19 are derived from a certain connection with ideals, a dedication to attaining certain goals, or a devotion to certain practices. These attitudes are the results of what William James considers as religious experience since the nature of religiosity for him resides in the "connection" that produces a betterment in life. Cassidy Scidmore overcomes her feeling of isolation and uncertainty by means of immersing herself in activities like painting, reading, talking to her dog, relaxing, and listening to music with the aim of finding a sense of peace and mindfulness. Meanwhile, Rupal Kaur employs her dedication in painting, sketching, dancing, singing, baking, and talking to her family as her coping strategy to overcome distress and loneliness during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Religion, Punishment, and Human Response**

In this context, religion tends to explain disasters and human sufferings from theological perspective whether they are considered a trial or punishment. All of them come from God. Human beings must adapt and give a proper response to them. Meanwhile, Freud, James, and Dewey perceive unpleasant events in human life from a human perspective. Freud maintains that what is so called "God's punishment" essentially originated from human's feeling of guilt that resulted from a further development of the neurosis. On the one hand, accepting such punishment is deemed a necessary attitude to respect God. On the

other hand, one needs to avoid the punishment through obeying what is perceived as “God’s law and teaching” regardless of scientific findings. This blind obedience of being too demanding to God’s rule is what Freud criticises about religion.

James and Dewey do not address the question of the origin of where punishment comes from or the reasons why punishment and human sufferings occur. Instead, they focus on what proper attitudes and behaviours that humans should have to face any possible uneasiness, unpleasant occurrences, and sufferings that happen in life. James presents a healthy-mindedness to cope with uneasiness and Dewey offers the idea of human life betterment through adjustment to any circumstances and ideals. Religious scholars such as Leibniz, al-Ghazālī, and al-Rūmī (Jalāluddīn al-Rūmī) provides the idea of “the best-possible of all possible worlds (Leibniz)”, “there is not in the possibility anything more wonderful than what it is (*laysa fī al-imbkān abda<sup>c</sup> min mā kān*, al-Ghazālī)”, and the virtue of patience (*ṣabr*) and inner contentment (*riḍā*) (al-Rūmī) (Chester et al., 2019; Rouzati, 2018). These religious attitudes towards sufferings are believed to be effective ways to achieve human’s mental and spiritual wellbeing.

## Conclusion

As can be seen from the above discussion, religious scriptural and scholastic traditions have their own notion of disaster in terms of *muṣībah*, *balā’*, and *‘adhāb* (as in the in Islamic context), which is relatively parallel to Leibniz’s theodicy models of the free-will, the best-possible of all possible worlds, and retribution in the Judeo-Christian context. However, scholars of religion severely criticise the role of religion. Sigmund Freud scrutinises critically when religion is understood as an escape from human helplessness due to an inability to deal with reality, a set of overly demanding rules and morality, and an anti-science attitude that generates unhappiness. Religion in this sense is irrelevant and not useful to address human hardships and difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This kind of understanding of religion makes some (conservative or fundamentalist) religious adherents tend to believe in the conspiracy theory of the origin of Covid-19, ignore health protocols and restrictions in religious practices (including isolation and social distancing), and refuse to undergo vaccination to stop the spread of the disease.

However, according to James and Dewey, Freud's criticism of religion does not eliminate the significance of certain qualities and aspects of religion. They show that every individual has certain religious qualities of experience in life, regardless of the sources. Religious experience can be derived from either one's relationship with supernatural beings or with worldly ideal ends ranging from scientific, aesthetic, and civic ideals. In contrast to Freud criticism that religion produces human discontent because of external forces, James and Dewey prove that human beings have control over their own demands and wants. For James, through a healthy-minded perspective on life, religious experience can be used to solve human problems and uneasiness. This kind of healthy-mindedness eventually results in human happiness. In a similar vein, Dewey maintains that religious experience can be directed to affect an adjustment and peaceful orientation in life. Interestingly, religious scholars like Leibniz, al-Ghazālī, and al-Rūmī have a shared stance regarding disasters that should be responded to, not as punishment or retribution (*‘adhāb*) from God due to human mischievous deeds, but as the best-possible of all possible worlds, test (*muṣībah* or *balā’*) to maintain the balance of the universe, and to raise the mental and spiritual level of human beings.

In dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic and other forms of calamities, James and Dewey would agree with Freud when religion is viewed in a narrow understanding in terms of a set of overly demanding rules and anti-science attitudes that can put oneself and others in danger. This kind of religiosity is irrelevant since they do not derive positive attitudes towards life. Leibniz, al-Ghazālī, and al-Rūmī might agree with this intellectual stance as well. They further argue that trust in God (*tawakkul*) is not necessarily an act of escapism, as Freud claimed. For them, the belief and connection with the “more” can pave the way for healthy-mindedness, human happiness, life betterment, and peaceful orientation for humans, which eventually help them cope with the uneasiness and sufferings caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Similarly, Leibnizian's the best-possible of all possible worlds, Ghazālīan trust in God's decree (*tawakkul*), and Rūmīan virtue of patience (*ṣabr*) and contentment (*riḍā*) provide a religious coping mechanism to face unpleasant events and disasters, including the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, this experiential aspect of religiosity, which is derived from an experience with “the more,” certain ideals and ends, supernatural

beings, or God, is relevant and can be used to solve human problems and uneasiness, including Covid-19 pandemic and other possible disastrous events in the future.

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# **International Islamic University Malaysia’s (IIUM) Islamic Education Teacher Trainees’ Self-Efficacy during Teaching Practicum**

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**Abstract:** This sequential exploratory mixed-methods study explores the self-efficacy (SE) of Islamic Education (ISED) teacher trainees in three domains (i.e., curriculum design and implementation, teaching and classroom assessment) as they experienced a four-month teaching practicum at various schools in Malaysia. The survey sample comprised 56 ISED undergraduates, aged 21 to 30, who were in their final year of teacher training at the Kulliyah of Education, IIUM. They completed a two-part Likert-type questionnaire with 23 items measuring their confidence levels in specific aspects of the three SE domains. The interview participants were four ISED trainees randomly

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selected from the survey sample. The survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while the interview data were scrutinised for recurring themes on trainees' SE beliefs and teaching practicum challenges. Consistent with many previous studies, the results indicated high levels of self-efficacy among the ISED teacher trainees, particularly in technology usage (89.3%) and collaborating with colleagues and administrators (85.7%). Five broad areas of self-efficacy improvement were identified, namely higher-order teaching, differentiating instruction, classroom management, learning assessment and lesson evaluation. The study recommends the use of lesson study and increasing the contact hours for microteaching to further develop teacher trainees' instructional competencies, thereby increasing their levels of self-efficacy in teaching ISED as a school subject.

**Keywords:** Self-efficacy, teaching practicum, Islamic Education students, competency areas, classroom performance

**Abstrak:** Kajian kaedah campuran *sequential exploratory* ini meneroka efikasi sendiri pelatih guru Pendidikan Islam dalam tiga domain (iaitu, reka bentuk dan pelaksanaan kurikulum, pengajaran dan penilaian bilik darjah) yang menjalani praktikum pengajaran selama empat bulan di pelbagai sekolah di Malaysia. Sampel tinjauan adalah terdiri daripada 56 mahasiswa Pendidikan Islam, berumur 21 hingga 30 tahun, yang berada di tahun akhir latihan perguruan di Kulliyah Pendidikan, UIAM. Mereka melengkapkan soal selidik di dua bahagian skala Likert dengan 23 item bagi mengukur tahap keyakinan mereka dalam aspek khusus tiga domain efikasi sendiri. Peserta temu bual pula terdiri daripada empat orang guru pelatih Pendidikan Islam yang dipilih secara rawak daripada sampel tinjauan. Data tinjauan dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif manakala data temu bual diteliti untuk tema berulang tentang kepercayaan efikasi sendiri pelatih dan cabaran praktikum pengajaran. Selaras dengan banyak kajian lepas, keputusan menunjukkan tahap efikasi sendiri yang tinggi dalam kalangan pelatih guru Pendidikan Islam, terutamanya dalam penggunaan teknologi (89.3%) dan bekerjasama dengan rakan sekerja dan pentadbir (85.7%). Lima bidang peningkatan efikasi sendiri yang luas telah dikenal pasti, iaitu pengajaran aras tinggi, pengajaran terbeza, pengurusan bilik darjah, pentaksiran pembelajaran dan penilaian pelajaran. Kajian ini mengesyorkan penggunaan '*lesson study*' dan meningkatkan waktu pengajaran mikro untuk mengembangkan lagi kecekapan pengajaran guru pelatih, seterusnya meningkatkan tahap efikasi sendiri mereka dalam mengajar mata pelajaran sekolah Pendidikan Islam.

**Kata kunci:** Efikasi sendiri, pengajaran praktikum, pelajar Pendidikan Islam, bidang kompetensi, prestasi bilik darjah

## Introduction

Self-efficacy beliefs have been proven many times as a factor that influences performance—no matter what the context or circumstance is. Put in the context of teaching, we can expect teachers' self-efficacy to be part of the formula that explains the effectiveness of an instructional activity. Research has so far demonstrated that self-efficacy (SE) is a powerful drive influencing the behaviour of teachers in the classroom and the effort they put in the endeavour (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

Malaysia strives to improve the performance of its teachers and the standard of instruction rendered in Malaysian classrooms. It has outlined some strategic initiatives and events as key to enhancing teacher quality and the teaching profession in its Education Transformation Development Plan 2013–2025 (Ministry of Education, 2013). We acknowledge that a comprehensive strategy is essential for effectively implementing such initiatives and attaining their intended goals but that comprehensive strategy must also factor in teachers' self-efficacy. We premise this argument on the fact that teachers must have strong efficacy beliefs—on top of a wide range of competencies—to be able to address the challenges and demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century education.

Teachers' readiness to confront challenges and fulfil their duties is intertwined with their perceptions of competence, as suggested by various studies (e.g., Casey, 2011; Coady et al., 2011; Pas et al., 2011). This perception of competence, or belief in one's capability, better known as self-efficacy, has been extensively studied in the various educational contexts (Bandura, 1994; Henson et al., 2000; Ross, 1995). Self-efficacy is a psychological and emotional state that directly impacts teachers' performance as it influences how they feel about their ability to execute their roles and responsibilities. Hence, self-efficacy indirectly impacts classroom dynamics and the overall educational landscape via teachers' performance. In addition, the construct influences how teachers set goals, motivate students, and handle difficult situations in the classroom. Therefore, understanding and fostering Malaysian teachers' self-efficacy can have significant implications for student outcomes, school performance and Malaysia's overall educational environment. To illustrate, compared to their counterparts with less self-efficacy beliefs, teachers with high self-

efficacy are more likely to use innovative teaching methods, persevere in the face of challenges, and engage in continuous professional development, all of which contribute to a positive learning environment and improved student achievement.

Strong self-efficacy beliefs are no less important for Islamic Education teachers than they are for Mathematics, Science and English teachers. In Noornajihan et al. (2016), Islamic Education teachers in Peninsular Malaysia were reported to have high levels of self-efficacy in domains like pupil involvement, classroom management and teaching strategies but lower efficacy in academic guidance and personal development. This created a grave concern for teacher educators because academic guidance and personality are two domains most critical to the classroom implementation of the subject and the fulfilment of the philosophy of Islamic Education. In Islamic Education (ISED), teachers must have the personality of *murabbis* and *muaddibs* and they must have the correct belief that they can execute these roles convincingly. Low efficacy beliefs among ISED teachers would undermine the teaching of the subject, hence its quality, and hinder the professional advancement of its teachers. This is counterproductive to ongoing efforts to elevate the status of Islamic Education as a valued school subject with moral and economic significance (Mohamad Tajuddin, 2018; Taufik et al., 2023). Given these arguments highlighting the link between teachers' efficacy beliefs and the effective teaching of Islamic Education, it is imperative that an assessment of teachers' self-efficacy levels, especially those of trainee teachers currently undergoing their practicum, be conducted. The purpose is to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses to improve current teacher training content.

### **Research Context**

The Bachelor of Islamic Education programme, offered by the Kulliyah of Education (KOED) IIUM, is designed to produce proficient graduates who meet the workforce requirements of secondary schools and the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Malaysia. Beyond merely meeting these demands, the programme strives to train and develop graduates who serve as exemplars for their peers and the wider community. Through a comprehensive curriculum, KOED equips students with the necessary instructional competencies, research skills, Islamic values, and mindsets to execute their roles as *murabbis* (mentors or guides),

*muaddibs* (character shapers), *mudarris* (teachers or instructors) and *mu'allims* (knowledge providers). ISED teachers, particularly, must also play the role of *murshids*, i.e., ones who guide others to good and goodness. The courses offered in KOED's teacher training programme place a significant emphasis not just on teaching abilities and but also on developing the right personalities and dispositions in trainees, ensuring that they can teach, guide and shape learners effectively. The overarching goal of KOED's teacher training programme is to foster well-rounded, competent, and knowledgeable individuals capable of making meaningful contributions to academia and society (IIUM, 2022).

The first year of the programme lays the essential groundwork for trainee teachers, giving them comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles and theories underpinning the teaching profession. Trainee teachers learn relevant theories about student learning, motivation, special needs education, technology usage, and the philosophy and sociology of education, alongside a dedicated study of Islamic Education encompassing courses such as *Fiqh 'Ibādāt*, *Fiqh al-Sīrah*, *Tajwīd* and *Hifẓ*, and the like. KOED employs a multifaceted approach to teacher education to ensure that its trainees are well-grounded in the broader educational context and well-acquainted with the distinctive nuances of Islamic content and pedagogy (IIUM, 2022).

In their foundational year, ISED teacher trainees are introduced to the intricate workings of educational institutions, gaining insights into the organisational structures of schools, the formulation of curricula, and the various components the Malaysian school syllabi integral to Islamic Education. The diverse courses trainees have to complete give them a holistic overview of both the Malaysian educational framework and the specialised domain of Islamic content and pedagogy. Through classes, learning tasks, collaborative work and assignments, trainees are primed to develop a nuanced understanding of the educational landscape they will later navigate (IIUM, 2024).

As the training programme progresses into its second year, the emphasis shifts towards deepening trainees' comprehension of Islamic Education, reinforcing the core content while concurrently initiating them into the practical intricacies of classroom instruction. This phase

represents a pivotal juncture where theoretical knowledge seamlessly integrates with real-world application as students are gradually introduced to the dynamics of teaching and learning within the classroom setting. Through a gradual and scaffolded approach, trainees are guided towards proficiency beyond mere theoretical understanding, fostering the development of practical skills essential for effective pedagogy (IIUM, 2024).

In essence, the structured progression designed into the training programme not only instils a robust foundation and comprehension of educational theory; it also ensures the cultivation of a holistic educator well-versed in both conventional educational practices and the specialised context of Islamic Education. By seamlessly integrating theoretical knowledge with practical application, the programme endeavours to nurture a cohort of ISED educators equipped to navigate the complexities and challenges inherent in the modern educational landscape while remaining grounded in the principles of Islamic pedagogy (IIUM, 2024).

Teaching practicum is done in the last semester of trainees' final year. It is the culmination of their three-and-half years of training and competency development process. During this period of internship, ISED trainees have the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in an actual classroom setting (Arifin et al., 2020). The school experience allows them to gain more confidence in their abilities as teachers and further develops their teaching skills in an authentic context. Since it is a crucial period of professional training and development, there must be systematic efforts to assess the self-efficacy of ISED teacher trainees during their teaching practicum. The assessment is intended to fully understand if KOED's training programme has been successful in developing adequate self-efficacy in ISED teacher trainees. This confidence is greatly needed by the trainees to be able to teach Islamic education effectively.

In the present research context, self-efficacy is the ISED trainees' belief or confidence in their ability to perform the tasks and responsibilities associated with teaching Islamic Education successfully during teaching practicum. Previous research has shown that self-efficacy plays a significant role in the teaching effectiveness

of educators. Demonstrably, teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to use effective teaching strategies, engage students in learning, and promote positive classroom outcomes than those that lack such efficacy (Al-Alwan & Mahasneh, 2014).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the generally high levels of self-efficacy among ISED teachers in areas such as student participation, classroom management, teaching strategies, academic guidance, and personality, there still remain competency areas that can be improved further. The study conducted by Noornajihan et al. (2016) indicates that while scores in these areas are high, they have not yet reached their optimal level, particularly in the domains of academic guidance and personal development. Consequently, research in Islamic Education must actively identify the areas for improvement and take concrete steps to enhance ISED trainees' self-efficacy. This proactive approach can lead to even more effective teaching practices and better outcomes for their students (Noornajihan et al., 2016).

While numerous studies have explored self-efficacy in education, there is a paucity of recent research specifically focusing on the self-efficacy of ISED teacher trainees as they experience teaching practicum. With the evolving landscape of education, heavily characterised by technological advancements, diverse student populations, and changing pedagogical approaches, it is crucial to investigate how these factors intersect with pre-service teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy in real-world teaching scenarios. Furthermore, the transition from student to teacher presents unique challenges and opportunities that may influence self-efficacy levels.

Little is known about how those experiences impact novice educators' development and maintenance of self-efficacy beliefs. Hence, the purposes of this study are to examine the level of ISED teacher trainees' self-efficacy during teaching to understand their beliefs, and also to explore the challenges they face during their teaching practicum. Based on the findings, the study will propose necessary recommendations for the improvement of existing classroom practices at KOED specifically and suggest avenues for future research into teacher self-efficacy.

## Literature Review

### *Self-Efficacy in Islamic Education*

Self-efficacy essentially means belief. In Islam, the word *faith* (*Īmān*) (al-Ghazali, n.y.; Noornajihan et al., 2012) is used to explain the concept of belief which constitutes an unshakeable belief in the oneness of God. In the Islamic context, *Īmān* entails one's practical and moral commitment to living a righteous and virtuous life in accordance with the teachings of Islam. (Mohd Nasir et al., 2017)

In the context of education and teaching, an efficacious teacher would attribute student success and failure to instructional efforts within their control. Teacher efficacy has consistently been found to be a factor that makes a difference in student learning (Barni et al., 2019; Mohamad Sahari et al., 2017). Noornajihan et al. (2012) assert that the role of Islamic Education teachers is clear. It is to educate and mould learners to become individuals of academic excellence and good character in this world and prepare them well for the next life. This task is more challenging now than ever before. The heavy responsibility as *murabbis* (educators) should be carried out by teachers by appreciating the concepts of *amānah* (trustworthiness) and self-efficacy. As *murabbis*, ISED trainees require a sound mental and physical preparation for school teaching, and effective teaching can only be achieved if ISED trainees have high self-efficacy.

Past studies have found ISED teachers in Malaysian secondary schools to have generally high levels of self-efficacy (Noornajihan & Ab. Halim, 2013), particularly excelling in the domains of "pupil involvement," "classroom management" and "teaching strategies." However, they are reportedly lacking in two SE domains, i.e., academic guidance and personality development. This warrants further research into ISED teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and the SE domains needing further improvement.

### *Self-Efficacy in Curriculum Design and Implementation*

The work of Bandura (1993) delves into the intricate interplay between perceived self-efficacy and cognitive development, emphasising its profound implications for curriculum design and educational practices. His findings underscore the importance of nurturing students' self-efficacy beliefs to facilitate cognitive growth and academic success.

Meanwhile, Bandura's seminal work (1997) comprehensively examines self-efficacy, elucidating its theoretical underpinnings and practical implications across diverse domains, including education. His insights lay a solid foundation for understanding how self-efficacy influences learning outcomes, increases instructional effectiveness, and informs curriculum design strategies. Bandura's research continues to be instrumental in shaping educational approaches that foster students' self-efficacy, ultimately enhancing their academic performance and overall development.

In a study involving science teachers, Khanshan and Yousefi (2020) pointed out the significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and teaching practices, where an increase in the former was associated with improvements in the latter. This suggests that teachers' confidence in their abilities plays a crucial role in shaping their instructional decisions and effectiveness in the classroom. As modern-day classrooms are beset with challenges, having high self-efficacy would empower teachers to navigate these obstacles with confidence and resilience, enabling them to adapt their teaching strategies effectively and maintain a positive learning environment for their students.

### ***Self-Efficacy in Teaching***

A study by Teng (2006) involving 420 teachers from 18 secondary schools in Kuching found teachers' self-efficacy to be high. On the other hand, Khalid et al. (2009) who studied novice teachers in Sabah found their self-efficacy to be moderate. In terms of SE domains, teachers reported feeling confident about classroom management, first and foremost, followed by the domains of teaching strategies and student involvement. These reports were also documented in Rahmah et al. (2006).

Kazan's study (2016) explored factors affecting teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes towards technology integration, revealing that these factors significantly impacted students' grades and interaction, particularly for students with special needs. Additionally, the study found that trained teachers were more adept at utilising technology in the classroom compared to untrained teachers. Their findings suggested that teachers' knowledge and beliefs play a crucial role in their intent to incorporate technology, as demonstrated by the integration of information and communications technology (ICT) into lesson plans,

with a significant positive correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and knowledge.

The findings of Rosas et al. (2009) revealed that both preservice and in-service teachers were confident in their ability to manage classroom discipline. However, notable differences in beliefs were observed between these two groups. This discrepancy underscores the importance of enhancing teacher education programmes to emphasise effective classroom management strategies more robustly. Such strategies are essential for effectively redirecting disruptive student behaviour and maintaining a conducive learning environment. Therefore, there is a clear need to enhance the training and preparation provided to future teachers to better equip them with the skills necessary for managing classroom dynamics effectively.

### ***Self-Efficacy in Classroom Assessment***

Reportedly, primary school teachers are generally more optimistic about their ability to implement the various classroom assessment strategies. The study by Oppong et al. (2023) found that teachers have a high level of confidence in their classroom assessment practices. It also revealed no significant gender differences in teachers' confidence in implementing classroom assessment. In contrast, other studies have found teachers' procedural knowledge in conducting school-based assessments to be just moderate ( $M = 3.27$ ) not high (Veloo et al., 2015). Although teachers in Veloo et al.'s (2015) study reported knowing about school-based assessment, the mean score of  $M = 3.09$  suggested just a moderate efficacy in this SE domain. Our comparison of the two means reveals that teachers' belief in their knowledge to implement school-based assessment (SBA) was stronger or higher than their actual readiness to practise the assessment. This means that although teachers thought they had the knowledge to conduct SBA, they were not fully ready to include SBA in their classroom practices.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

To ascertain the self-efficacy of KOED's Islamic Education students in the three SE domains during teaching practicum, the study employed

the sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, wherein quantitative survey data were collected first, followed by the collection of qualitative data to provide further insights and explanations for the quantitative results. For the quantitative part, the study adopted the *ex-post facto* research design using cross-sectional survey as the data collection method. In the subsequent qualitative part of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with four ISED teacher trainees to probe deeper into their teaching practicum experiences and perspectives in regard to self-efficacy. The interviews were conducted online via video conferencing, allowing for an in-depth exploration of their self-efficacy in the three domains.

Throughout the interviews, careful attention was paid to probing questions, enabling the teacher trainees to share their thoughts freely. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and facilitate analysis. An inductive thematic content analysis was employed as the primary data analysis procedure, enabling the identification of recurring themes and patterns in the narratives provided by the trainees. By systematically analysing the interview transcripts, this phase of the study aimed to uncover ISED students' beliefs in their instructional abilities that could later be used to augment the survey results.

### ***Sample***

For the survey, the respondents were 56 undergraduate students majoring in Islamic Education who, at the time of data collection, had completed the teaching practicum component of their preservice teacher training programme at KOED, IIUM. The sample represented 70% of the population of ISED students for that particular batch doing teaching practicum. They were randomly selected from a sampling frame based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) parameters for deciding a minimum sample size. For the semi-structured interviews, four students randomly selected from the sample were recruited.

### ***Research Instruments***

Two instruments were used to collect the quantitative and qualitative data for the study, namely a survey questionnaire and a set of interview protocol.

### *Survey Questionnaire*

The research instrument was a two-part Likert questionnaire adapted from Yüksel (2014). The first part sought background information on the respondents' gender, ethnicity, marital status and age. The second part contained 23 items on self-efficacy in three domains, i.e., curriculum design and implementation, teaching, and classroom assessment. The respondents were asked to indicate their confidence in various aspects of the three domains based on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*Not Confident at All*) to 5 (*Highly Confident*). The SE domains and their corresponding number of items and reliability estimates are indicated in Table 1:

Table 1: Self-Efficacy Domains, Number of Questionnaire Items and Reliability Estimates

SE Domain	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1) Curriculum Design and Implementation	6	.89
2) Teaching	12	.95
3) Classroom Assessment	5	.86
Total	23	

### *Interview Protocol*

A semi-structured interview session was held between 27 and 28 November 2023 involving four (4) informants selected using the purposive sampling method. All interviews were conducted online using the Google Meet application with two (2) female teachers and two (2) male teachers who were directly involved in teaching practice. The researcher interviewed each of them in turn to ensure that in-depth information was obtained from all four informants. The recorded interview results were translated into written transcripts and analysed using thematic analysis to obtain related themes and sub-themes.

### *Data Analysis*

The data were analysed using descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations). Meanwhile, the following guidelines by Mustika (2009), shown in Table 2, were used to interpret

the respondents' level of self-efficacy (i.e., confidence) based on their self-ratings of the questionnaire items.

Table 2: Guidelines for Interpreting Students' Confidence Levels Based on Mean Ranges (Mustika, 2009)

Mean Range	Level of Confidence
1.00—2.33	Low Confidence
2.34—3.66	Moderate Confidence
3.67—5.00	High Confidence

## Results

### *Sample Demographics*

The sample, which was predominantly female (67.9%), comprised 56 undergraduate ISED students between the ages of 21 and 30. A majority were in the 21-25 age group (91.1%; n = 51), while the rest (8.9%) were in the 26-30 bracket (n = 5). Most respondents were single (87.5%) and all were Malaysians of either the Bumiputra or Malay origin. Table 3 shows their background characteristics by age group, gender, ethnicity, and marital status.

Table 3: Sample Distribution by Gender, Age and Marital Status

	Variable	n	%
Gender	Male	18	32.1
	Female	38	67.9
Age Group	21-25	51	91.1
	26-30	5	8.9
Marital Status	Single	49	87.5
	Married	7	12.5

The interview was conducted with four students slated to undergo teaching practicum for the Islamic Education Programme in the year 2023. Among these four students were two men and two women, reflecting a balanced gender representation. These students fell within the age range of 22 to 25 years old,

### ISED Students' Level of Self-Efficacy During Teaching Practicum

This section reports on ISED students' self-efficacy (SE) during teaching practicum based on their responses to items in the three SE domains, namely curriculum implementation, teaching and classroom assessment. The response categories showing the levels of SE comprised "Not Confident at All," "Not Confident," "Slightly Confident," "Confident," and "Highly Confident." Using Mustika's (2009) guidelines, the levels are described as *low*, *moderate*, or *high* based on their mean scores. The five categories are collapsed into three levels to represent low SE (comprising *Not Confident at All* and *Not Confident* responses), moderate SE (*Slightly Confident* responses) and high SE (*Confident* and *Highly Confident* ratings).

### Self-Efficacy in Curriculum Design and Implementation

Table 4 shows the sample's responses to six items measuring their self-efficacy in the domain of curriculum design and implementation. The responses are categorised into three levels of confidence or SE, i.e., low, moderate and high.

Table 4: Self-Efficacy in Curriculum Design and Implementation (N = 56)

Item	Level of Confidence			M	SD
	Low	Moderate	High		
1. Confidence in ability to develop ISED lessons that meet the needs of diverse learners.	1 (1.8)	13 (23.2)	42 (75)	3.89	0.68
2. Confidence in conducting a needs assessment for ISED lessons.	-	8 (14.3)	48 (85.7)	4.25	0.69
3. Confidence in identifying appropriate learning objectives for ISED lessons.	-	6 (10.7)	50 (89.3)	4.16	0.60
4. Confidence in ability to design effective assessments to measure student learning outcomes in ISED.	1 (1.8)	17 (30.4)	38 (67.8)	3.89	0.78

5. Confidence in selecting appropriate instructional materials to support student learning in ISED.	11 (19.6)	45 (80.4)	4.16	0.73
6. Confidence in ability to evaluate the effectiveness of an ISED lesson.	4 (7.2)	11 (19.6)	41 (73.2)	3.89 0.91
Average			4.04	0.73

Note: Low = Not Confident at All & Not Confident; Moderate = Slightly Confident; High = Confident and Highly Confident

The pattern of responses shows that most ISED undergraduates in their final year doing their teaching practicum felt highly confident in most aspects of curriculum design and implementation. In particular, they expressed a high level of SE in three aspects, i.e., identifying appropriate learning objectives (89.3%), conducting a needs assessment (85.7%), and selecting appropriate learning materials (80.4%). The mean scores for these three aspects exceeded the 4-point mark indicating “high SE” or “high confidence” as proposed by Mustika (2009). Although a majority of the students (i.e., 75%) agreed they could develop ISED lessons that meet diverse learner needs ( $M = 3.89$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ), the sample mean placed their overall SE at *moderate* for this competency. The same pattern was observed for two other competencies, i.e., designing effective assessments ( $M = 3.89$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ) and evaluating lesson effectiveness ( $M = 3.89$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ). Self-ratings of low SE in competencies related to curriculum design and implementation were either extremely rare or non-existent among this sample. Overall, it can be deduced that final year ISED students doing their teaching practicum had a high level of SE or confidence in curriculum design and implementation.

### Self-Efficacy in Teaching

Table 5 shows ISED students' self-efficacy in twelve teaching competencies where they reported high SE in eight of the competencies. The highest efficacy was reported for “*using technology effectively to support student learning in ISED*” ( $M = 4.39$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ). Close to 90% of the students rated themselves highly on this competency, while none reported low efficacy on this aspect of teaching.

Table 5: Self-Efficacy in Teaching (N = 56)

Item	Level of Confidence			M	SD
	Low	Moderate	High		
1. Confidence in ability to teach engaging ISED lessons	2 (3.57)	7 (12.5)	47 (83.93)	4.18	0.86
2. Confidence in own skills and knowledge to teach effective ISED lessons.	2 (3.57)	7 (12.5)	47 (83.93)	4.00	0.76
3. Confidence in managing classroom and student discipline.	5 (8.93)	16 (28.57)	35 (62.5)	3.84	1.02
4. Confidence in ability to teach lessons that can positively impact students' academic performance	2 (3.57)	8 (14.29)	46 (82.14)	4.05	0.82
5. Confidence in ability to provide effective feedback to students.	4 (7.14)	6 (10.71)	46 (82.14)	4.00	0.81
6. Confidence in ability to motivate students to learn	2 (3.57)	11 (19.64)	43 (76.79)	4.02	0.80
7. Confidence in ability to handle challenging students.	4 (7.14)	21 (37.5)	31 (55.36)	3.63	1.00
8. Confidence in ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues and administrators to improve student outcomes.	1 (1.79)	7 (12.5)	48 (85.71)	4.29	0.76

9. Confidence in ability to identify and address the diverse learning needs of students.	3 (5.36)	9 (16.07)	44 (78.57)	3.95	0.84
10. Confidence in ability to use technology effectively to support student learning in ISED	-	6 (10.71)	50 (89.29)	4.39	0.68
11. Confidence in ability to create a positive and inclusive classroom environment.	2 (3.57)	6 (10.71)	48 (85.71)	4.16	0.83
12. Confidence in ability to help students to think critically.	3 (5.36)	8 (14.29)	45 (80.36)	3.96	0.83
Average				4.04	0.83

Note: Low = Not Confident at All & Not Confident; Moderate = Slightly Confident; High = Confident and Highly Confident

The second highest SE rating was reported for the competency of “collaborating effectively with colleagues and administrators to improve student outcomes” ( $M = 4.29$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ), where 85.71% of the students ( $n = 48$ ) ranked themselves highly in this aspect of teaching. Less than 15% expressed either low (12.5%,  $n = 7$ ) or no confidence (1.79%) in this competency.

Students also expressed high efficacy in creating “a positive and inclusive classroom environment” ( $M = 4.16$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ), and “engaging” ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ), “effective” ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ), and “impactful” ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ) ISED lessons, where more than 82% rated themselves highly on these four competencies. Meanwhile, moderate levels of SE were reported for “managing classroom and student discipline” ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ) and “handling challenging students” ( $M = 3.63$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ).

### Self-Efficacy in Classroom Assessment

Table 6 displays ISED students' self-efficacy in five classroom assessment competencies. As with the previous two domains, the students reported

high SE and confidence levels in all aspects of classroom assessment. For instance, the same percentage of students (83.9%) expressed a high level of confidence in the ability to “use various assessment tests” ( $M = 4.16$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ), “reflect on own assessment practices and identify areas of improvement” ( $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ), “seek professional development activities to improve classroom assessment practices” ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ), and “use assessment data to improve instruction and student learning” ( $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ). The least SE was reported for “giving feedback to students” ( $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ), although still a large majority indicated being highly competent in this aspect (80.4%). The pattern of distribution suggests that most ISED students felt highly confident in their ability to implement appropriate classroom assessment during teaching practicum.

Table 6: Self-Efficacy in Classroom Assessment (N = 56)

Item	Level of Confidence			M	SD
	Low	Moderate	High		
1. Confidence in using various assessment tools in teaching (e.g., MCQs, short-answer tests, essay tests, etc.)	2 (3.57)	7 (12.50)	47 (83.93)	4.16	0.85
2. Confidence in using data from classroom assessments to improve instruction and student learning.	2 (3.57)	7 (12.50)	47 (83.93)	4.04	0.79
3. Confidence in giving feedback on students' performance on classroom assessments.	2 (3.57)	9 (16.07)	45 (80.36)	4.04	0.76

4. Confidence in reflecting on own classroom assessment practices and identifying areas for improvement.	2 (3.57)	7 (12.50)	47 (83.93)	4.09	0.82
5. Confidence in seeking professional development opportunities to improve classroom assessment practices.	1 (1.79)	8 (14.29)	47 (83.93)	4.05	0.67
Average				4.08	0.78

*Note: Low = Not Confident at All & Not Confident; Moderate = Slightly Confident; High = Confident and Highly Confident*

### **Semi-Structured Interview Findings**

Based on the findings of the interview analysis, several main themes and sub-themes can be shown as follows.

#### **Theme 1: High confidence during teaching practice**

Findings from semi-structured interviews found that students have high confidence in planning teaching sessions in the classroom and planning assessments:

##### **a. Confidence in planning the lessons**

*The part I am most confident about is the preparation and planning part. (Participant 1)*

*The part I am most confident in is the teaching part in the classroom. Before going to school to do the practicum, I reviewed and referenced 21<sup>st</sup>-century teaching methods. (Participant 4)*

##### **b. Design an assessment**

The students who were interviewed also found that they have confidence in evaluating:

*For me, the most confident part is the evaluation part. I will repeat what I teach in class with evaluation so I can focus and identify whether the students can understand or not with my presentation. (Participant 2)*

## **Theme 2: Low confidence during teaching practice**

In the areas where students are less confident during the practicum, the average practicum student expressed low confidence in controlling students in class.

*The part I am least confident about is the part that uses one teaching skill. It is quite difficult for us to master that matter. We need one skill to control the whole class (Participant 3)*

*When we teach, some students play, and even once in my class, they fight. It is very challenging, especially when managing the classroom. (Participant 2)*

*Next, how to control this student's attitude. So, I am less confident about my teaching technique. (Participant 1)*

## **Theme 3: Loss of confidence during teaching practice**

Based on the interviews conducted, there are also trainee teachers who lose confidence during teaching training:

*At one level, I could not control the situation in the class or the situation of the students. The students tend to be noisy in the class until they disturb the adjacent class for teaching and learning sessions. (Participant 3)*

*I think I lost confidence. I lost my ability to be a good educator when students have problems, especially in their attitude. (Participant 2)*

## **Discussion**

The general pattern discernible from the SE data indicates that ISED students in their final year doing teaching practicum at various schools under IIUM supervision felt highly positive and confident about their competencies in curriculum implementation, teaching and classroom assessment. The means reported for the three domains passed the 4-point mark indicating high SE (Mustika, 2009). The SE means reported in this study are consistent with those reported in Noornajihan

and Ab. Halim (2013), Teng (2006), and Khalid et al. (2009), who found that Islamic Education teachers in Malaysian secondary schools have incredibly high levels of self-efficacy. In terms of curriculum design and implementation, the study's results corroborate the findings of Khanshan and Yousefi (2020), who discovered a significant correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and their teaching practices.

Two areas the ISED students were most confident in were using technology for teaching and collaborating with colleagues and administrators to improve student outcomes. The former suggests that ISED students feel proficient and assured in leveraging digital technology for instructional delivery. Being Gen-Z, they may have developed this confidence from their familiarity with technology-enhanced learning environments that involve plausibly online resources, Web 2.0 tools, social media, or multimedia-rich presentations. The ISED students involved in this study were among those affected by COVID-19 who had experienced extensive online learning due to the pandemic, which had given them a substantial exposure to diverse learning technologies. Their affinity for social media and disruptive technology is a factor that may push the integration of digital technology into the teaching of Islamic Education in the near future. This is a positive finding that offers support for Kazan and El-Daou's (2016) assertion that self-efficacy beliefs can influence teachers' intent to use technology for greater student learning.

As for the latter result (i.e., confidence in being able to collaborate with colleagues and administrators), it shows ISED students' readiness to engage in cooperative endeavours aimed at enhancing instructional practices and fostering student success. Collaboration with peers and administrators enables them to exchange ideas, share best practices, and collectively address challenges, ultimately contributing to a more supportive and collaborative professional learning environment.

The results highlight several aspects of ISED students' SE that require attention and further improvement from the IIUM's Kulliyah of Education. Seven aspects fell below the 4-point mark of high efficacy—they can be broadly categorized into the following five competency areas, namely (1) helping students to think critically; (2) creating differentiated instruction based on students' diverse learning needs; (3) managing the classroom and student discipline; (4) creating effective

learning assessments; and (5) evaluating the quality of ISED lessons. These five areas, visualized in Figure 1, should be prioritised, and given more emphasis in the future training of ISED students at the Kulliyyah.

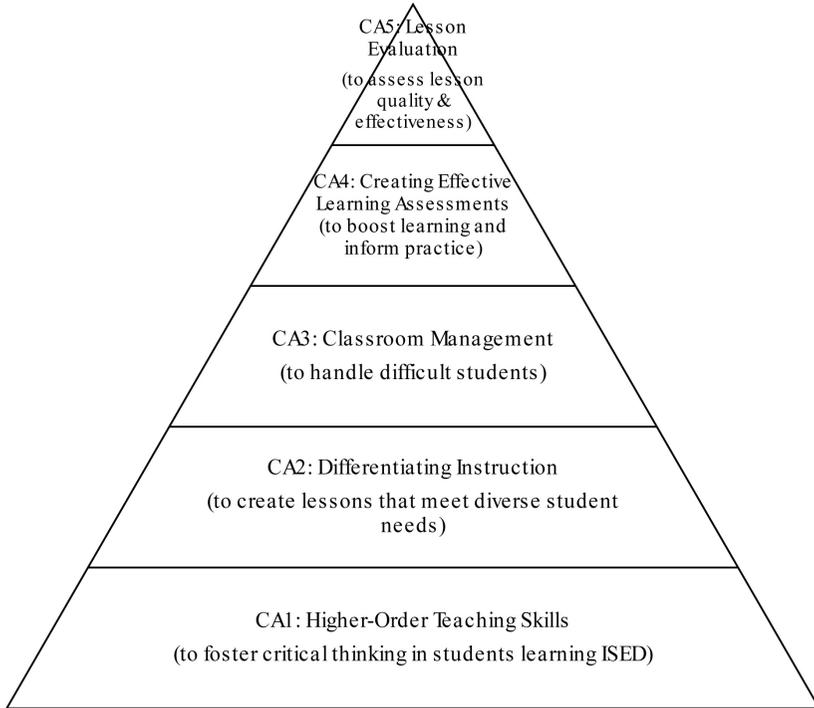


Figure 1: Five Competency Areas Needing Improvement for ISED Trainees  
*Note: CA = Competency Area requiring greater emphasis and training*

A number of strategies can be employed by the Kulliyyah to develop students' self-efficacy in the five competency areas. For instance, the lesson study method can be used to equip ISED students with the ability to evaluate lessons and develop the metacognitive thinking skill required of teachers. Classroom observations, school visits and consultations with expert or excellent teachers can be done to increase the efficacy in competency areas 1 to 4. KOED's teaching staff must also incorporate more real-world content and practices in their training of ISED students. The students themselves must be encouraged and trained to do more action research on issues that affect their overall effectiveness as teachers, for instance, on how to be proactive in dealing with student misbehaviour. Rosas et al. (2009) suggest that teacher

education programmes must emphasise equipping trainee teachers with practical strategies for managing classroom dynamics and handling disruptive behaviours. Such strategies are crucial for helping teachers reduce classroom disruption, use instructional time more fruitfully, and stay focused in their teaching. They also help to curb burnout among new teachers. Additionally, ISED majors should seek mentorship from experienced educators—this can give them valuable insights and strategies for managing challenging student behaviours.

Another competency area worth paying attention to is giving feedback on students' work. About one fifth of the sample expressed a lack of confidence in this aspect. Sardareh (2016) wrote that most of the time, Malaysian teachers tend to give feedback to students in the form of praise—when what students really need is informative and constructive feedback on their work and performance. Hence, the training of ISED majors as future teachers of the subject must include comprehensive instruction on the principles and techniques of providing effective feedback and what such feedback looks like. Such instruction can be embedded in their microteaching classes. More importantly, KOED's training of ISED majors must provide opportunities for them to practice giving feedback in various contexts and classroom settings. Simulated classroom scenarios should be used to allow ISED majors to develop proficiency in tailoring feedback to meet the individual needs of their students.

### **Research Limitations**

Our study's primary limitation is its small number of respondents. This was due to the fact that the target population was also small ( $N = 80$ ). That being the case, we expect the generalisability and utility of our results to also be somewhat limited. However, this should not limit the Kulliyah of Education from recognising the insights gained from the results and utilising them as a basis for further research and pedagogical development of its teacher trainees.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Overall, this research, albeit small, has effectively collected noteworthy information regarding the self-efficacy of ISED students in teaching practicum, addressing a void not previously covered by comparable

investigations. Its results suggest that while ISED students may feel well-prepared in certain areas, there are clear opportunities for improvement in others, particularly in designing higher-order lessons that promote critical thinking, differentiating instruction to meet learner needs, developing innovative assessments, and managing challenging classroom dynamics. Addressing these areas of lower confidence can lead to better teacher performance and greater student outcomes.

Its limitations notwithstanding, the study makes the following recommendations for the improvement of existing classroom practices at KOED specifically, and future research into teachers' SE:

1. In terms of research, future studies should conduct extensive lesson observations using well-validated and psychometrically sound rubrics or rating scales to ascertain, with empirical evidence, the actual levels of teachers' efficacy and compare them to their reported self-efficacy. The domains to be examined in these observations should include instructional competency, classroom questioning, provision of feedback and technology use. Such data will enable us to establish the alignment between teachers' perceived abilities and their demonstrated performance in the classroom. The results of this exercise can be used to support evidence-based decision making regarding appropriate instructional interventions for teachers, teacher evaluation, professional development planning, and resource allocation.
2. In terms of improving current classroom practices, teacher training providers must include in their courses greater hours for microteaching. Increased microteaching sessions give trainee teachers more opportunities to put theory into practice, develop their pedagogical skills through repeated practice and feedback loops, build confidence in implementing instructional strategies, and refine their classroom management techniques. Teacher training institutes should, by this point, already be considering the use of lesson study (Kusanagi, 2021)—an approach to professional development that originated in Japan some 150 years ago—as a viable method for developing teachers' efficacy in the various competency areas.

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# The Influence of Civil Society Organisations on Political Decision-Making in Iraqi Kurdistan

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**Abstract:** The significance of civil society in any given society cannot be overstated, as it safeguards individuals' rights in various spheres of life, including the political realm. Iraqi Kurdistan's civil society encompasses various groups that influence the legislative, executive, judiciary, and political parties. The influence and consequences of civil societies vary depending on the geographical and organisational context. However, while civil society in Iraqi Kurdistan saw significant growth after 2003 and has a strong influence on political decisions, its involvement in political decision-making needs to be more to reach the required threshold. The present research employs historical and descriptive methodologies to showcase the influence of civil society organisations (CSOs) on political determinations in Iraqi Kurdistan (IK). This article examines the efficacy of CSOs in influencing political decision-making. It also identifies the obstacles that impede civil society's participation in this process by evaluating their effects on political parties and the government.

**Keywords:** Civil society, political decision-making, Iraqi Kurdistan, Kurdistan Regional Government, political culture.

**Abstrak:** Kepentingan masyarakat sivil dalam mana-mana masyarakat tidak boleh dipertikaikan, kerana ia melindungi hak individu dalam pelbagai bidang kehidupan, termasuklah dunia politik. Masyarakat sivil Wilayah Kurdistan

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Iraq (IK) merangkumi pelbagai kumpulan yang mempengaruhi perundangan, eksekutif, kehakiman dan parti politik. Pengaruh dan kesan pembentukan masyarakat sivil berbeza dan bergantung pada konteks geografi dan organisasi. Walaupun masyarakat sivil di Wilayah Kurdistan Iraq menyaksikan pertumbuhan yang ketara selepas 2003 dan mempunyai pengaruh yang kuat dalam membuat keputusan politik, pembabitannya harus lebih besar untuk mencapai tahap yang diperlukan. Penyelidikan ini menggunakan metodologi sejarah dan deskriptif untuk mempamerkan pengaruh organisasi masyarakat sivil (CSO) terhadap penentuan arah politik di Wilayah Kurdistan Iraq. Artikel ini mengkaji keberkesanan CSO dalam mempengaruhi pembuatan keputusan politik. Ia juga bagi mengenal pasti halangan yang menghalang penyertaan masyarakat sivil dalam proses ini dengan menilai kesannya terhadap parti politik dan kerajaan.

**Kata kunci:** masyarakat sivil, membuat keputusan dalam politik, Wilayah Iraq Kurdistan, Kerajaan Wilayah Kurdistan, budaya politik.

## Introduction

The US's overthrow of the Ba'ath regime in 2003 led to a freer and favourable environment for CSOs. This change in the Iraqi regime led to international organisations providing financial assistance to CSOs in Iraqi Kurdistan (IK). This helped them become independent and no longer rely on political parties. International organisations also opened courses for CSOs, such as commitment to democracy, election monitoring, and freedom of expression. This liberated most CSOs from political party dominance in IK.

It enabled CSOs of Kurdistan to exert a considerable influence on diverse facets of Kurdish society, encompassing the legislative, executive, and judicial branches and political organisations. In recent decades, Iraqi Kurdistan has experienced substantial political, economic, and social transformations, although they have faced various obstacles, including political party disputes and economic and social concerns. These challenges have presented impediments for CSOs to effectively engage in and exert influence over political determinations within the region of IK. As societal consciousness regarding individual rights and civic duties increased, and democratic institutions becoming more robust, CSOs have assumed a significant role in influencing political determinations. The rise in the number of charitable societies, development-oriented CSOs, and human rights organisations serves

as a testament to the expanding role of CSOs within the civil society framework. A growing call for reform is present along with this trend, which impacts political decision-making.

The objective of this study is to explain the influence of CSOs on political decision-making in the region of IK. This study also aims to evaluate the potency of civil society in driving political reform. It is based on elite interviews and perception studies while considering the degree of freedom these organisations possess. The principal inquiry driving this investigation is: “What is the influence of civil society on political decision-making in IK?” The primary inquiry leads to various subordinate inquiries, including the emergence of civil society in IK, the essential regulations governing CSOs, and the underlying reasons for their substantial involvement in political decision-making.

## **Methodology**

A qualitative research method was implemented to investigate this research, incorporating primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was acquired through the use of interviews and document collection. During the period from 2021 to 2022, the researchers conducted a series of interviews with a cohort of twenty respondents. The sample included executives of CSOs with expertise in various domains, such as electoral observation, human rights advocacy, youth mobilisation, women’s affairs, and education. Interviews were also conducted with professionals from academia, politics, and law. The process of selecting CSOs for the interviews was predicated on their proven level of activity and involvement. The data collection process included audio-visual techniques to guarantee accuracy in data recording.

Structured and semi-structured interview questions were employed to gather pertinent information efficiently. Interviews were conducted in the Kurdish language and were subsequently translated and transcribed into English. Interviews are essential for this qualitative research since they assist the study in describing, better understanding, and exploring the research subjects’ viewpoints, attitudes, perceptions, and experiences regarding the impact of political decision-making in IK. After this, all interview data were analysed in English. In transcription and translation, the study achieved data immersion, which assists in identifying themes during subsequent analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Supplementary sources, including but not limited to secondary data such as books, articles, and online newspapers from domestic and international sources, were utilised to augment the research outcomes in conjunction with primary data. The sources have furnished significant perspectives regarding the functions and undertakings of CSOs in the region of IK. These inputs have substantiated the examination of the influence of CSOs on political determinations. The present study endeavours to elucidate the efficacy of CSOs in the political decision-making process in Iraqi Kurdistan through an all-encompassing research methodology that involves collecting primary and secondary data. Comprehending the function of CSOs and the obstacles they encounter is imperative in augmenting the involvement of civil society in moulding the political milieu and advancing substantial reforms.

### **Literature Review**

The existing literature on the influence of CSOs in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has been criticised for its lack of rigorous academic inquiry, as noted by Sofi (2009), NCCI (2011), Poutros and Zubaida (2013), and Medeni (2017). Several scholars have analysed the progression of CSOs in Iraq throughout history and the government's efforts to curtail their operations. The studies have recognised the reliance of CSOs on political parties and the decreased significance of CSOs due to the 2011 legislation. Political parties have used their sway over these entities to acquire monetary advantages and privileges from prominent individuals.

Nonetheless, extant research has yet to investigate the influence of CSOs on political determinations comprehensively. Hakeem (2017) has provided insight into the historical and developmental aspects of CSOs operating under the authority of the KRG. The author has highlighted the democratic milieu established for these organisations' functioning and operations since the KRG's inception. Furthermore, Hakeem has analysed the internal and external impediments that impede the operations of CSOs. Hassan Kawa's (2015) work focuses on the efforts of ruling parties to establish family rule and limit democratic processes. Kawa emphasises the importance of CSOs in advocating for an end to corruption through public demonstrations and exerting pressure on those in power. Kawa has emphasised the influence exerted by CSOs and opposition political parties on the IK parliament, leading to the passage

of significant legislative amendments to the Election Commission Law and the reduction of political parties' budgets.

Hoshyar Malo's scholarly investigation delves into the inadequacies of antecedent inquiries by focusing on the activation of civil society institutions in IK via a series of legislative measures and resolutions promulgated by the KRG and Parliament. Malo (2022) observes that the enactment of Law No. 1 in 2011 was a response to the influence and recommendations of CSOs. This legislation established the Office of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) within the KRG, which includes CSOs, and assumed responsibility for registering all CSOs without requiring a licence from the Ministry of Interior.

Drawing from the extant literature, the subsequent observations can be discerned: Primarily, the need for more literature and research that delves into the institutions of civil society and their influence on the political decision-making process. The extant literature predominantly comprises prospective analyses, envisioning potential trajectories for civil society organisations and political decision-making in IK. Furthermore, the studies have established conceptual frameworks and have acquainted themselves with the topic, facilitating an examination of the substance of the exemplar studies utilised in the current investigation. The main emphasis of these studies has been to provide a comprehensive portrayal of the topic at hand. The writings above and studies hold significant value in comprehending civil society, its inception, the pivotal regulations governing its functions, and the phases of the reformation procedure in IK.

### **Historical Background**

The UK and France divided the Kurdish region into four parts as per the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) (Gunter, 2011). As a result, Britain and France forcibly annexed the vilayet of Mosul, which is now Iraqi Kurdistan, to Iraq (Farhad, 2021). This situation sparked a liberation movement to realise the Kurdish nation's rights.

The political struggle had an impact on CSOs, which are an essential part of Kurdish society, and they acquired political traits in addition to their civil role. During the monarchy, most CSOs in Iraq primarily served charitable purposes and did not have a political impact. The

royal regime banned CSO activities if they were politically influential (NCCI, 2011).

In this context, the Kurdistan Scientific Society was established in 1922 as a CSO focused on promoting education and awareness. The leadership and members of this group supported the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan (Tahiri, 2007). Additionally, in 1937, a group of patriotic Kurdish youths formed the Brotherhood Association (Brotherhood Movement) in Sulaymaniyah under the leadership of Sheikh Latif, the son of Sheikh Mahmoud Al-Barzinji. They aimed to achieve independence for Kurdistan (Gardawani, 1999). However, due to the dominance of Arab nationalist ideologies among Iraqi students and youth organisations, Kurdish students and youth were marginalised in their activities. As a response, the Kurdistan Students Union and the Kurdistan Youth Union were established on February 18, 1953, to defend the rights of Kurdish students and youths and contribute to the development of the Kurdish liberation movement (Farhad, 2021).

Following the revolution on 14 July 1958, teachers, workers, students, and women actively participated in the formation of political parties and associations. However, Jabbar (2006) argues that the 1958 Revolution marked the beginning of the decline of civil society. During the 1960s, opposition political forces in Iraq and Kurdistan, as well as democratic organisations in Iraq, engaged in clandestine struggles. The burden of fighting against the dictators and occupiers of Kurdistan fell primarily on the Kurdish revolutionaries, leading to a decline in the activities of democratic organisations across Iraq. Furthermore, the Iraqi government should have paid more attention to Iraqi Kurdistan. Iraqi President General Qassim rejected the peace process with the KDP, denying the Kurdish nation their rights according to the 1958 Iraqi Provisional Constitution (Rubin, 2007). These circumstances ultimately led to the September Revolution of 1961, against General Qassim's government, further intensifying the Arab and Kurdish nationalist movements.

Consequently, CSOs faced increased risks (Muhammad, 2007). Under the Ba'ath regime from 1963 to 1991, the activities of CSOs in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan were prohibited unless they were officially affiliated with the Ba'ath Party and implemented the regime's agenda (Rusty, 2010). Viewing CSOs as a threat to their power, the Ba'ath Party

witnessed numerous demonstrations against its rule by CSOs during from 1975–1991. These protests resulted in the killing or imprisonment of hundreds of civil activists by the Ba’athist regime. For instance, Snawbar, a teacher, was martyred during the demonstrations in Qaladze on April 4, 1983 (Noradini, 2022). However, CSOs were allowed more freedom of activity whenever revolutionary leadership was in place (Azad, 2022). After the uprising in 1991, the door opened for CSOs to engage in freedom-working efforts, but until 2003, their freedom was limited (Najih, 2021). Nevertheless, after the fall of the Ba’ath regime, CSOs had more significant opportunities to operate freely and influence political decisions (Dana, 2021).

### **Overview of Iraqi Kurdistan**

The majority of people in IK, a region in northern and eastern Iraq, are Kurds, with notable Turkmen and Christian minorities (Gunter, 2011). The Hashemite monarchy, established in the British Protectorate of Iraq in the 1920s was the first modern Iraqi state and saw the birth of Kurdish parties, associations, and organisations (McDowall, 1996, p. 166).

From the beginning of the Republic in 1958 to 1990–1991, Kurdish nations in Iraq were subjected to harassment, and the government forbade Kurdish political parties. Iraqi Kurds, demanding their national rights, have waged several uprisings and revolutions against previous regimes and the Ba’ath regime, including the September Revolution in 1961 and the New Revolution in 1975 (Farhad, 2021). The Ba’athist regime systematically attempted to destroy Iraqi Kurds, committing genocide and chemical attacks (Galbraith 2005). Iraqi Kurds were victims of crimes against humanity and genocide under Saddam Hussein’s regime. According to Leezenberg (2017), the Iraqi dictatorship could only retain control of IK through intimidation and large-scale brutality, which reached genocide levels during the 1988 Anfal Campaign. As Davis (2005) argued, for more than four decades, Iraqis had no freedom to establish CSOs independent of the state and the Ba’athist regime in Iraq. The September Revolution in 1961 and the new revolution on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1976, brought together all such organisations in the national struggle for political rights.

After the issuance of UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 688 in 1991, the Ba’ath regime withdrew its administration from IK, imposing an economic embargo and creating an administrative vacuum.

(Gunter, 1995). The US protection of the Kurdistan Region from the Iraqi regime and military enabled de facto independent governance, and the democratic electoral process took place in IK under the auspices of the UN on May 19, 1992, to fill the administrative vacuum. IK, under the Kurdistan Regional Government, has also made progress in social and economic rehabilitation following the first free elections held in 1992, which led to the establishment of a parliament and a Kurdistan regional government.

Since then, new realities and problems have emerged in terms of reconstructing the political system, establishing new power-sharing agreements development in Iraqi Kurdistan and freedom of civil society activities. The 2003 fall of the Iraqi government, led to international organisations like USAID (US Agency for International Development), NPA (Norwegian People's Aid), Iraqi Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP under United Nations Development Programme or UNDP), and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) providing financial assistance to CSOs in IK. This led to many organisations, such as Peace and Freedom Organisation (PFO), becoming independent and no longer relying on political parties (Hoger, 2022). Following the establishment of new laws governing the operation of CSOs in 2011, the CSOs in IK have the opportunity to impact political decision-making in Iraqi Kurdistan to change the process toward better governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and overall, the consolidation of a democratic society.

### **The Concept of Civil Society**

The precise definition of civil society is a subject of debate among scholars. In broad terms, civil society refers to a collection of voluntary and non-profit organisations that function in the public interest, serving as intermediaries between the government and the populace. These organisations communicate the populace's requests to the governing body through proposals and applying influence to preserve democracy, human rights, social equity, political transformation, and the liberty of speech in all domains of existence. The significance of civil society in a given society is paramount, as it endeavours to tackle a range of issues at the community level by utilising its inherent strengths, institutional framework, and cultural conventions. Even with its potential benefits, implementing civil society institutions at the state level poses specific

difficulties owing to the heterogeneous character, constraints, and extent of such entities across various domains. Civil societies' efficacy relies on factors such as their allocation of human and financial resources, geographical placement, and specialised domains.

### **Political Decision-Making Actors in Iraqi Kurdistan**

The notion of political decision-making in administrative behaviour was first introduced by Simon (2013). Russo (2014: 1) subsequently defined this concept as a process involving various interactive steps, including goal determination, information collection and processing, solution design, effectiveness evaluation, answer selection, decision implementation, and long-term feedback (Laoyan, 2021). According to Livingstone and Lunt's theory from 1994, the incorporation of public participation acts as a mechanism for guiding policies in the public interest. Additional means of public and civil society engagement and responsibility in the decision-making process encompass scrutinising alternative undertakings and resisting the trend towards participatory democracy. As regards Iraqi Kurdistan, both official and unofficial institutions make political decisions. The official institutions encompass the legislature authority, executive institution, and judiciary authority, while the unofficial institutions consist of political parties.

### **Official Policymakers**

Official policymakers have legal power to participate in the formulation of public policy, including the legislators' authority, executive institution, and judiciary authority.

#### *Legislative Authority*

To establish proficient legislative leadership in Iraqi Kurdistan, the authority of the parliament's leader must be unambiguously delineated, particularly in light of the involvement of all political factions in parliamentary proceedings (Omotoso, 2010). In the executive-centred phase of the legislative process, policy proposals are initiated by the President, high-ranking officials, and advisors. According to Sarwar (2022), the parliament possesses the legal authority to develop policies, necessitating the head of parliament to introduce and endorse multiple policy proposals.

The parliament of Iraqi Kurdistan is comprised of a total of 111 seats, of which eleven are designated explicitly for the representation of religious and ethnic minority groups such as Christians, Yazidis, and Turkmen. The first session of the parliament was held on June 4, 1992, and it is presently in its fifth term, as Noradini (2022) reported. Throughout its tenure, the parliament has observed noteworthy political events. Several significant developments have occurred, including establishing the Regional Council of Ministers and a separate ministry law that excludes regional ministries. Additionally, a resolution was issued on October 4, 1992, in support of establishing a federal union to establish legal relations with the central government. The Judicial Power Act was adopted in 2016, and a law authorising the deployment of Peshmerga forces to protect the city of Kobane in West Kurdistan from the occupation of the ISIS terrorist organisation was passed in 2015. As of 2022, the Kurdistan Parliament has legislated 405 laws since its inception (Sirwan, 2021).

#### *The Executive Institution*

A diverse group of well-known people and organisations responsible for creating policies make up Iraqi Kurdistan's executive power. These individuals comprise a group of high-ranking officials who hold critical positions within the government of Iraqi Kurdistan. This group includes the President of Kurdistan Region, Nechirvan Barzani, the Vice Prime Ministers of Kurdistan Region, the Prime Minister, Masrour Barzani, the Vice Premier, ministers, advisers, top political aides, and administrators who are responsible for overseeing critical departments within the region. Since the inception of the Kurdistan Region in 1992, several legislative measures have been implemented to distinguish between entities such as organisations, trade unions, and groups, all of which are subject to legal regulation (Hoshyar, 2022). The 9th Cabinet of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), established in 2018, adopted a unique approach in its operations, prioritising the objectives and undertakings of various entities in relation to governance. As a result, according to Barzan (2022), the KRG decided to establish fifteen boards, of which three are currently in use.

#### *Judicial Authority*

The judiciary is responsible for assessing, overseeing, and interpreting public policies and their execution in the interest of the public and the

Constitution. However, it is essential to note that this function may differ across diverse constitutional frameworks (Anderson, 2014). IK's judicial system comprises of the Ministry of Justice and its affiliated agencies, which play a role in the functioning of the Supreme Court and the Court of Personal and Criminal Procedure. The Kurdistan Region Shura Council (KRSC) is also involved in the judiciary. By the legislation of the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Shura Council Law enacted in 2008, the KRSC is a duly constituted legal and judicial entity vested with the power to oversee the judiciary and the board of directors of the region. The primary responsibilities of this entity include the composition and thorough examination of legislative proposals. The Shura Council is an administrative body that is institutionally integrated into the Ministry of Justice. Its operations comply with the 2007 Law of the Ministry of Justice. Law No. 14 of 2008, also referred to as the KRSC Law governs the establishment and authorisation of these councils. According to Karwan's (2016) analysis, the KRSC has implemented various legal and administrative frameworks that efficiently facilitate the execution of the Council's mandates and instructions. As per Rudaw's report in 2015, it can be inferred that the KRSC has two fundamental roles: a judicial function and a legislative function. Furthermore, it has a significant impact on shaping political determinations in the region of IK.

### **Unofficial Policymakers**

According to Knutson (2023), unofficial policymakers are actors who have an interest in policy outcomes and work hard to influence policy outcomes but lack the legal standing to make a policy decision. Unofficial actors are always going to be unofficial because they do not have the legal authority to make policy decisions. In this section, we aim to focus on political parties in IK and examine the influence of CSOs on these parties through research and analysis.

#### *Political Parties*

Political parties in Iraqi Kurdistan function within a structured legal framework. The legislative body of Iraqi Kurdistan enacted legislation in 1993, 1997, and 2002 mandating political parties to adhere to the electoral procedures and pertinent regulations (Gunter, 1993). The Iraqi Constitution of 2005, in Article 39, guarantees the freedom to establish associations and political parties subject to legal regulation. According to Gunter (1993), the Legislative Council facilitates establishing political

parties while affording citizens and eligible residents the opportunity to engage in and affiliate with any such party.

The political parties operating in Iraqi Kurdistan are comprised of individuals who share similar ideologies and objectives and are dedicated to gaining influence over the governmental machinery. Upon attaining power, a political party's government officials formulate policies congruent with the party's programme and manifesto, as per the report by Freedom House (2021). The prevalence of the Barzani family in Erbil via the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Talabani family in Sulaymaniyah through the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) has constituted a distinctive characteristic of Kurdish political affairs, as Freedom House (2021) reported. The cooperation between the two parties is deemed crucial for the region's development, despite the presence of historical, ideological, and sociological divisions between them. Notwithstanding their divergent perspectives, the Kurdish political leaders are committed to advancing the Kurdish nationalist agenda. Efforts to simplify the intricate nature of Iraqi Kurdish politics by categorising their political ideologies into tribal or socialist labels are deemed oversimplified (Stansfield, 2003; Morris, 1999).

Political parties do not influence the decision-making process in Iraqi Kurdistan; rather, a small number of individuals do. While political parties may participate in debates and engage in questioning, the ultimate authority to make decisions rests with a select few individuals (Hoger, 2022).

### *The Influence of CSOs on the Legislative Authority*

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are involved in political decision-making through their active participation in elections, process monitoring, and public participation advocacy. The extent to which they influence political decision-making depends on the organisation and contextual factors, as Sangar (2022) notes. According to Hoger (2022), CSOs can indirectly influence political decision-makers through their involvement in public life and participation in electoral processes. This capacity is crucial in enabling the empowerment of all societal segments. The ongoing and significant measure of the development of IK pertains to the influence of CSOs in political decision-making. Their involvement can be observed in the legislative, executive, and judicial

branches of government, as expounded upon in subsequent sections (Hoger, 2022).

Various CSOs operating within the region have presented several significant legislative proposals to the Parliamentary Committee on CSOs. The items comprise proposed legislation about the issue of violence against women and a legislative proposal to curtail the budget of political parties and facilitate the election of House Representatives. Many bills submitted by CSOs avoided party scrutiny (and political vetoes), especially those submitted to the Kurdistan Parliament by several CSOs on demonstrations and the Draft Law on the Right to Information submitted by the Journalists' Union and the Metro Centre (Gharib, 2022).

For example, the Kurdistan Region-Iraq Demonstration Law and the Kurdistan Region-Iraq Right to Information Act (Law No. 11 of 2013) have been achieved as a result of the endeavours of CSOs. Moreover, the Kurdistan Parliament enacted Law No. 2 of 2009 to institute a quota system for women's representation in parliamentary and governmental roles. The Parliament has shown favourable reception towards a significant bill proposed by women's organisations concerning implementing the Personal Status Law (Dlsoz, 2022).

The enactment of Law No. 1 of 2011, about establishing and registering non-governmental organisation (NGO) offices, presented a notably arduous undertaking. The issuance of work permits to establish organisations is exclusively under the purview of the Ministry of Interior, which also undertakes the more scrutinising tasks of the judiciary (Ako, 2022).

The Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament has enacted several laudable legislations while also subjecting various ministers in the ninth cabinet of the KRG to scrutiny. The occurrence did not subvert the essential supremacy of the KDP and PUK factions; however, it exhibited the efficacy of civil noncompliance in contesting their monopolisation of authority. Consequently, an allocation of 1% of the budget has been made to independent CSOs, reducing the financial burden on political parties. Before this allocation, political parties were receiving the equivalent of USD 54,493 per seat per month, as Hassan (2015) reported.

CSOs have exerted a significant influence on the political decision-making process in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament passed law No. 1 of 2011 in response to the requests of civil society organisations such as Public Aid Organisation (PAO) and Kurdish Human Rights Watch (KHRW). These entities have significantly promoted dialogues among different groups, as evidenced by their participation in congressional hearings. Moreover, they have provided insightful viewpoints on crucial issues, such as the transition from a closed to an open electoral register, reducing the minimum age requirement for parliamentary members, and establishing the Women's High Council.

### *The Influence of CSOs on the Executive Institution*

At the request of women's organisations, the KRG has established the Women's High Council and Development, which is affiliated with the Council of Ministers. It seeks to realise women's rights in the political, economic, and social spheres. Also, the number of women in the Kurdistan Parliament and local councils increased from 25% to 30% (Bahar, 2022). The number of members of the Kurdistan Parliament is 111, with 34 women; and this played a role in empowering women and giving them more opportunities to participate in the political process and take ranks in Kurdish parties (Hoshyar, 2022). CSOs such as KHRW, PAO, Dabin Organisation and Metro Centre have impacted the KRG, and, on their proposal, several offices and bodies have been established by the KRG, such as the Human Rights Commission and the Intelligence Commission (Dilsoz, 2022).

At the request of the teachers' unions, the Ministry of Education changed the primary, secondary and high school curricula to suit the education systems of developed countries. In addition, communication between CSOs and the KRG has led to disability benefits and social welfare payments for disadvantaged groups, and the issuance of a law against domestic violence. Several years ago, local government and political parties ignored the role of women and youth, but the growth of CSOs led to political parties and KRG offices opening the doors for young people and women to participate in political processes. Regarding this point, women and young people in political parties have played roles in the democratisation process. Before 2011, the Ministry of Interior and the security agencies allowed CSOs' work, but now such activities

are civil and not security-related (Gulpy, 2021). In elections in KRG, the age for candidates has been reduced from 30 to 25, enabling young people to run for parliament and local councils, which is an important achievement for CSOs. Bahar (2022) argues that actively developing the democratic process in Kurdistan played a role in establishing several bodies, including the Integrity Commission and the Human Rights Commission.

In addition, CSOs have an active role in improving the performance of the KRG. It is known that members of CSOs such as PAO, Civil Development Organisation (CDO), Dabran institution, Rwanga institution, and Kurdistan child protection organisations have many workers in the administrative and service fields in the administrative units and bodies, which affects the development work of members of CSOs in the development of administrative and service institutions and government bodies (Hoshyar, 2022). CSOs' belief in collective action makes them more connected to the principles of democracy in their administrative positions and away from the dictatorial mentality in governmental positions (Saman, 2022). Through suggestions, criticism, and volunteer work, they also learn that they are more involved in developing and promoting their work in government business units. Political decisions are made by official and unofficial institutions that shape the political decision-making process (Anderson, 2014).

In a constructivist dialectical tension, civil society does not oppose the state; rather, it recognises the state's formal and essential validity. Furthermore, civil society is not merely a buffer zone between perceptions and markets, but an ever-evolving process as well as a tool for achieving democratic dynamics (Mexhuani & Rahmani, 2017). Raouf (2010, p. 38) argued that CSOs in IK worked to encourage the leaders in IK to produce a civil society for democratic transition. In this regard, it should be noted that community organisations such as the Kurdish Institute for Elections, PAO, PFO, Dabran Institution, Pay Centre for Monitoring of Parliament, Metro Centre, and RWANGA foundation have played an important role by raising awareness of people's rights and duties, encouraging people to participate in elections, observing elections, spreading a culture of mutual acceptance, carrying out collective projects, and working to change the Kurdish community into a democratic community.

Many CSOs have had direct and tangible impacts on the KRG, such as securing their cooperation and facilitation of numerous projects by the PFO, CDO, and PAO. Specific examples include opening computer and English courses for young men and women and seeking to provide young people with self-reliance to secure their lives. Also, other CSOs, such as the Rwanga foundation, financially support young men and women to initiate small projects for themselves. CSOs, such as the Kurdistan Economic Development Organisation (KEDO), Stop Organisation, and Pay Centre, influence the government by lobbying and suggesting ways to improve the economic situation and reduce administrative and financial corruption. Other groups and CSO - such as contract teachers, disgruntled teachers, disabled people, and Dabin organisations for Democracy and Human Rights Development, influence the government through protests and demonstrations to demand rights. The impact of CSOs on the KRG varies and depends on the different activities and capabilities of CSOs, their relationships with political parties, and their working geographical contexts.

#### *CSO's Influence on the Judicial Authority*

Although the KRG formally separates the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, specific legislation had to be passed to make the judiciary an independent power under Law No. 23, which was passed in 2007. It subsequently enacted Law No. 7 of 2009 to facilitate the appointment of qualified judges and legal staff. In this regard, several independent CSOs such as KEDO and Halwest have highlighted the politicisation of the courts in IK, and the political affiliation of judges and other officials means that their decisions cannot be considered objective and independent (Najih, 2022). Sometimes political parties interfere directly in the affairs of the courts, and the executive branch is higher than the judiciary, with the Prime Minister appointing judges.

Consequently, the head of the judiciary is effectively under the power of the Prime Minister (Hussam, 2022). Nevertheless, the level of political power over the judiciary has relatively declined since the Ba'ath regime broke down in 2003. After that, the KRG Judiciary Institute was established at the request of CSOs in the capital, Erbil. On the other hand, Sirwan (2021), believes that the CSOs have had a positive influence on the judiciary's independence within the limited

extent possible in this context, and the judiciary is a de jure independent authority.

### *CSOs' Influence on Political Parties*

According to Hassan (2015), the dissolution of the strategic agreement between PUK and PDK in 2014, which had previously apportioned governmental and administrative positions between the two parties, resulted from the pressure exerted by CSO. Furthermore, CSOs actively monitoring elections impacted election results, as evidenced by their ability to diminish the number of votes garnered by the Change or Gorran Movement during the 2021 Iraqi election in Sulaymaniyah.

CSOs such as CDO, Dabin Organisation, and the Metro Centre operating in Sulaymaniyah significantly impact political decision-making, particularly at the grassroots level. They exert internal pressure on political processes within the Kurdistan region. Conversely, it can be observed that international CSOs such as PAO, PFO, and Rwanga Institute situated in Erbil exert a hierarchical impact on the political landscape, utilising backing from global stakeholders (Majeed, 2021). The ruling factions in Iraqi Kurdistan exhibit inherent opposition towards the independence of CSOs. It can be argued that the objectives of CSOs aimed at advancing democratic principles and fostering cultural refinement within the Kurdish community do not intrinsically clash with the concerns of other stakeholders (Najih, 2021). CSOs have enhanced operational efficiency, reducing bureaucratic and corrupt practices. This has led to a favourable outcome for the operational units. Although the dominance of the political parties may hinder the KRG's democratic space's advancement, CSOs have successfully used this space to aid in the creation of a democratic environment.

According to Kamrava's (1998) argument, civil society is a product of a political culture that arises from the democratic organisation of individuals and plays a crucial function in maintaining democracy. CSOs play an active role in the national and private spheres concerning freedom of expression and human rights. They collaborate with political entities to advocate for the protection of these fundamental rights. CSOs share a collective policy to safeguard human rights and uphold freedom of expression. This function enhances community consciousness and influences the establishment of institutions within the KRG.

## **The Influence of CSOs in Decision-Making**

Civil society is an integral part of Iraqi Kurdish society, with the role of ensuring democracy, human rights, and social justice in all areas of life. The effectiveness of CSOs varies in Iraqi Kurdistan according to their human and financial capacity, geographical boundaries, and specialisation. IK has not been isolated from the debate on CSOs and human rights, where the political situation has significantly promoted their development. The issue of the influence of CSOs on political decision-making in the IK is a living one, as is the issue of political reform in the IK. According to Kaase and Marsh's (1979) definition, political participation refers to the deliberate actions undertaken by individuals to exert influence on political decisions across various tiers of the political structure. Nonviolent political engagement and participation are essential for advancing socioeconomic and civil society in IK as an independent nation or within Iraq.

Since 2003, international organisations like USAID, NPA, and JCC have opened courses for civil society organisations, including promoting democracy, freedom of work, teamwork, election participation, election monitoring, and support for freedom of expression and social justice. This has significantly impacted the actions of various of these organisations and liberated several CSOs from the control of political parties in IK. The independence of CSOs has grown, but this has been met with commensurately strong challenges to their emerging activities, including political challenges and direct government influence, media impacts, legal restrictions, economic and financial problems, cultural barriers, religious challenges, and corruption issues (Sangar, 2022). All these challenges hurt the scope of CSOs and reduce their activities on the ground. However, there are about 5,700 registered CSOs in 2021 in the KRG; the majority of them are also active and have an influential role in Iraqi Kurdish society.

CSOs operating within indigenous knowledge have demonstrated efficacy in galvanising political entities to safeguard shared interests, as evidenced by their efforts during the conflict with ISIS in 2014. CSOs demonstrated constructive involvement in devising a comprehensive strategy for collaboration with other regions of Kurdistan, specifically in West Kurdistan; they effectively rallied resources to safeguard the city of Kobani, as per Noradini's (2022) findings. Furthermore, CSOs

engage in political activities by organising quadrennial conferences to revise their objectives and select new boards of directors. This practice has played a significant role in fostering the establishment and growth of democratic procedures within political party entities. Additionally, they have been actively involved in formulating a unified policy to safeguard human rights and promote freedom of speech. CSOs function at the grassroots level, aiming to create awareness and exert influence on establishing institutions. For instance, in 2015, Hoshyar (2022) reported that CSOs such as the KHRW played a pivotal role in establishing gender unit in the Ministry of Peshmerga.

CSOs have a significant role in imparting knowledge to individuals regarding their obligations. As an illustration, the KRG implemented prisoner training programmes and founded a Ministry of Human Rights in 2001 due to the impact of CSOs. It participates in the national political process and contributes to developing Iraqi Kurdistan (IK), albeit with varying degrees of engagement contingent on its expertise and capabilities. Specific organisations prioritise providing services and developing capacity for young individuals and women. In contrast, others monitor the government's administration, finance, law enforcement, and transparency agendas. CSOs, including STOP Organisation for Monitoring and Development, Halwest, the Metro Centre, and the American-Kurdish organisation, are crucial in promoting government accountability through monitoring endeavours (Sangar, 2022).

Women's organisations have significantly impacted public life and the promotion of women's rights within the United Kingdom. The Supreme Council of Kurdistan Women was established by various women's organisations with distinct ideological and religious orientations. Its primary objective is to promote women's rights and establish direct communication with the leader of the KRG.

Delsuz (2022) reports that notable advancements have been achieved in women's rights, with the presentation of legislative proposals to the Kurdistan Parliament aimed at bolstering the empowerment and safeguarding of women. Regarding political participation, it is currently observed that women occupy leadership roles in all political parties within the Kurdistan Region, with varying degrees of representation. Females are extensively involved in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, along with political parties. Prominent instances

comprise Dr Rewas Faiq, the female parliament speaker hailing from the PUK, Dr Vala Fried, a minister associated with the KDP, and Kuestan Mohammed, Minister of Labour and Social Affair. Furthermore, women, being tasked as university presidents, judges, and general managers across the Kurdistan Region, are in prominent roles. The Kurdistan Parliament implemented legislation in 2009 that mandates a minimum of 30% female representation in electoral lists and political entities, promoting women's participation in political decision-making.

The CSOs are essential in developing democracy, freedom of expression, and oversight of the executive and legislative institutions. In this regard, Kurdistan Region (Law of Non-Governmental Organisations in Kurdistan Iraq) or KRG Law No. 1 of 2011 provided for the establishment and operation of CSOs, and since then, until 2021, several thousand CSOs have been established under this legal framework. According to a senior official involved in the management of CSOs in IK, they work in relief and assistance, developing democracy, legal awareness, justice, and human rights, empowering women and youth, and monitoring government and parliamentary actions and policies (Ako, 2022).

## **Conclusion**

CSOs play a crucial role in advancing the political and social interests of communities, which governments often neglect. In IK, the NGO Law implemented since 2011 has improved registration and funding processes for CSOs, establishing conditions for their financial sustainability. Since 2013, there has been a notable and positive shift in the work of CSOs, impacting political decision-making and political parties such as the PAO, PFO, CDO, Dabin, Rwanga foundation, Metro Centre, Pay Centre for Parliamentary Monitoring, KHRW, People's Development Organisation (PDO), and KEDO. The influence of CSOs on political decision-making varies according to the nature of their activities and capabilities, and their impacts vary from city to city. CSOs have been influential in preparing discussions between factions in conferences, having serious views on changing the closed electoral roll to the open list, reducing the age of parliament members, and influencing the formation of the Women's High Council. They have successfully lobbied the Parliament to pass several laws and amendments, such as the Right to Information Law No. 11 of 2013 and the Demonstration

Law No. 11 of 2010. However, increased competition among political parties in Iraqi Kurdistan can pose challenges for CSOs, particularly those affiliated with specific parties. Building robust CSOs remains crucial for strengthening the democratic process, as democracy is an inclusive process that allows individuals, political leaders, and civil society to intervene in various ways.

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# The Collapse of Economic Voting Behaviour in Turkish Politics

**Caglar Ezikoglu\***

**Abstract:** For voters, phenomena such as increasing feelings of nationalism, the transformation of the perception of foreign powers into a political tool by the government, and the pursuit of polarisation politics by making the opposition enemies, push the importance of the economic crisis towards the back of the list of concerns for the voters. The general elections that took place between 1980 and 2018 are examined and the economic voting behaviour is explored in this study, especially in terms of periodical developments in Turkish politics. It is obvious that the economic voting model was an important determinant on the Turkish voters in the elections until 2008. However, ideological factors, strong leadership analysis or other indicators have started to replace the economic voting model in Turkey with serious political changes after 2008. In this context, this study is aimed to make an important contribution by filling the gap in the literature on economic voting in Turkish politics.

**Keywords:** Economic Voting Behaviour, Turkey, AKP, Islamism, Nationalism

**Abstrak:** Bagi para pengundi, fenomena seperti meningkatnya perasaan nasionalisme, transformasi terhadap persepsi kuasa asing sebagai alat politik oleh kerajaan, dan mewujudkan polarisasi politik dengan mencipta pembangkang sebagai musuh, telah melemahkan kepentingan krisis ekonomi sebagai faktor penting dalam membuat keputusan mengundi. Makalah ini mengkaji keputusan pilihan raya umum antara 1980 dan 2018 dengan menganalisis tingkah laku pengundian ekonomi, khususnya dari segi perkembangan politik berkala di Turki. Jelas sekali bahawa model pengundian ekonomi merupakan penentu penting kepada pengundi Turki dalam pilihan raya sehingga 2008. Walau bagaimanapun, faktor ideologi, analisis kepimpinan yang kukuh atau penunjuk

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lain telah mula menggantikan model pengundian ekonomi di Turki dengan perubahan politik yang serius berlaku selepas 2008. Dalam konteks ini, kajian ini bertujuan untuk memberi sumbangan penting dengan mengisi kekosongan literatur mengenai pengundian ekonomi dalam politik Turki.

**Kata Kunci:** Tingkahlaku Pengundian Ekonomi, Turki, AKP, Islamisme, Nasionalisme

## Introduction

The role of free elections is crucial for democratic countries. In this study, the article presents a comparative analysis of economic voting behaviour through the example of Turkey. The first general elections of the Republic of Turkey were held in 1935, and the early Republican period witnessed a one-party state in Turkish politics. The first election in which more than one party participated was held in 1946. Studies on voting behaviour in Turkish political science literature have since focused on the transition to the multi-party system in Turkey.

The general elections that took place between 1980 and 2023 are examined and the economic voting behaviour is explored in this study, especially in terms of periodical developments in Turkish politics. It is obvious that the economic voting model was an important determinant on the Turkish voters in the elections until 2008. However, ideological factors, strong leadership analysis or other indicators have started to replace the economic voting model in Turkey with serious political changes and developments after 2008. In this context, this study aims to make an important contribution by filling the gap in the literature on economic voting in Turkish politics.

## Materials and Methods

The main methodology of this research is a qualitative document analysis based on secondary sources about economic voting behaviour in Turkish politics. Document analysis is a qualitative research method that involves the systematic examination and interpretation of various types of documents to gain insights and understanding about a particular phenomenon or research question. This method allows researchers to analyse existing texts, written or visual, to uncover patterns, themes, and meanings that contribute to the research inquiry. Document analysis is commonly used in social sciences, humanities, education, and other

fields to study historical events, organisational structures, policy documents, literature, and many other subjects (Bowen, 2009, pp. 27-28).

Qualitative research methods, including document analysis, are concerned with understanding the context, meanings, and interpretations of data rather than quantifying or measuring variables. Through document analysis, researchers aim to explore complex social and cultural phenomena, providing in-depth insights into individuals' perspectives, historical trends, and societal norms. The process of document analysis typically involves gathering relevant documents related to the research question or topic. Documents can include written texts, reports, policy papers, historical records, interviews, photographs, newspapers, and other visual or textual materials. Document analysis is a flexible and powerful qualitative method that allows researchers to explore various aspects of a research question. It can be used as a standalone approach or combined with other qualitative or quantitative methods to enrich the research process and provide comprehensive results (Sankofa, 2022).

At the same time, surveys conducted by IPSOS and KONDA research companies in Turkey before and after the elections have been an important data collection tool for this research. In particular, post-election surveys after the Turkish elections were examined and the reasons why the respondents voted were observed. As can be seen from these electoral surveys, the logic of voting behaviour based on economic reasons has declined in Turkish elections after 2008.

### **Voting Behaviour Models**

Apart from economic voting behaviour, there are other different schools and models of voting behaviour. The best known of these are the Columbia School and the Psychological approach. The Columbia school, which argues that people vote according to their social class, and the Psychological (Michigan) school, which argues that voters' preference according to their party affiliation, have been insufficient in some points. In particular, these two schools fail to explain why citizens vote for a different political party in the elections. Rational (economic) voting behaviour aims to explain this phenomenon.

The rational school argues the voter's decision precisely by considering economic variables. In this school, voters support the

political party that is closest to their goals and interests in every electoral period. In this theory, voters do not have a sense of political belonging like the Columbia or Psychological school. The only expectation of the voter is their rational thinking, i.e. the only goal of the voters is to obtain “material benefits” as a result of the election. In the rational school, voters support political candidates or parties that can meet their interests. If the voter’s political party fails to achieve this goal, they decide to support another political party in the next elections (Akgün, 2007, p. 89).

Similar to the Columbia school, the rational school attributes an instrumental approach to the elections. However, the action that emerges as a result of cost-benefit calculations is individual-centred in this school. Other schools and approaches like Michigan or Psychological Schools are the opposite of the rational school due to this reason. The basic criterion of the rational choice model is that voters stress government’s responsibility of economic policies. The electoral success of the ruling party in the upcoming elections is directly related to its economic performance in the past. If it has implemented an unsuccessful economic policy, its chances of electoral victory decrease in the elections (Ünal, 2010, pp. 101-108).

The most important work of the rational voting school is “An Economic Theory Of Democracy” written by Anthony Downs in 1957. In the study where economic models are applied to political science, election areas are likened to market areas. Theoretically, the relations between voters and political parties are clear and obvious. During the election process, political parties present their political propaganda to the voters. Voters choose the political party that can bring more benefits for them at the ballot box. In other words, like the supply-demand model in economics, this school focuses on the decision-making mechanism that occurs in the individual’s mind, as opposed to the external factors that make voting preferences (Ünal, 2010, pp. 101-105).

Cem Başlevent and Hasan Kirmanoğlu’s “Economic Voting in Turkey: Perceptions, Expectations, and Party Choice” (2015) explores the effects of economic data on voting behaviour. Beginning with a brief summary of 2001 economic developments, their study reviews the literature on the economic voting school in the Turkish context and then examines the likelihood of Turkish voters’ preference for the ruling

party, Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi-AKP). Their work uses micro data from pre-electoral surveys for the 2014 presidential elections. It provides strong evidence in favour of the idea that perceptions and expectations about the economy have a significant impact on party choice in terms of economic developments in Turkey. The findings suggest that the AKP government will remain in power for at least one more term after the 2015 elections due to the high rate of voters who are satisfied with the Turkish economy (Baslevant and Kirmanoglu, 2015).

### **Economic Voting Behaviour in Turkey in the 1980's**

As a result of the 12 September 1980 military coup, the activities of political parties were suspended in 1981. On 24 April 1983, the Political Parties Law was re-enacted together with the 1982 Constitution. In order for political parties to gain legal personality, they were required to publish their declaration of establishment according to Article 8 of the Political Parties Law of the 1982 Constitution. Parties that published their declaration of establishment could start their activities after 16 May 1983 (T.C. Official Gazette, 1983, p. 3).

Only three political parties participated in the general elections held on 6 November 1983 after the military authorised the elections. The centre-right was represented by the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi-ANAP) founded by Turgut Özal and the Nationalist Democracy Party (Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi-MDP) founded by retired General Turgut Sunalp, while the centre-left was represented by the Populist Party (Halkçı Parti-HP) headed by Necdet Calp, whose only qualification was to serve as İsmet İnönü's secretary (Ahmad, 2016, p. 260). Founded in 1983 by Özal, the Motherland Party won the general elections and became the ruling party in Turkish politics.

Özal was the most important figure in previous Süleyman Demirel's government in charge of economic policies and the chief architect of the 24 January 1980 decisions which changed the basic paradigm of Turkey's economy, springing it to life with a free-market economy approach taken before the 12 September 1980 coup. Özal was free to take any measure he saw fit «to correct the country's economic problems,» which meant floating prices to reduce inflation, restricting consumption by keeping wages low, increasing exports and bargaining with foreign

credit institutions to postpone foreign debt payments of around eighteen billion dollars (Ahmad, 2016, pp. 260-261).

The 24 January 1980 decisions were seen as a close cooperation by international banks such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and received positive reactions. In economic terms, the favourable atmosphere created by this cooperation enabled the restructuring of foreign debts and the establishment of a payment schedule under better conditions. This meant an influx of new resources for the Turkish economy. As a result, the ban on foreign exchange was lifted and the public sector's need for domestic inflationary financing was reduced compared to previous periods. It is obvious that these developments and the external support provided played an important role in ensuring macroeconomic stability (Pamuk, 2016, p. 297). The architect of the economic recovery until 1983 was Turgut Özal, the executor of the 24 January 1980 decisions. The voters supported ANAP in the 1983 elections instead of the other two political parties supported by the military forces. The 1983 elections were a strong example of the economic voting behaviour of the Turkish electorate.

On 6 September 1987, a referendum was held to lift the 5 to 10-year political bans imposed on politicians with the provisional Article 4 of the 1982 Constitution. As a result of the referendum, political bans were lifted (Çiftçi, 2018, p. 61). Thus, political leaders in political exile would be able to lead the parties they had founded. The 1988 general elections were brought forward by one year. Özal's decision to hold early elections made it difficult for ANAP to implement its economic agenda for the elections. In the 29 November 1987 elections, the ruling party ANAP led by Özal, the Social Democrat Populist Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti-SHP*) led by Erdal İnönü, and the True Path Party (*Doğruyol Partisi-DYP*) led by Demirel, whose political ban was lifted, managed to pass the election threshold. In the elections, ANAP won 292 parliamentary seats with 36.3%, SHP 99 parliamentary seats with 24.8% and DYP 59 parliamentary seats with 19.1%.

The economic policies implemented by Özal during his early years as prime minister brought many advantages after 1984. Since then, entrepreneurship and investments have increased with the opening to foreign markets. As the import substitution policy was replaced by

neo-liberal policies, foreign exchange was used for new investments. By the end of 1984, the share of industry in exports exceeded 70%. Turkey had begun to move from an agriculture-based economy to a high value-added, industrial exporting country. However, when the import substitution model that had dominated the Turkish economy for so many years was replaced by neo-liberal policies, the Turkish economy began to experience some problems due to its lack of industrialisation. The competitiveness of Turkish industry should be measured effectively when the economy was in a period of high inflation. In the name of liberalism, Turkish industry had started to partially implement automation and robotic technology with the idea of keeping up with the new breakthroughs. The introduction of automatics and robotics into small industries, which were not sufficiently specialised exacerbated the already problematic unemployment rate (Talas, 1993, pp. 4-6).

Structural problems started to increase the deficits in imports and current account transactions. The increase in current account deficits led to an increase in exchange rates and interest rates (Çelebi, 2013, pp. 160-161). In this period in Turkey, the population living in rural areas was marginalised; the call to boost agricultural development to increase the income of the rural population was ignored. In addition, with the 24 January 1980 decisions, the number of products supported in agriculture dropped from 24 in 1980 to 18 in 1985. With the 24 January 1980 decisions, the inflation rate was brought down to a certain level in the first years of the ANAP government, but the purchasing power started to decline with high inflation in the following years. Inflation led to an increase in the prices of essential consumption products and wages continuously declined as compared to high inflation rates between 1984 and 1988 (Şinasi et.al., 2008).

This negative perception in the Turkish economy first made itself felt in the 1987 elections. Although ANAP emerged as the first party in the elections, it lost votes compared to the previous elections. The main reaction of the electorate to the worsening economic situation was in the 1989 local elections. In these elections, ANAP received 22% of the votes across the country and lost many local governments. This again shows the impact of economic voting behaviour on the Turkish electorate in the 1980s. This phenomenon continued in the 1990's and it will be explored in the next part of this study.

### **Economic Voting Behaviour in Turkey in the 1990's**

After the 1989 local elections, ANAP prepared for the 1991 general elections with the Özal's presidency and an economic downturn in Turkey. Özal became the President in 1989 and Mesut Yılmaz was the chairman of ANAP before the 1991 election. With the above-mentioned situation, political parties put mergers or alliances among themselves on the agenda. In the 1991 general elections, the first political alliance was between the RP (*Refah Partisi*), the Nationalist Work Party (*Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi-MÇP*) and the IDP (*Islahatçı Demokrasi Partisi*); the second alliance was between the centre-left parties HEP and SHP; and the third and last alliance was between the Democratic Centre Party (*Demokratik Merkez Parti-DMP*), founded by some politicians who left ANAP and DYP in order to pass the electoral threshold and enter parliament (Yiğit, 2018, p. 121).

Polling results were inconclusive; ANAP – whose support had eroded steadily since the previous (1987) elections – lost its absolute parliamentary majority (ANAP received about %24 of total votes) while DYP, in line with opinion polls, increased its total. After inter-party negotiations on formation of a new Government, DYP and SHP signed a coalition pact on 19 November 1991. The Cabinet – with 11 SHP and 22 DYP members – was announced the next day, Demirel becoming Prime Minister once again and Erdal İnönü his Deputy.

After eight years of uninterrupted rule, ANAP lost huge support from voters and became the second largest party. The most important reason why ANAP lost so many votes and DYP emerged as the largest party was inflation and high unemployment rates caused by the 24 January 1980 decision. In addition, ANAP's lack of support for rural areas during its time in power and Demirel's use of this policy as election propaganda were effective in terms of rural votes. The Islamist RP, which allied itself with MÇP and IDP, together with SHP and DSP, which passed the 10% electoral threshold by a very small margin, had representatives in parliament. In the 1991 general elections, ANAP suffered humiliating loss.

Economic reasons were among the most important factors in turning the political conjuncture in favour of the DYP. Another important achievement was the rise of RP, which reached a significant potential and demonstrated this with the alliances it established. In addition to

the unfair distribution of income among the Turkish people, foreign and domestic borrowing led to a decline in purchasing power. These are the main reasons why the Turkish voters' preference changed from ANAP to the DYP and RP in the 1991 elections.

In the 1991 elections, one of the most important issues was the effect of economic indicators on the elections. As mentioned in the economic voting model, it is an important factor that the public wants to consider their own interests from an economic perspective. Based on this factor, election campaigns are the crucial factor that will be reflected in the election results. The DYP used this factor and conducted its election campaign by highlighting economic issues that affect the Turkish people. This dominant position of the economic voting model would be repeated in the 1995 general elections.

Before the 1995 general elections, important developments had taken place in Turkish political life. The IMF and the World Bank became decisive in the Turkish economy after the 1994 economic crisis. Following this development, on 6 March 1995, a Customs Union agreement was concluded with the EU. It is an arrangement whereby all customs and other restrictive practices in trade between participating countries are abolished. Theoretically, it aims to increase the volume of trade among member countries (McCormick, 2015, p. 387). This treaty partially tied the Turkish economy to the EU without giving any assurance of the former's full membership in the EU (Akdevelioğlu & Kürçüoğlu, 2010, p. 229). As a result, the influence of the US and the EU in the Turkish economy increased.

After the 1994 local elections, the RP (*Refah Partisi*) continued to rise as an alternative party to the government in opinion polls conducted before the 1995 general elections. Çiller and Yılmaz (DYP/ANAP), who entered the elections with strong leadership cadres and were in the centre, carried out propaganda activities targeting the political ideology of the party against the RP, which was in the periphery (Balci, 2007, p. 125). The RP focused on criticising the government and the system, used social democratic slogans, and carried out election propaganda that it defined as “*Adil Düzen*” (Just Order) in order to ensure opportunity and income justice. RP's political momentum in the 1990s began when it drew a border of anti-nationalism against the secular bloc, which it held responsible for the country's problems such as political corruption or bribery (Kalaylıoğlu, 2017, p. 86).

RP's electoral programme, which it called "*Adil Düzen*," was a propaganda tool created for the Turkish electorate and was completely interwoven with economic voting behaviour that had a very pronounced impact in this period. The adoption of the "free market regime" by the Turkish economy after the 24 January 1980 decisions pushed parties such as the DYP, ANAP, SHP and CHP to use free market arguments as propaganda in the elections. The post-1980 period of crises that emerged as a result of the antagonistic division emerged as an essential response to the crisis of the existing political structure (Kalaylıoğlu, 2017, p. 86). *Adil Düzen* was not just an election manifesto that included the economy. It was a total administrative order that encompassed political, economic, religious and social life (Ersin & Yıldırım, 2015, pp. 143-145). Economic voting behaviour, which is one of the most important characteristics of the Turkish electorate and which made itself felt especially in the 1990s, raised the RP to the first party position in the 1995 general elections. Voters evaluated the developments in the economy before the elections, whether good or bad, and as seen in many examples around the world, the economic-based voting factor was effective in Turkey. Considering the inability of the parties in power to find solutions to problems such as economy, inflation, unemployment and livelihood problems, voters withdrew a significant mass support to these political parties. There were "socio-economic" reasons behind the RP's rise to the position of the first party with the support of religious, conservative, nationalist and low- and middle-income voters who had been confined to the sidelines and excluded from economic and social life for many years. The electoral argument used was reflected in the election results and RP emerged from the elections with significant vote potential. In principle, the "*Adil Düzen*" promised that all citizens would have a fair income and that social justice would be ensured for all (Karagöl & Dama, 2015, pp. 2-4). In this period, RP aimed to unite the peripheral elements of capital and working classes with the slogan of "*Adil Düzen*."

In the elections held in the 1990s, the crises in the Turkish economy had a direct impact on voter preferences. The economic voting behaviour of the Turkish electorate was behind the rise of the Islamist RP in the 1990s. The last example of this situation would occur in the 2002 elections, and after the 2002 elections, the economic voting behaviour of the Turkish electorate would decrease. This phenomenon will be discussed in the next part.

### **The Collapse of Economic Voting Behaviour in Turkey in the 2000's**

The last elections in Turkish politics in which economic voting behaviour was clearly observed were the November 2002 elections. Established in 1999, the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition faced a major economic crisis, especially with the deterioration of macroeconomic stability. When the tripartite coalition came to power, the Turkish economy was involved in “globalisation efforts,” which led to difficult times. In 1999, the effects of the “stand-by” agreement with the IMF were visible in 2000 and 2001. The “state crisis” between President Sezer and Prime Minister Ecevit affected the Turkish economy. The crisis of 2001 was triggered by the 24 January 1980 decisions that had fully embraced foreign capital and demolished customs walls. The 2001 crisis was precisely the lack of “foreign exchange-hot money” in the Turkish economy. In 1989, the current account deficits caused by the hardening of capital markets had disrupted the inflow of “foreign exchange-hot money” (Çarkoğlu, 2002, p. 125).

On 14 April 2001, the new IMF-financed economic stabilisation programme was announced to the public by Kemal Derviş who was appointed by Ecevit and his government for resolving the economic crisis. The programme was described as a “transition to a strong economy” and included the enactment of 15 laws. Immediately after the programme was announced, Turkey and the IMF signed the 18th “stand-by” agreement. The attitude towards the coalition government during the crisis was different from other economic crises. In the 2000-2001 crisis, there were violent demonstrations, and tradesmen or artisans were directly involved in the demonstrations. The main agenda item of the state was replaced by the economy instead of “security and politics.” As the main agenda of the summits held at the state focused on the economy, the military and judicial bureaucracy, which prioritised the statist economy, experienced a change of mind (Tuncel, 2010, p.175).

The demonstrations during this period directly affected the upcoming general elections. With the economic crisis in the country and the deteriorating health of Ecevit, the prime minister of the coalition government, discussions on early elections began. Upon these developments, MHP's leader Devlet Bahçeli found a solution to the

discussions about early elections. The date of the early elections was set for 3 November 2002.

The previous coalition government received 52.98% of the votes in the 1999 general election (DSP 22%, MHP 17.98%, ANAP 13%). In the 2002 elections, the total vote share of the coalition partners DSP, MHP and ANAP was 14.47%. When both elections are compared, the coalition partners lost a total of 38.51% of the votes. The main reason for this loss was the economic crisis in 2001. On the other hand, the AKP, which reacted harshly to the economic crisis and was founded after the division in the *Milli Görüş* Movement, was the winner of the elections. The AKP was established in 2001 and won the elections in November 2002, with a winning coalition that included both domestic and external supporters such as European countries and the United States, liberal intellectuals within the country, moderate Islamist groups like the Fethullah Gülen Movement, conservative citizens of Turkish society – as their votes significantly influence who is elected – centre-right voters, faith-based non-profit organisations, Western-style business institutions like TÜSİAD (*Türk Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*) and conservative business interests among many others (like MÜSİAD) when the party first assumed power in 2002. An analysis of the AKP's broad winning coalition also reveals the support of important representatives of the economic sector. This is another indication of the validity of economic voting behaviour, especially when the AKP came to power (Ezikoğlu, 2021).

In all elections held after 2002, which allowed the AKP to survive in Turkish political life, economic voting behaviour weakened and different reasons for voting emerged. Leaders or political parties consolidated their power by minimising their winning coalition against threats to their survival. AKP has faced two significant threats: the 2007 military coup attempt and the 2008 closure trial. After surviving these threats, the AKP chose to consolidate its power by fighting against secular Kemalist elites. This phenomenon affected the 2007 election and AKP increased its votes up to 47 percent in this election.

During its second and third terms, the AKP broke that broad voting coalition from its founding philosophy and eliminated its partners one by one. The distinguishing feature of these coalition partners is that they defined themselves as specifically secular. As the tension with

the secularists grew from 2007, the AKP had to assume policies that were more populist to retain the large nominal electorate. Hence, the impending question is, how did the AKP gain the support of the majority of voters? At this point, the AKP carried out a populist strategy between secular and conservative citizens in Turkey and consolidated the support of conservative voters between 2011 and 2014 (Ezikoğlu, 2021).

After the 2014 presidential elections, the AKP and Erdogan's policy line evolved into a new way. With these elections, Erdogan was convinced that the Kurdish movement and the Fethullah Gülen Movement could become a threat to his political survival. The AKP government needed a new paradigm to put this struggle into political expediency to console the electoral base and increase its votes in the elections (Ezikoğlu, 2016). At this point, Turkish nationalism, which started to rise in the Kurdish peace process, will seek help from the AKP and Erdogan. In the Erdogan leadership of the AKP government, the effort to combine Islamism and nationalism will also be one of the independent variables to explore the survival of the AKP. As can be seen, there are many factors other than the economy that contributed to the AKP's increased voting potential. On the other hand, there is a positive correlation between the deterioration of economic data and the increasing trend of AKP's votes in Turkish elections.

Leaders or ruling parties should redistribute wealth to maintain their supporter base and should pay their followers just enough to support them. Although there is an increase in poor people from the lower-classes in Turkey, these people have continued to support Erdoğan's leadership.

Even though Turkey's \$800 billion economy is among the 20 biggest in the world, the IMF recently warned that it is not built on a sustainable model and remains too vulnerable to dangers outside its borders. Likewise, Standard & Poor's noted that the boom in consumer credit had become a serious risk for Turkish leaders. Turkey, which has one of the biggest current-account deficits in the world— 7.9%% of GDP in 2013— was particularly vulnerable. By way of comparison, the current account deficit of South Africa is 5.3%% of GDP, Brazil is 3.6%% of GDP, Indonesia is 3.3%% of GDP, and India is 2.6% of GDP (Eligür 2014, pp. 174-175).

Despite poor economic performance, AKP and Erdogan seemed to receive approval from the electorate. Eligür (2014) opines:

However, this worsening economic picture led to an increase in support for the AKP government. Gallup surveys show that many poor Turks have seen improvements in their living standards under Erdogan's watch, a likely factor in his high popularity among this group. While living standards in Turkey have generally improved since 2008 thanks to a quick recovery after the global economic crisis, the poorest 20% of Turks are particularly likely to have grown more satisfied with their living standards—possibly related to considerable spending on social assistance programmes under Erdogan's AKP government. In 2008, 28% of the poorest Turks were satisfied with their standard of living, rising to 48% in 2014 (2014, p. 175).

People who could not find a job and whose living standards were dropping voted AKP in the elections. One of the cases of this phenomenon was the March 2014 local elections. Deniz Derviş who volunteered as a ballot monitor in Okmeydanı for the 30 March 2014 local election reported:

I volunteered as a monitor in Okmeydanı (a poor, mixed district of Istanbul). The ballot box I monitored had 120 AKP votes, 95 CHP (main opposition) and 53 HDP (leftist, pro-Kurdish opposition). Yes, there may well have been vote rigging during these elections, in particular in Ankara. But I don't think the total rigged votes could exceed 1% for the whole country. So, we are faced with economic problems with Gezi and the 17 December corruption tapes but at least 40% of people are still happy with the AKP. We should also note that the voter-turnout was 90%, whereas it was 85% in 2009 (Derviş, 2014).

In explaining this phenomenon, Tillman (2014) writes:

Data from an exit poll conducted during the 30 March 2014 local elections demonstrates a negative relationship between income and support for the AKP. Those in the lowest income group (less than 700 Turkish Lira per month) voted AKP over the CHP by a 42% to 18% margin. However, 40% of those in the highest income bracket (more than 3,000 Turkish Lira per month) voted for the CHP, compared to 30% for the AKP (Tillman 2014, p. 4).

A similar example was the 2018 general elections, when the Turkish economy was about to experience a serious crisis. Ezikoglu states that:

An ongoing steep fall in the value of the Turkish lira, coupled with warnings of an overheating economy and a widening current account deficit, threaten the popularity of the AKP, which has often banked on a healthy and growing economy as a key element of its popular strength (2021).

In February 2018, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned Turkey about its increased vulnerabilities, such as large external financing needs, limited foreign exchange reserves, increased reliance on short-term capital inflows, and high corporate exposure to foreign exchange risk (IMF, 2018).

Despite these negative developments in the Turkish economy, it was observed that voters voted according to the rise of nationalist ideology rather than economic voting behaviour. Ezikoglu points out that:

This nationalist sentiment, which AKP and leader Erdogan focused on, was not only campaigned during the elections but was also turned into an electoral coalition with the MHP. The amendments to the electoral law that the government rushed through Parliament only one month prior to the elections allowed political parties to band together – a move by the AKP designed to circumvent the 10 per cent electoral threshold for its ally MHP and retain the parliamentary majority as a bloc. This plan would be successful in the June 2018 Elections. The winners of this election were Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the Justice and Development Party. Thus, by obtaining 52.5 per cent of the vote, Erdoğan became the first President under the new system, while the AK Party received 42.6 per cent of the vote and obtained 295 seats in the parliament (2021).

Altun (2018) claims that, “under the leadership of Erdoğan, by forming the People’s Alliance (Cumhur İttifakı) with the Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP), the AKP laid the way for a strong parliamentary coalition” (pp. 89-103).

## **Conclusion**

The main argument of this research is the erosion of economic voting behaviour in Turkey. Accordingly, in the first phase of the study, elections

in the 1980s and 1990s and voting behaviour in these elections were analysed. As a result of these analyses, economic indicators are behind the rise of ANAP in the 1980s and RP in the 1990s. Both of these parties came to power by turning the economic crises that preceded them to their favour. In these periods, the parties or actors held responsible for the crisis could not hold on to the political arena.

The AKP's rise to power in the early 2000s was similar. However, in the elections that followed, it is observed that economic voting behaviour started to lose its relevance in Turkish politics. The final part of this study attempted to explore this phenomenon. Despite the recent economic crisis and with inflation soaring, the 2023 election results demonstrated that the AKP government has not suffered a serious loss of votes.

Before the 6 February 2003 earthquake that hit 10 provinces in Turkey, polls showed that the AKP government's share of the vote in the parliamentary elections was between 35% and 40%. The observation that the People's Alliance could win a majority in parliament with the votes of the MHP, another partner of the People's Alliance, shows the magnitude of the erosion of economic voting behaviour. For the voters, phenomena such as increasing feelings of nationalism, the transformation of the perception of foreign powers into a political tool by the government, and the pursuit of polarisation politics by antagonising the opposition push the importance of the economic crisis for the voters towards the back of the list. This phenomenon confirms the main argument of this study although there were many studies in the literature that economic voting behaviour could end the AKP rule before the 2023 elections.

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# Challenges of ‘*Awrah* Coverage for Muslim Women Athletes in Malaysia: A Qualitative Review

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**Abstract:** *Sharī‘ah* law provides a specific ruling that requires every Muslim to cover his/her ‘*awrah*. The prohibition of disclosing ‘*awrah* is derived from the Qur’an and practices of Prophet Muhammad and his companions. Nevertheless, covering ‘*awrah* is difficult for women, especially when it comes to involvement in sports activities or competitions. Based on a qualitative research method that uses observation and document analysis, this study explores the challenges related to ‘*awrah* faced by Muslim female athletes in Malaysia. There are several issues regarding the ‘*awrah* of Muslim female athletes, which include the non-*Sharī‘ah* compliant attire that Muslim female athletes are made to wear for certain competitions. Other issues are the mingling in coaching sessions between different genders, and the suitability for Muslim women to participate in competitions as well as the lack of enforcement of *Sharī‘ah*-compliant dress code.

**Keywords:** *Sharī‘ah*, athlete, Muslim, sports, ‘*awrah*.

**Abstrak:** Syariah telah memberikan ketetapan khusus berkenaan cara berpakaian yang mewajibkan setiap Muslim untuk menutup aurat. Larangan mendedahkan aurat boleh didapati dalam al-Qur’an dan amalan Nabi

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Muhammad dan para sahabatnya. Namun begitu, menutup aurat bukanlah sesuatu yang mudah bagi setiap Muslim, khususnya wanita, apabila melibatkan aktiviti bersukan atau pertandingan. Berdasarkan kaedah kualitatif yang menggunakan kaedah pemerhatian dan analisis dokumen, kajian ini berpandangan bahawa terdapat cabaran dalam kalangan atlet wanita Islam di Malaysia yang berkaitan dengan aurat. Sehubungan dengan itu, terdapat beberapa isu mengenai aurat atlet wanita Islam, termasuk pakaian tidak patuh Syariah yang perlu dipakai oleh atlet wanita Islam untuk pertandingan tertentu. Selain itu, terdapat isu berkenaan sesi latihan bersama jurulatih antara jantina yang berbeza, dan kesesuaian untuk wanita Islam menyertai pertandingan serta kekurangan penguatkuasaan etika berpakaian Syariah.

**Kata kunci:** Syariah, atlet, Muslim, sukan, aurat.

## Introduction

Covering *'awrah* is a *Sharī'ah* directive that is commanded in both the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. It is a part of *'ibadah* for every Muslim. Therefore, it becomes a responsibility for every Muslim to ensure that certain parts of their body are covered according to the *Sharī'ah*. However, the observance of *'awrah* can be difficult, especially for women. This is because some of them face several challenges when it comes to career selection that requires a dress code that does not comply with the *Sharī'ah*. The *'awrah* issue is also critically embraced by some Muslim women who are involved in the sports industry. This is due to some regulations established by sports' authorities that do not consider their status of being Muslim, especially in the code of attire. Consequently, there is only a limited number of Muslim female athletes joining competitions at domestic and international levels.

Generally, Islam does not prohibit women from joining any sport competitions as long as their participation is aligned with *Sharī'ah* principles. One of the principles is to ensure the compliance with *'awrah* rules. However, some of the sports competed by athletes seem to be not appropriate, such as swimming and gymnastics, since the sports attire clearly contravenes *Sharī'ah*. In response, Islamic authority agencies have set several guidelines for those who are involved in sports industry. By having an in-depth analysis on the guidelines, this study analyses them and proposes some minor additional suggestions to close the gap in the guidelines.

Women in Malaysia face no significant barriers when it comes to participating in sports, including high-level competitions such as the Olympics. The country generally supports and encourages women's involvement in the sports industry. Fitri et al. (2017) stated that badminton is the most popular sport that has the most participation of Muslim women, followed by swimming, athletic, netball, tennis, volleyball, cycling, futsal, and table tennis.

Qureshi & Ghouri (2011) found that Muslim female athletes have experienced certain challenges when they participate in sports tournament. According to their survey, very few girls can take their enthusiasm for sports to the top level due to legal prohibitions, social stigmas, and limited opportunities available. Because of this challenge, they agreed that Muslim female athletes should have separate prayer room and washroom. Another obstacle for Muslim female athletes is the absence of female coaches and organisers in the Muslim nations. In the absence of female officials, parents are usually reluctant to allow their girls to participate in sports competition in a male-dominated environment. Other than that, transport facility could also be a challenge. According to the authors, most of the girls may not have access to transport and they are reluctant to use public transportation to go to training sessions in the evening as their parents have reservations over them taking this mode of transportation. The study also regarded 'awrah as a barrier for Muslim female athletes.

Some people argue that the practice of covering 'awrah or wearing *hijāb* constrains women's opportunities for self-fulfilment. Western feminists view *hijāb* as the ultimate symbol of female oppression (Harkness & Islam, 2011). Nevertheless, despite criticisms, it does not stop the growth in participation of Muslim women in the sports industry, which subsequently results in an increased demand for the production of *Sharī'ah*-compliant attire. This can be seen in the Muslim women's involvement in sports at high-level competitions in Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, as well as Indonesia and Malaysia.

In Malaysia, religious authorities are standardising and publishing guidelines to govern the conduct of Muslim athletes' attire. These guidelines encompass various aspects of sports and competitions. For example, "*Garis Panduan Bersukan Menurut Perspektif Islam*," compiled by Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM)

covers several areas of sports and competitions with a particular focus on addressing the *'awrah* limitations for Muslim female athletes, as well as the consideration of coaching staff, training, and the sports themselves. Apart from JAKIM, other states such as Selangor, Terengganu, Kelantan, and Pahang also introduced their own sports and competition guidelines.

Although the guidelines have been published and are publicly accessible, the enforcement is disappointing. There are Muslim female athletes who choose not to cover their *'awrah* in sport competitions. Unlike Terengganu that enforced its *Sharī'ah*-based dress code, the Federal government leaves sport regulations to the respective sport bodies. Astro Awani (2019) reports that following Terengganu's decision to enforce the *Sharī'ah* dress code, the Ministry of Youth and Sports threw its support to Muslim gymnasts from Terengganu who could not participate in national competition. The federal government allows female athletes to make their own choice whether to participate or withdraw from the game, while the Terengganu authority decided to withdraw Muslim female athletes from competing in gymnastics competition.

### **The Terminology of *'Awrah***

The word *'awrah* is from Arabic. It can literally be understood as shame, disgrace, ignominy, degradation, weakness, and vice (Arabic Lexicon). In another word, it is also described as misbehaviour (Al-Mausu'ah al-Fiqhiah, 1990). The basis of prescription of the *'awrah* is described in the Holy Qur'an. In Surah al-Aḥzāb, the word *'awrah* was mentioned by referring to the case of the Companions whose houses were unprotected even though they were unexposed. The story was described in the Holy Qur'an: "And when a faction of them said, "O people of Yathrib, there is no stability for you [here], so return [home]." And a party of them asked permission of the Prophet, saying, "Indeed, our houses are unprotected," while they were not exposed. They did not intend except to flee" (Al-Aḥzāb, 33: 13).

Surah al-Nūr addresses the "*'awrah* times" that people usually use to rest, and mentions that the most private times are before *fajr*, at noon and after *'isha*. The Holy Qur'an mentions: "O you who have believed, let those whom your right hands possess and those who have not [yet] reached puberty among you ask permission of you [before entering]

at three times: before the dawn prayer and when you put aside your clothing [for rest] at noon and after the night prayer. [These are] three times of privacy for you.” (Al-Nūr, 24: 58)

In Islamic law, the word 'awrah is technically defined as body parts that cannot be exposed to people (al-Qurtubi, 2014, 190 & Shams al-Din al-Ramli, 1984, 7). Muslim jurists agreed on the prohibition of exposing 'awrah based on factors of age, gender, and status (Al-Mausu'ah al-Fiqhiah, 1990, 43) Hence, Muslims are not allowed to expose any part of their body regardless of men or women, except what is permissible, according to *Shari'ah*.

### **Shari'ah Standards for 'Awrah of Muslim Women**

#### ***The Muslim Women's 'Awrah Limitation***

There is a consensus among Muslim scholars regarding the obligation of covering 'awrah for every Muslim women who fulfilled all requirements set by *Shari'ah*. However, they differ in specifying the parts that *Shari'ah* does not consider as 'awrah.

The basis of disputes among scholars lies in interpreting several textual revelations from the Holy Qur'an. For instance, in Surah al-Nur, verse 31: "...and to not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears," Ḥanafī scholars interpret the "necessarily" parts as including the face, hands, and feet (al-Jassas, 2010). They base this on the requirements during prayer, where the face, hands, and feet must be visible. However, some argue that the feet should be considered 'awrah (al-Jassas, 2010).

The Mālikī school agrees that the 'awrah for Muslim women includes all body parts except for their hands and faces. This interpretation is supported by a saying of Prophet Muhammad: "If a woman has reached puberty, it is prohibited for her to expose her private parts except for her face and hands" (Al-Tabari, 2012). Additionally, Prophet Muhammad permitted a man intending to marry a woman to see her face and palm (Abu Daud, 12: 2082; Al-Mawardi, 1999). This view is also backed by Ibn 'Abbās's commentary on the verse, suggesting that exposing the face and hands is permissible for Muslim women (Zarzur, n.d), as they do not cover these parts during prayers and iḥrām (Zarzur, n.d).

Within the Mālikī school, there is a specific interpretation regarding which part of the hands women can expose. Al-Kharashī (n.d) states that the hand's *'awrah* includes the wrist, meaning only the palm can be exposed. However, some Mālikī scholars disagree, arguing that the elbow is not part of the *'awrah* (Ishāq, 2005). This interpretation is also supported by the Prophet Muhammad's saying and Ibn 'Abbās's commentary (Al-Tabari, 2012; Zarzur, n.d).

Shāfi'ī scholars assert that Muslim women have two distinct categories of *'awrah* coverage. The first, known as *al-'awrah al-kubrā*, pertains to intimate parts that must be covered during prayers and interactions with unrelated men or hermaphrodites. The second category, *al-'awrah al-ṣuḡhrā*, includes the area between the navel and the knees, applicable when women interact with other Muslim women or relatives (al-Mawardi, 1999).

The Ḥanbalī school has varying views on *'awrah* coverage for Muslim women. Some Ḥanbalī scholars consider the entire body as *'awrah* except for the face (Ibn Qudamah, 2010). However, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal leans towards excluding the face from *'awrah* coverage (Al-Zarkashi, 1993). Abū al-Barakat, another Ḥanbalī scholar, includes the face and hands in the exclusion, based on 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas's interpretation of Surah al-Nur: 31, which he believes to mean the face and hands are not *'awrah* (Al-Zarkashi, 1993).

### **The Muslim Women's *'Awrah* in Public**

#### *The 'awrah of Muslim woman in front of other women*

The term "*nisā' ihinna*" or "their sisters" in Surah al-Nūr: 31 prescribes the boundaries of a woman's *'awrah* when she is among other Muslim women. Ibn Kathīr emphasised that women should still cover their *'awrah* in the presence of their Muslim relatives (Ibn Kathir, 1999). A ḥadīth from the Prophet prohibits Muslims from viewing the *'awrah* of others, stating: "a man should not see the *'awrah* of another man, and a woman should not see the *'awrah* of another woman" (Muslim, 3: 338). In line with this, most scholars from the Hanafī (Ibn 'Abidin, n.d.), Mālikī (al-Ru'yani, 1992), Shāfi'ī (Al-Mawardi, 1990), and Ḥanbalī (Ibn Qudamah, 2010) schools of thought concur that the *'awrah* of a Muslim woman in front of her Muslim female relatives extends from the navel to the knees.

*The 'awrah of Muslim woman in front of non-Muslim women*

Muslim scholars exhibit divergent views regarding the extent of 'awrah coverage for Muslim women in the presence of non-Muslim women. Some scholars contend that a Muslim woman should conceal her entire body, except what is necessary for daily activities and household chores, when interacting with non-Muslim women (*al-ashghal al-manziliyah*) (Ibn 'Abidin, n.d.; al-Zuḥayli, n.d.). This concept, referred to as *al-'awrah al-sughrā*, allows the exposure of hair, feet, and hands in such contexts.

Moreover, al-Fatāwa al-Hindiah (n.d.) asserts that there is no distinction in defining 'awrah in front of non-believers, which includes polytheists and People of the Book (*ahlu al-kitāb*). They interpret the term "*nisā'ihinna*" or "their sisters" in the Quranic verse as pertaining specifically to individuals of the same faith. Consequently, they argue that religious differences serve as a barrier for Muslim women to expose their 'awrah to non-Muslim women. Supporting this view, it is recorded that 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb instructed Abū 'Ubaydah to prevent Muslim and non-Muslim women from using the lavatory together to ensure that Muslim women cover their 'awrah (Al-Tabari, 2012).

Conversely, scholars from the Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shafī'ī, and Ḥanbalī schools of thought maintain that the 'awrah of Muslim women in front of non-Muslim women is limited to the area between the navel and the knees (Al-Sarakhsī, 1993; Ibn al-'Arabī, 2003; Al-Mawardī, 1993; Ibn Qudāmah, 2010). They base this perspective on a general interpretation of the same Quranic verse (24:31), arguing that there is no specific evidence to restrict the verse's meaning. Thus, they assert that the regulation applies equally to all women, regardless of their faith. Al-Sarakhsī (1993) likened a woman observing another woman to a man observing another man in terms of legal provision. Furthermore, they interpret 'Umar's statement as reflecting the separation of authority (*wilāyah*) between believers and non-believers, as clarified by Ibn 'Abbās (Ibn Kathir, 1999). Al-Māwardī (1993) also emphasised that interaction with non-Muslim women necessitates covering only the area between the navel and the knees, known as *al-'awrah al-ṣughrā*.

In contemporary times, where interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim women are often unavoidable, 'Abd al-Karīm Zaydān (2014) suggested that Muslim women might consider revealing certain

parts of their bodies, provided it does not lead to harm or defamation. Similarly, Ibn Bāz argued that Muslim women need only to cover between the navel and the knees when interacting with non-Muslim women. He also pointed out that the predominant opinion disallows uncovering the body except for the face and hands (<https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/956/>). Uthmān al-Khamīs (n.d.) clarified that Muslim exegetes interpreted Quranic verse 21:32 as inclusive of all women, including non-Muslims. Consequently, Al-Alūsī (1995) regarded this guidance as recommendatory rather than obligatory, allowing Muslim women the option to either reveal or cover specific body parts. The Office of the Federal Territory Mufti also highlighted the necessity of considering contemporary circumstances, as interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims today differ from those in the past.

### **Sports from the Islamic Perspective**

In Islam, there are no inherent restrictions on Muslims engaging in physical activities. Any pursuit that promotes physical well-being is actively encouraged within Islamic teachings. The maintenance of health and adoption of healthy practices are deemed essential, requiring adherence to proper conduct and beneficial habits (Marwat et al., 2014). Attaining a healthy body is regarded as fulfilling a duty in Islam, reflecting how Muslims should care for their bodies and honour their physical well-being, as exemplified by the ḥadīth where Prophet Muhammad endorsed Salmān al-Fārisī's advice on this matter (Al-Bukhari, 3:75).

Beyond the belief in monotheism, the pillars of Islamic faith encompass rituals that express and reaffirm devotion to God, while the *Sharī'ah* also emphasises social responsibilities alongside spiritual obligations (Haifa Jawad et al., 2012; Alberto Testa, 2015). Prophet Muhammad did not oppose his companions seeking leisure activities, affirming the balance between worldly engagements and religious duties, as conveyed through the incidents involving Hanzalah and Abū Bakr (Muslim, 50: 2750).

While the primary acts of worship in Islam such as prayer, *zakāt*, fasting, and hajj are traditionally seen as avenues for earning spiritual rewards, the concept of *'ibādah* (worship) extends to broader realms, including sports. When sports activities are conducted in accordance with Islamic principles, serving a righteous purpose, adhering to

regulations, promoting well-being, sustaining familial obligations, and maintaining modesty, they are considered acts of worship and merit spiritual rewards (Abd Rahim et al., 2019).

During the time of Prophet Muhammad, companions actively participated in sports under his encouragement and guidance. Archery, for instance, was notably promoted as a means of self-defence and skill development (Oktay Kizar, 2018). The Prophet's own engagement in physical activities, observed by his companions, highlighted his physical prowess and active lifestyle, affirming the importance of maintaining physical health and agility (Al-Tirmidhi, 49: 3648). Additionally, equestrian sports were endorsed by Prophet Muhammad as beneficial endeavours, particularly in contexts related to jihad (Oktay Kizar, 2018). This encouragement aimed not only to strengthen physical capabilities but also to instil discipline and strategic skills among his followers (Al-Bukhari, 56: 2852).

In sum, Islam promotes a holistic approach to human well-being, integrating physical activities like sports into the concept of '*ibādah*', thereby ensuring a balanced life that addresses both material and spiritual needs. This comprehensive perspective underscores Islam's commitment to enhancing human welfare through diverse avenues of engagement and worship (Abd Rahim et al., 2019).

### **The Participation of Women in the Sports Industry**

Previous scholarly works by Western researchers often depicted Muslim women as submissive, passive, and oppressed, while characterising Muslim societies as obstructive to development and oppressive towards women (Radzi & Abdullah, 2010). However, contemporary discourse in Malaysia highlights a growing emphasis on women's participation in sports as a means to foster empowerment. Astro Awani (2019) notes the current initiative to narrow the gender gap in sports participation, which has seen a decline among women. Radzi and Abdullah (2010) emphasise that women's sports issues have gained prominence on the global agenda for women's emancipation and empowerment.

Engagement in sports motivates women to showcase their abilities and talents competitively, as argued by Ani Mazlina Dewi Mohamed et al. (2009). Prominent Malaysian female athletes such as Farah Ann Abdullah, Nur Dhabitah, and others in gymnastics, diving, shooting,

netball, and bowling have elevated Malaysia's profile internationally (Zamri & Salleh, 2019).

In Malaysia, sports have garnered interest and active participation from Muslim women, with badminton being particularly popular due to its cultural significance in both Malaysia and Indonesia (Fitri et al., 2017). The Malaysian government supports women's sports development by providing facilities and funding, aiming to diversify success in sports traditionally dominated by men like football and rugby (Berita Harian, 2019).

Despite progress in education, Malaysia still faces gender disparities, as evidenced by its rank in the Global Gender Gap Index (Khoo & Zainal Abidin, 2021). The Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia acknowledges the role of sports in promoting women's health and well-being, combating non-communicable diseases like high blood pressure and obesity (Ministry of Youth and Sports).

From an Islamic perspective, Islam recognises the importance of physical health and movement, supporting sports as beneficial both physically and spiritually (Radzi & Abdullah, 2010; Kamali, 2017). While Islamic principles do not explicitly address sports, they generally permit physical activities as long as they maintain dignity and uphold Islamic values (Fitri et al., 2017). Thus, sports serve as a means for Muslim women to engage in healthy recreational activities while adhering to Islamic guidelines.

### **The Main Challenges for Muslim Female Athletes**

Despite the legal acceptance of women participating in sports and pursuing careers as professional athletes, they encounter significant challenges, particularly concerning the concept of *'awrah*. Certain sports necessitate specific attire tailored to their requirements, reflecting the diverse nature of athletic disciplines. Proper sports attire is essential not only for enhancing performance and preventing injuries but also for ensuring comfort, as noted in a report by Harian Metro (2016).

Modern advancements in sports science have led to the development of specialised attire, such as compression garments, designed to reduce injury risk and support muscle function during training and competition. However, these advancements can present obstacles for Muslim women

due to their modesty requirements. Issues arise when standard sports attire does not align with Islamic principles, affecting participation in sports like rhythmic gymnastics and women's gymnastics, as reported by Free Malaysia Today (2019).

Another challenge faced by Muslim female athletes is the underrepresentation of female trainers in coaching staff, as discussed by Qureshi & Ghouri (2011). The presence of male coaches can pose difficulties as it requires adherence to *'awrah* guidelines and ethical considerations during physical interaction and training sessions. These guidelines, alongside other ethical considerations, become particularly important during physical interaction and training sessions, where close contact and specific instructions might be required. The presence of male coaches in such contexts can lead to discomfort and potential barriers for Muslim female athletes, impacting their performance and overall experience in sports.

Furthermore, not all sports are suitable for Muslim women due to attire requirements that conflict with *Shari'ah* standards of modesty. Sports such as swimming, gymnastics, and springboard diving often mandate attire that may not align with these standards. These requirements can pose challenges for Muslim women who wish to participate in such sports while adhering to their religious beliefs, which emphasise modesty and the covering of the body. Consequently, finding appropriate sportswear that meets both the demands of the sport and religious guidelines can be a significant concern for many Muslim women athletes.

Media coverage also poses challenges, particularly when male audiences are involved, as it can conflict with *'awrah* norms. According to the *Shari'ah*, Muslim women are required to maintain modesty in the presence of unrelated males, as emphasised in the Qur'an (21:30). Thus, media interactions and public exposure during sports events can become complex issues for Muslim female athletes.

In summary, while women have legal rights to participate in sports and pursue athletic careers, the challenges stemming from attire requirements, coaching dynamics, and media exposure present significant hurdles, particularly in adhering to modesty standards dictated by Islamic principles.

## **Analysing the Existing Guidelines for Muslim Female Athletes: A Move Towards Progress**

Despite the prohibition, some states, such as Terengganu, Kelantan (UPNK Kelantan), and Pahang ([www.pahang.gov.my](http://www.pahang.gov.my)), have supported efforts to standardise Shari‘ah-compliant attire for athletes. JAKIM has also developed guidelines for sports participation (<https://www.islam.gov.my/ms/garis-panduan/478-garis-panduan-bersukan-menurut-perspektif-islam>). These guidelines, outlined in sections 7, 8, and 10, advise Muslim athletes on appropriate attire and behaviour.

Section 7 specifies that female athletes should wear long-sleeved shirts, full-length pants, and cover their hair and neck, opting for loose-fitting garments that do not reveal the body. Section 8 emphasises gender segregation in tournament areas, recommending separate facilities for male and female athletes such as sprint tracks, gymnasias, and swimming pools, or scheduled usage if separation is not feasible. Section 10 encourages female athletes to participate in sports suitable for their gender while promoting respectful conduct.

The “*Seminar Pemakaian Atlet Sukan Patuh Syariah Peringkat Negeri Pahang*,” held on January 21-22, 2020, established guidelines aligning athletes’ attire with Islamic principles in its resolutions. These guidelines require attire that covers the ‘*awrah*, fits loosely, and avoids revealing body shape or skin tone. The resolution also addresses the issue of tight-fitting sportswear, permitting its use by athletes.

The resolution classifies sports into three distinct categories according to their conformity with *Sharī‘ah* dress codes. The first category includes sports such as *silat*, *tae kwon do*, and archery, which inherently align with *Sharī‘ah*-compliant attire without requiring significant modifications. The second category comprises sports like football and badminton, which are somewhat less accommodating to *Sharī‘ah* dress codes, but still offer potential for adaptation with some efforts. Finally, the third category encompasses sports like swimming and gymnastics, which currently pose greater challenges to compliance, yet can achieve conformity through specific adjustments and tailored attire modifications.

However, challenges arise for athletes in sports like swimming, running, gymnastics, and cycling, where specific attire requirements

may conflict with *Shari'ah* standards. While some garments may cover 'awrah, tight materials can still reveal body shape, which contradicts *Shari'ah* requirements for loose attire (Al-Nawawi, 2010). The involvement of female coaching staff remains limited, complicating adherence to *Shari'ah* guidelines. To mitigate exposure risks, athletes are advised to wear outer clothing over sports leggings, preferably in dark colours to avoid confusion with skin tones.

In addition to this, the guidelines also do not provide clear instructions on how media and broadcasters should cover sports events in accordance with *Shari'ah*. Islamic teachings stress modest interactions between men and women, advocating for lowering gaze and minimising unnecessary visual contact.

Enforcement of existing guidelines remains inconsistent, with authorities yet to reach consensus on accommodating Muslim female athletes in certain events. It is incumbent upon Muslim athletes to abstain from events that do not meet *Shari'ah* standards, prioritising obedience to religious principles. International sports bodies could foster inclusivity by permitting athletes to compete in attire aligned with their faith, thus supporting Muslim values on a global scale.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the discussion, it can be inferred that the active involvement of Muslim women in Malaysia's sports sector faces significant challenges. The main issue revolves around 'awrah coverage, which concerns the extent of body covering according to Islamic traditions. This poses a major hurdle as certain sports require attire that does not align with *Shari'ah* standards. Consequently, many Muslim female athletes encounter obstacles in fully realising their potential. The strict dress regulations mandating comprehensive 'awrah coverage create difficulties for these athletes.

To empower Muslim female athletes, effective collaboration among all stakeholders is crucial. It is important to reevaluate the impact of dress codes on performance, considering their effectiveness and adherence to Islamic principles, and how these factors affect athletes psychologically and in terms of performance metrics. Additionally, authorities, particularly JAKIM, should compare dress codes across different sports since each sport has unique attire standards related to its

events. Some sports may pose challenges for Muslim female athletes due to attire requirements conflicting with *Sharī'ah* guidelines, exacerbated by media coverage that sometimes demands revealing attire.

Moreover, the enforcement of guidelines lacks consistency and inclusivity among authorities, leading to varied stances on Muslim women's participation in sports that may contradict their religious obligations. Authorities should take decisive action to address these issues as frontline supporters of athletes' adherence to religious duties. Collaboration with religious authorities is essential to develop dress codes that align with Islamic principles while being practical for athletes. Examining successful collaborations can offer valuable insights. Furthermore, international collaboration among Muslim countries is vital for enhancing sports governance and policies, ensuring the voices of Muslim countries are heard and protecting Muslim female athletes from potential marginalisation as a minority group.

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## **Chapter in a Book**

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Alias (2009)

Reference:

Alias, A. (2009). Human nature. In N. M. Noor (Ed.), *Human nature from an Islamic perspective: A guide to teaching and learning* (pp.79-117). Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press.

## **Journal Article**

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Chapra (2002)

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Chapra, M. U. (2002). Islam and the international debt problem. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 10, 214-232.

## **The Qur'ān**

In-text:

(i) direct quotation, write as 30:36

(ii) indirect quotation, write as Qur'ān, 30:36

Reference:

*The glorious Qur'ān*. Translation and commentary by A. Yusuf Ali (1977). US: American Trust Publications.

## **Ḥadīth**

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(i) Al-Bukhārī, 88:204 (where 88 is the book number, 204 is the ḥadīth number)

(ii) Ibn Hanbal, vol. 1, p. 1

Reference:

(i) Al-Bukhārī, M. (1981). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr.

(ii) Ibn Ḥanbal, A. (1982). *Musnad Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*. Istanbul: Cagri Yayinlari.

## **The Bible**

In-text:

Matthew 12:31-32

Reference:

*The new Oxford annotated Bible*. (2007). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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