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**AN ANALYSIS OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT BASED ON
IBNU KHALDUN'S THOUGHTS**

Mohd Nizam Sahad (a), Mohd Azolman Zulkufli (b)*
*Corresponding author

(a) *Universiti Sains Malaysia*, 11800 Gelugor, Penang, nizamsahad@usm.my
(b) *Universiti Sains Malaysia*, 11800 Gelugor, Penang, mohdazolman@gmail.com

Abstract

Ibnu Khaldun is a great Islamic scholar in the 14th century AD. His ideas in various fields such as economy, history, politics, and education are still being referred to and cited by scholars in both the West and East. His writing entitled “*Muqaddimah*” is his ultimate thoughts that has been translated into various languages such as English, Spanish, German, and so on. Although Ibnu Khaldun has long gone, his thoughts on the concept of thinking and theory of human cognitive development are still relevant today. The concept covers the importance of thinking, development of human thought resources, and the levels of human cognitive development. The results of the study show that humans naturally possess an intellect that distinguishes them from animals and the theory of human cognitive development is divided into four levels namely *aql tamyizi*(discerning intellect), *aql tajribi* (experimental intellect), *aql nazari*(speculative intellect), and *aql al mazid*(additional intellect), of which, this thoughts of Ibnu Khaldun has preceded the era. In fact, the concept of thinking and the theory of human cognitive development based on Ibnu Khaldun’s thoughts are comprehensive and in depth for the course of producing a knowledgeable and ideal person (*haqiqatul insan*) in human life and society.

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Keywords: *Muqaddimah*, thinking, cognitive, human, *haqiqatul insan*.



1. Introduction

The greatness and excellence of Ibnu Khaldun is manifested in his writings which have been referred to by scholars in both the East and West. One of his greatest writings is *Muqaddimah*. The ideas and views expressed by Ibnu Khaldun in *Muqaddimah* were influential to the changes of thoughts and high intellectual ability in the world's society before and now that Toynbee (1935) a historian once revealed: "Muqaddimah is the greatest work of its kind that has ever been created by any mind in any time or place".

Besides that, there are various other written works by Ibnu Khaldun such as *Al Ta'rif bi Ibnu Khaldun wa Rihlatul Gharban wa Syarqan* (Introduction on Ibnu Khaldun and his journeys to the West and East), *Burdat al Bushairi*, *Lubab al-Muhassal fi Usul al din* (Selected essence in the basis of religion), and *Syifa al-Sail fi Tahzib al-Masail* (The cure in questioning in order to solve the problem). Ibnu Khaldun is well known for his unparalleled genius among the Islamic thinkers as his writing, *Muqaddimah* debates various disciplines such as knowledge on philosophy, history, economics, politics, tasawwuf, education, and psychology.

2. Problem Statement

There are a number of studies which have been conducted previously by other researchers on Ibnu Khaldun's thoughts in his *Muqaddimah* and which involve the historical and social fields. His expertise and the strength of his knowledge in these fields qualify him to the title "The Father of Sociology" and "The Father of History" (Che Zarrina & Mohd Kamil, 2015). Ibnu Khaldun has submitted an in depth research on the human civilisation such as the beginning of civilisation, factors which drive to its development, and also factors which lead to its downfall (Joni & Che Zarrina 2009).

However, his huge contribution in the field of education is also very often forgotten due to his prominences in three other fields, that is, sociology, history, and philosophy (Yazid, 1985). He has also sparked a sufficiently long and outstanding idea in education. Within this context, this paper will discuss his thoughts on the concept of thinking and the theory of human intellectual development based on his writing, *Muqaddimah*.

3. Research Questions

The following are the research questions in conducting the research study:

- i) What is the concept of thinking based on Ibnu Khaldun writing, *Muqaddimah*?
- ii) What is the theory of human intellectual development based on Ibn Khaldun writing, *Muqaddimah*?

4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to analyse the concept of thinking dan theory of human intellectual development. Furthermore, the study was to determine the relationship human intellectual development and knowledge to gain an ideal human.

5. Research Methods

In order to accomplish this study, a qualitative approach is used to obtain information through library method such as referring to writing materials in the form of scientific books, articles, journals, proceedings, and papers presented at seminars or workshops. Textual analysis has been carried out to obtain findings in *Muqaddimah*. The writing of *Muqaddimah* is an introduction to the writing of *Kitâb al-‘Ibâr wa Diwân al-Mubtada’ wa al-Khabar fî Ayyam al-‘Arabwa al-‘Ajam wa al-Barbar wa Man ‘Asarahum min Dhawi al-Sulthan al-Akbar* which is also known by researchers as *Kitab al-Ibar* (Book of Instructions) or *Tarikh Ibnu Khaldun* (History of Ibnu Khaldun). The *Muqaddimah* is a unique and great written work of Ibnu Khaldun in his last days which is completed in five months in the mid-779 AD. In *Muqaddimah*, his writing is divided into six clauses and introductions. In Chapter Six, he discusses on the topic of educational philosophy, knowledge philosophy (epistemology), and teaching methods, adding up to 60 clauses. His writing in the field of education is seen to be of such high quality that it has become a very interesting debate of knowledge to be studied by education experts.

6. Findings

Some findings of the research on *Muqaddimah* can be categorised as follows:

6.1. The Concept of Thinking

Upon the analysis on *Muqaddimah*, it is discovered that in nature, the gift of thinking ability (intellect) on humans is a privilege and glory that aims to distinguish humans from other creatures of Allah such as animals (Ibnu Khaldun, 1997). The existence of intellect allows humans to think and make judgements in an organised and systematic manner compared to animals that have merely instincts (Al Mudhamgha, 1972).

Ibnu Khaldun mentions that human beings need the nature of *haywaniyyah* as a basis for socialisation purposes (Yazid, 1985; Joni & Che Zarrina, 2009; Masauche & Bensaid, 2014). Then only humans are able to build a capacity in thinking and learning through social interactions for shaping and building a society and civilisation. Hence, the ability to think plays an important role for human beings to excel among the human beings. It is stated by Ibnu Khaldun that *idrak* is: “the consciousness of one’s self-respecting things, which are peculiar to the living creatures alone” (Ibnu Khaldun, 1995).

Ibnu Khaldun stresses on the importance of knowledge (*makrifah*) and the nature of knowing (*idrak*) that they distinguish between human beings and animals. Allah Taala has conferred five senses, that is, hearing, sight, taste, smell, and touch that can help humans to achieve knowledge (Abdullah Al Amin, 1994). Hence, this senses is a tool that enables human minds to learn and understand their surroundings. He clearly states that human minds or thoughts are the source of knowledge and knowledge that is generated through human natural minds (Ibrahim, 2015). In fact, human minds are the centre of all human activities. Notwithstanding the fact, a question thus arises: where is the location of intellectual minds?

Ibnu Khaldun believes that thinking occurs when there is a shadowing process (of an object) behind feelings, and the use of intellect in analysing and synthesising, as well as incorporating vague parts. He claims that the word *af'idat* (plural of *fu'ād*) which means the heart or feeling is appropriate in serving the meaning of thinking (Ibn Khaldun 1995; Sulaiman, 2015). Ibnu Khaldun's view is accompanied with Allah Taala's words in his *Muqaddimah*, which means: "Say: "It is He Who has created you (and made you grow), and made for you the faculties of hearing, seeing, feeling and understanding: little thanks it is you give." (Surah Al-Mulk [67]:23)

Al-Aṣfahāniy (1997) termed the word intellect as "the strength of a person who is willing to accept knowledge" and is sometimes referred to as "the knowledge that human acquires through that strength". This is in line with the view of al-Ghazali (n.d.) that the intellect is not an object that can be touched when it is compared with knowledge. Consequently, Ibnu Khaldun's view had raised disputes among scholars about the position of intellectual minds in human beings.

Ibn Qutaybah (n.d.) argues that the position of intellect is the heart as Al-Aṣfahāniy (1997) describes the word *qalb* as intellect and knowledge based on the word of Allah Taala: "Verily in this is a Message for any that has a heart and understanding or who gives ear and earnestly witnesses (the truth)." (Surah Qaf [50]:37)

Based on the verse, the tafsir ulama describes different meanings for the expression of *qalb*. Al-Suyuti (2002) explains that the position of intellect is in *qalb* based on the history of Mujahid. Meanwhile, Ibnu Kathir (2007) claims that *qalb* is the content of heart that can give consciousness. Imam al-Syawkani describes that the word *qalb* has two meanings, that is, intellect and heart based on the argument that the word *Qalb* in Arabic carries the meaning of intellect as in the expression (قلب لك ما) which means "you have no intellect and the nature of the pure heart that enables you to know the fact and think".

However, al-Suyuti (2002) stresses that the position of intellect is not in the head but in the chest as based on the word of Allah S.W.T: "Do they not travel through the land, so that their hearts (and minds) may thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear? Truly it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are in their breasts." (Surah al-Hajj [22]:46)

This argument obviously shows that the intellect is not in the brain because the expression of *qalb* carries the meaning of heart. In fact, the opinion that the intellect is centred in the brain is a weak opinion (Al-Ansari, 1983). Besides *qalb*, the word *al-fu'ad* (فؤاد) which is recorded in the Qur'an also carries the meaning of intellect. The word is repeated 16 times through different suras, either in the form of *mufrad* (single word) or *jama'* (plural); the expression in the form of *mufrad* such as *al-fu'ad* (three times) and *fu'adak* (two times), while the expression in the form of *jama'* such as *af'idah* (eight times) and *af'idatahum* or *af'idatuhum* (three times).

Al-Qaradawi (1996) argues that the word *fu'ad* (فؤاد) and all derivative words are often interpreted as one of three advises to acquire knowledge other than hearing and sight. There is a total of eight verses which mention the word *fu'ad* (فؤاد), alongside the word *samaa'* (سمع) and *bashar* (بصر) as in the word of Allah S.W.T.:

"And pursue not that of which you have no knowledge; for every act of hearing, or of seeing or of (feeling in) the heart will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning)." (Al-Isrā' [17]:36)

Fakhr al-Din al Razi (1999) describes the word *fu'ad* (فؤاد) in the above verse as the intellect that gives human the ability to generate knowledge through sensory parts in the form of sight and hearing. He further classified the knowledge generated by the intellect into two parts, that is, knowledge obtained naturally without intention (البيئية) and the knowledge obtained by effort (الكسبية).

This view is in line with Ibnu Khaldun's view that the intellect is centred in the heart (*fuād*), not in the head because the head is the primary source of information receiving from the senses which is analysed and developed with other imaginations from the imagination on the matter (Shahrul, 2008). Ibnu Khaldun has brought an implied view that intellect is not the brain but it is an advantage to humans to explore and understand the environment as well as to gain knowledge, of which, with the knowledge, humans are able to judge between goodness and evil, and thus, keep away from harm.

6.2. Theory of Human Cognitive Development

For Ibnu Khaldun, human intellect develops and has different cognitive abilities in four levels (Machouche & Bensaid, 2015a; Ibrahim, 2015; Masauche & Bensaid, 2015b; Mohd Yusof, 2012). The first level is the ability of the human intellectual on the understanding of something beyond the universe, in the changing order of nature or shapes. These thoughts are in the form of perceptions. This level is known as a differential capability that allows humans to acquire everything that is beneficial for themselves and their lives, as well as rejecting the harmful things.

Rosenthal (2015) translates this level of intellect as “the discerning intellect”, that is: “The ability to think has several degrees. The first degree...the discerning intellect, with the help of which man obtains the things that are useful for him and his livelihood, and repels the things that are harmful for him”.

This level also enables humans to identify the meanings derived from the senses by imagining all things from the outside either in nature or in the pursuit of purpose (Abdullah Al Amin, 1994). Hence, human is also able to explore the things that benefit himself or herself and to his or her life as well as keep away from harm (Joni & Che Zarrina, 2009).

The second level is the ability to think that can provide humans with all the ideas and behaviours required in human relationships with the environment such as building relationships between subordinates and leaders. This idea is derived through perception (*tashdiqat*), which is gained through experience until it is considered as useful. It is also known as experimental intellectual or *al-'Aql al-Tajribiy*. Rosenthal (2015) states that the second level is called “the experimental intellect” with an explanation: “the idea and the behaviour needed in dealing with his fellow men and in leading them” (p. 334).

Hence, cognitive development in this level differs greatly from the previous level in which experimental-minded activity is aimed at identifying “relationships” by producing and studying ideas relating to social needs and the behaviours required in their social interactions (Joni & Che Zarina, 2009). This level only occurs when they gather, help others, and when expressing their views and ideas in association with others (Abdullah Al Amin, 1994).

Moreover, the third level is the ability to think that equips humans with knowledge (*al-ilm*) or assumptive knowledge (*dzann*) about an object that is behind the sensory perception without practical actions (Ibnu Khaldun, 1995). It is referred to as speculative intellect (*al-aql an-nadzari*). This thought also includes perception and apperception, *tasawwur* (worldview) and *tashdiq* (Amir, 2013). It is styled

according to special rules with other knowledge of the same kind such as response or observation, whereby all of them are joined with other things (Shahrul, 2008).

At this level, human beings are able to give an impression of existence as it is which covers various generalisations, differences of reason and its causes (Joni & Che Zarrina, 2009) This intellect also enables humans to make comparisons and combinations of some knowledge to produce new knowledge (Amir, 2013; Ismail, Dakir, & Othman, 2011). According to Ibnu Khaldun, this intellect will form a true and perfect human intellect ergo be interpreted as the essence of human (*al-hakikah al-insaniyyah*) (Ibnu Khaldun, 1995). Rosenthal calls the third level as “the speculative intellect” with an explanation: “Provides the knowledge, or hypothetical knowledge, of an object beyond sense perception without any practical activity (going with it). This is speculative intellect. It consists of both perceptions and apperceptions”.

Furthermore, the fourth level shows the level of human ability to think more towards high-class intelligence in a sophisticated cultural setting in order to advance a society in achieving higher knowledge and skills (Shahrul, 2008). The development of this thinking occurs when human beings are given theoretical knowledge and skills, humans can convey and demonstrate in intellectual discussions and practice such skills to solve problems (Masauche & Bensaid Benouda, 2015a). Ibnu Khaldun has previously stated that additional intellect (*aql al mazid*) and speculative intellect (*aql annazari*) is the result of the synthesis of the three intellects namely *al-aql tamyizi*, *aqal-tajribi*, and *aql nazari* (Masauche & Bensaid Benouda, 2015b). Rosenthal (2015), calls the fourth level as “the additional intelligence” with an explanation:

Therefore, it is necessary that each kind of learning (ilm) and speculation (nazari) should be the rational soul with additional intelligence. Now, the crafts and their habit always lead to the acquisition of scientific norms, which result from habit. Therefore, any experience provides intelligence. The habits of the craft provide intelligence. Perfect sedentary culture provides intelligence, because it is a conglomerate of crafts characterized by concerns for the (domestic) economy, contact with one's fellow men, attainment of education through mixing with (one's fellow men) and also administration of religious matters and understanding the ways and condition governing them. All these (factors) are norms which, properly arranged, constitute scientific disciplines. Thus, an increase in intelligence results from them” (p. 331).

7. Conclusion

The humans' ability to think is the nature of event which Allah bestows upon humans as a special creature to assume responsibility as caliph in the world (Kamarul Azmi & Abdul Halim, 2007). Allah Taala encourages humans to always think by mentioning it in various words in the Qur'an such as *ta'qilun*, *tanzurun*, *tadabbarun*, *tafakkarun*, *ulul alabab*, *tazakkarun* (Muhammad Fuad, 1997). Ibnu Khaldun has compiled on the importance of thinking in his writing, particularly in Chapter Six which shows that thinking is an advantage and privilege of human beings compared to other creatures like animals, and humans function to obtain life (*li-tahsil ma'ashi-hi*), build cooperation or help each other (*al-ta'awum 'alay-hi*), and thus, enables humans to receive revelation through the Messenger of Allah (Zaid, 2004).

In addition, Ibnu Khaldun points out that the development of human intellect occurs naturally in parallel with the development of human namely *akal tamyizi*, *akal tajribi*, *akal nazari*, and *akal al mazid*.

He named the levels of human cognitive development with a name that is comprehensible and has its own boundaries. The intellect of *tamyizi* demonstrates the ability of human intellect to differentiate things that bring goodness and keep away from harmful things through the process of identifying the differences and truths found in reality-valued things in life (Abdullah Al Amin, 1994). Meanwhile, the intellect of *tajribi* is applied in identifying opinions and ideas derived from human-induced discussion by linking past experiences and experiments (Joni & Che Zarrina, 2009).

Next, the intellect of *nazari* allows humans to create confidence in the perceptions, physical or metaphysical representations and justifications based on clauses, reasons, and causes (Personally, 2014). The intellect of *al Mazid* is distinguished by the excellence of human thought that have a steady and practical knowledge in solving problems (Masauche, & Benouda Bensaid, 2013).

In whole, Ibnu Khaldun has brought to the fore a theory of thought, that is, thought that produces knowledge or views on the subject being studies that goes beyond the senses (Muhsin, 2014). He has developed the concept of human thought and the theory of human cognitive development in his great work, *Muqaddimah*. According to Ibnu Khaldun, thinking ability is a privilege awarded to human, and by thinking, human can acquire knowledge. Ibnu Khaldun's view of the concept of thinking is in line with the revelation of Allah, the Qur'an. In addition, he also clarifies that human intellect will develop in a hierarchy of four levels, that is, *akal tamyizi*, *akal tajribi*, *akal nazari*, and *akal al mazid*. Every intellectual development has its own advantages and disadvantages. Hence, Ibnu Khaldun's thoughts are relevant to be studied and applied in the modern society.

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