

The Concept of Indicators from Islamic Perspective

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Abstract--- *This paper has two main objectives. The first objective identifies the concept of the indicators that are constructed based on the al-Quran and al-Sunnah. The second objective analyses the scholars' views on the selected divine proofs that contain the concept of indicators. Generally, indicators refer to the measurements or characteristics to measure a change or an exchange. Hence, indicators become an important tool in providing results and decisions. If the measurement is wrong, then the findings from the measurement are inaccurate. Indicators that are constructed based on Western resources and worldview will produced findings that are in line with the Western worldview. If the same condition is used to measure Islamic elements or the affairs of the Muslims, the findings obtained will certainly do not reflect the Islamic worldview. As such, in matters relating to Islam and the affairs of the Muslims there is a need for the concept of indicators to be in accordance with the Islamic perspective so that validity or truth can be attained as a result of such measurement. The question is what is the concept of indicators based on the Islamic perspective and what are the elements contained in the concept of indicators? Both of these issues are examined based on the interpretations of the scholars on the concept of the indicators based on the al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah. Therefore, this paper aims to address both these issues through textual analysis of selected literatures. For the first issue, this paper identifies the concept of indicators contained in al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah. For the second question, this paper discusses the views of scholars and subsequently formulates the elements for the concept of indicators from the Islamic perspective.*

Keywords--- *Indicators, Concept of Indicators, Elements Indicator, the Islamic Perspective*

I. INTRODUCTION

Discussions related to indicators are discussions that provide much impact to the world today. Indicators are among the things that play a significant role in the development of a country. Indicators that dominate the world today is viewed from an economic point with the use of numbers and statistics. Progress and setbacks of a country depends on the measurement of numbers and statistics in the economic discussions. The world accepts this principle as a 'law of nature' (Karabell, 2014). Basically, indicators refer to variables, size or features as a guide to measure a change (Green & Gabon, 2012).

There are those who argue that, the more accurate the indicator is in converging to economic aspects, the smaller the scope of measurement in the social aspects. The more successful the economic indicator, the more man has failed to measure the social aspects. Even measurements with gross national product (GNP)¹for example are not able

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¹The total value of all final goods and services produced within a country in a given year, plus the income earned by the people (including the income of those located abroad).

to measure satisfaction from a psychological standpoint, happiness and a meaningful life for the society in a nation (Land, 1983).

Worldview (*tasawwur*) and epistemology constitute the foundation of every discipline of knowledge (Muhammad SyukriSalleh, 2008). *Tasawwur* refers to the conception of life that forms individuals' beliefs and practice (Muhammad SyukriSalleh, 2008; El-Sayed el-Aswad, 2012). The Western worldview refers to the set of beliefs that the Western people hold about life. The fundamental principles about life are expounded in great detail and manifested in the lives of those who understand the worldview (Muhammad SyukriSalleh, 2008).

In general, the Western worldview is constructed from Western thinking (Mohd. ShukriHanapi, 2012) which is based on the Western epistemology. In There are two main epistemological thinking approaches in the Western philosophical tradition, namely empiricism and rationalism (Abdul RahmanHj. Abdullah, 2010).

Empiricism or positive science emphasises on questioning, scientific observation and empirical data as well as facts as verification method (Muhammad SyukriSalleh, 2008). This thinking approach posits that knowledge is considered objective when it is extracted from observation, the use of sensory and data collection. This approach dismisses religion, metaphysical elements, speculation and abstract thinking. It accentuates that knowledge is solely produced based on scientific evidence and developed through observation (ReevanyBustami&ElishaNasruddin, 2008).

Karl Popper, a rationalism proponent, on the other hand, asserts that observation could not be disconnected from theory or concept. Popper (cited in Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996) argues that:

"The naive empiricist...thinks that we begin by collecting and arranging our experiences, and so ascend the ladder of science...But if I am ordered: "Record what you are experiencing," I shall hardly know how to obey this ambiguous order. Am I to report that I am writing; that I hear a bell ringing; a newsboy shouting; a loudspeaker droning; or am I to report, perhaps, that these noises irritate me?...A science needs points of view, and theoretical problems".

Both thinking approaches are founded, primarily, from speculation and perception. Although rationalism begins from theories, fundamentally the theories are derived from speculation and perception. Each speculation is built on the premise that it could true or false and not all constructed theories are true. These theories are often in the state of testing with the possibility that other emerging theories could contest or challenge earlier theories. When this take place, the former theory is more that often be dismissed.

All types of knowledge discipline are discussed based on these thinking approaches. The approaches become the backbone of every research that is carried out and serve as basic indicators that underline any academic discussion. This indicate that thinking approaches are the main principles that guide the development of indicators in any disciplines.

Things like this should not happen as anything related to Islam and the affairs of the Muslims' measurement also dictates a concept of Islamic sources.

In Islam, referring to the al-Qur'an, al-Sunnah and Muslim scholars is the key, guiding principle in the formation of indicators in Islam and Muslim affairs. This is based on what Allah has decreed in the Qur'an which reads as follows:

“This kitab of Al-Qur'an does not contain any doubt (about its origin from Allah and about its completeness); it serves as a guidance for those who believe in Allah.”

(al-Baqarah, 2:2).

“And indeed, al-Qur'an is the truth of certainty (complete certainty)”

(al-Haqqah, 69:51).

There are two important points decreed by Allah SWT based on these proofs (*daleel*). The first is that the knowledge (in this paper, knowledge refers to the basic concept in the construction of indicator) that is based on revelation will produce truth. Research must draw upon revelation prior to testing or logical reasoning. Testing or logical reasoning must be parallel with the content of the revelation. The outcome that is produced from this research is the truth. The second is to believe that Allah SWT provides true knowledge. Testing and logical reasoning alone are not able to produce true knowledge. Allah SWT is the owner of all knowledge. He also bestows understanding of the true knowledge to human beings.

The question is: How do al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah conceptualize indicators? This paper seeks to answer this question in two parts. The first part identifies the daleel on indicators that are provided in both al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah. The second part analyses the scholars' views on selected daleel and subsequently, summarizes the indicator elements based on these views.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed secondary data that were obtained from archival research. The data were used for data collection purposes. Archival research was used for the data that were accessible. These data were then extracted and analysed using the computer without going through empirical experiment (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). The words 'indicator', 'al-Quran' 'Sunnah' and 'Hadith' were used as keywords to identify related articles from the online database.

Data that were collected were then analysed. Data analysis is a process in which the researcher examines the data as a whole as well as individually through statistical techniques or relevant qualitative approaches (Noraini Idris, 2010). In this research, the researcher employed both content analysis and textual analysis to analyse the data.

In this research, the research has employed five steps viewed as appropriate for the content analysis method. These five steps were highlighted by authors such as Augustin and Coleman (2011), Sabitha Marican (2006), Weber (1990) as well as Schreier (2012). The first step was selection of text or document that is related to the research. The second step is the formation of categories based on the information contained in the selected texts or documents. The researcher has formed relevant categories based on the literature review conducted on the selected materials. In the third step, the research labeled appropriate codes to these categories. The fourth step involved repeated reading

process to obtain accurate understanding of the document or text contents. This is done to ensure that the content is placed under accurate category. The researcher then sought to understand the emerging concepts found in each category.

III. FINDINGS

Part one identifies the *daleel* (divine proofs) from the primary sources of Islam on the indicators as found in al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah. Based on the review of literatures, the concept of indicators can be found in the Quranic verses related to the promises. Among the scholars who use the term indicator in discussing the divine proofs that have elements of promise is MuhammedSalih Al-Munajjid (2015). According to him, Allah SWT fulfilled His promises by showing the signs of His power. He used the term indicators to reflect these great signs of Allah SWT.

The same is also used by Nabeel Qureshi (2016) in his book regarding the reward for those who do *jihad* (strive in Allah SWT cause). The reward is a promise of Allah SWT. While the indicator is *jihad*. Chablullah Wibisono & Hardi Selamat Hood (2015) also used the term indicators to measure faith by using arguments that have elements of Allah SWT promise. The same term is used by Salih MA Mohamed (2004) and HarunYahya (t.t) in examining the divine proofs relating to promise. As such, one verse related to promise is selected to examine the views of scholars.

Further investigation was also conducted on the books of translations of al-Qur'an in the English Language. Based on such investigation, this research found that the verses containing the term indicators are in *Surah al-Furqan* verse 45. Among those who use the term indicators in referring to this verse are M.H. Shakir, (2009), LalehBakhtiar(2007), MaulanaWahiduddin Khan (2013), TB Irving (Al-Hajj Ta'lim 'Ali), (1978) and MAS Abdel Haleem(2010). They use the term indicator in translating the identified verse. They referred to the sun as an indicator to determine the process of extending and retracting the shadows as stated in the verse. Therefore, this paper examines the views of scholars on this verse.

So far in the investigation on Hadith, the use of the term indicator is found on two occasions. First, the term indicator is used in referring to the discussions that are contained in the book on Hadith's expositions. For example, Adel Awadalla (2004) uses the term indicator to express the views of IbnHajar al-'Asqalaniy in *Fath al-Bari* on the hadith regarding the period of doing rituals for three types of society; the *ummat* of Prophet Muhammad SAW, the *ummat* of Prophet MusaAS and the *ummat* of Prophet Isa AS. The Hadith contains an indicator to show the imminent ending of this world until it finally ends. The indicator here refers to the criteria.

Second, there are scholars who use the term indicator for the Hadith that has elements of both promise and criteria. Among them are studies conducted by Asad Zaman Arif Naveed & Atiq-ur-Rehman (2014). Their study found that the element of wealth is an indicator to generate welfare on the social and economic sectors. The study conducted by Asamarai, Solberg, and Solon (2008) also use the term indicator for the divine proof that contains that element of both promise and criteria. They examined the concept of piety as an indicator by relying on the few specific criteria mentioned in choosing a partner and that happiness is the promise to the said marriage. The same matter is also discussed by Waugh, Abu-Laban, and Qureshi (1991) in their book *Muslim Families in North America*. This term is also found in the divine proofs that have the element of both promise and criteria in the research carried out by Usman Ismail, Soroni, and Wazir (2015) and the research conducted by Baharuddin, Ruskam

and Yacob (2015), Baharuddin, Ruskam, and Yacob (2015), Nofianti and Okfalisa (2019), Ridza et al. (2018) and Bensaid, Machouche, and Grine (2014).

Therefore, this paper chooses on divine proof from the Hadith which contains the element of both promise and criteria to examine the scholars' views and formulate the concept of indicators based on the scholars' views. The following is a discussion of the three divine proofs of scholars chosen for this paper to discuss the elements contained in the concept of indicator and thereafter formulate the concept of indicators by to the perspective of al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah.

This part examines the views of scholars based on the three divine proofs that have been identified to have contained the concept of indicator as highlighted by the review of literatures. The following is a discussion of the three divine proofs.

The First Daleel

Allah SWT says which provides the following interpretation:

“Those who believe in Allâh and the Last Day would not ask your leave to be exempted from fighting with their properties and their lives, and Allâh is the All-Knower of Al-Muttaqûn“

(Surah al-Tawbah, 9: 44).

Jihad (strive in the cause of Allah SWT) is a form of obedience. A person is said to be a faithful believer is one who is willing to strive for Allah SWT cause when commanded to do so. Those who strive in the cause of Allah SWT are among those who are pious and who seek the favours and pleasures of Allah SWT. They are also considered as those who are just when they commit to strive in the cause of Allah SWT (*As'adMau'id*). There are scholars who state that this verse shows the signs of who are the hypocrites. The hypocrites seek permission not to join *jihad*, while those who are not hypocritical did not at all ask for permission of Prophet Muhammad SAW to be excused from joining *jihad* (Muhammad Yusuf Hayyan al-Andalusi, t.t; Mujamma'al-Malik Fahad, 2009). Even Umar Ali al-Dimasyqiy (1998) states that those who sought exemption from joining jihad represent those who have doubts and when there are doubts then faith would not exist within them.

There are also scholars who portray those who did not ask for exemption from joining jihad after being asked to do so are those who are pious. Allah SWT gave them due recognition in addition to the promise that this group of people will be rewarded. They are also recognized as the true believers. Their sacrifice to join in *jihadis* a testament of their faith (Ahmad 'Ajibah al-Husniy, 2002). The passion to strive in the cause of Allah SWT is a sign for those who believe and are pious (Mahmud Umar al-Zamakhsyariy, 2009; Muhammad al-An 'Assyrian, 1984).

These views give the impression that there are two views of indicators, that is, those who do not join *jihad* are described as the hypocrites whereas those who are pleased to be given the opportunity to participate in *jihad* are described as those who are the most faithful and devoted. The indicator here is *jihad* while the outcome from the indicator is faith, piety and rewards. The concept of faith and the concept of rewards are under discussions on *aqidah* (faith) while the concept of piety is under the discussion of *syariah* (Islamic laws and rulings) and *akhlaq*

(good manners and morals). Indicator is thus linked to *aqidah*, *syariah* and *akhlaq*. Such indicator serves as a guide to produce something that is intangible, namely matters relating to faith.

The Second Daleel

Allah SWT divinely revealed that brings the following interpretation:

“Have you not seen how your Lord spread the shadow. If He willed, He could have made it — still — But We have made the sun its guide [i.e. after the sunrise, the shadow shrinks and vanishes at midnoon and then again appears in the afternoon with the decline of the sun, and had there been no sunlight, there would have been no shadow]”

(Surah al-Furqan, 25:45)

In Surah al-Furqan verse 45 Allah SWT mentioned the sun is an indicator for the movement of shadows. Humans has made the sun and its circumstances as well as the shadows as a guide to determine the period of time (Juziyy Muhammad al-Kabliyy, 1995) amongst others to identify the times during the day and time for prayer. Logically, the sun is the cause for the movement of the length or shortness of the shadows. Allah SWY made the sun as a guide to the shadows in its movement. However, the fact is that Allah SWT is the cause of the movement of the shadows. It is Allah SWT who has the power to move the shadows or to not make the shadows move despite the movement of the sun. This shows the strength, power and perfection of Allah SWT in governing this universe (Ibn al-Qaim, t.t; Muhammad HussainMasud al-Baghawiy, 2002).

The situation is commanded by Allah SWT to get humans to think and finally acknowledge the glory and greatness of Allah SWT. On Judgment Day, shadows will be held by Allah SWT (al-Nasir al-Din al-BaidhawiySyirazy, 1998) because the reality is that it is Allah SWT who moves the shadows. The sun has no power to move the shadows because it is Allah SWT who moves the sun. Human’s mind(reasoning) accept that the sun is a guide for the movement of shadows (Muhammad al-Razi, Fakhruddin, 1981) however it is Allah SWT who is actually behind any clues or guidelines. Such matter is an acknowledgment for those who think (Ibn al-Qaim, t.t). Movements of the shadows represent obedience of this universe to her owner (Muhammad Ibn 'Atiyah al-Andalusiy, t.t).

This discussion illustrates that indicators need to be in line with common sense or logic as well as scientific measurements. However, indicators which are of a scientific nature must be in line with the concept of the Islamic faith that is Allah SWT is the absolute Owner to all that are in existence of a scientific nature. In other words, things are intangible have a relationship with the variables that are tangible, and that something that is tangible is not only to be measured simply by the use of statistics or numberings or the use of logic or reason alone.

The Third Daleel

The selected divine proof is a Hadith that contains elements of promise and criteria. The Hadith is:

Of Ka'b Bin 'Ujrah (ra) reported: Messenger of Allah (sallallahualaihiwasalam) said: Come ye near the pulpit. Then we assemble. Then he climbed the pulpit stairs, he said: Aamiin. When he was up to the second rung, he said:

Aamiin. And when he was on the third, he said: Aamiin. And when he got down (from the pulpit) we asked: O Messenger of Allah, we have heard something from you on this day that we've never heard before. He replied:

"Verily Jibreel (as) had already put (prayer), but he said: Woe to the one who finds the month of Ramadan, but his sins are not forgiven. Then I uttered Aamiin to the prayer. When I went up to the second rung, he said: Woe to him who (when) your name called on his side but he did not greet with blessings upon you. Then I also uttered Aamiin. And when I climbed up the third stairs, he said: Woe to the one who finds his parents are old or one of them, but they did not put him in heaven. Then I uttered Aamiin.

(Reported by al-Hakim)

Scholars associate this hadith with deeds that are associated with faith. The elements of faith that are found in this hadith is the presence of the angel informing Prophet Muhammad SAW on such deeds. In addition, elements of sinfulness also fall within the ambit of discussion under belief, that is, every deed that will be accounted for on the Day of Judgment. Beginning with faith, scholars identified the laws on certain practices such as *farḍh* (compulsory) to recite blessings (*salawat*) to Prophet Muhammad SAW when in prayers, pilgrimage and *'umrah* and that it is only *nawafil* (recommended) when not in prayer, pilgrimage or *'umrah* ('Atiyyah Muhammad Salim, 2001). Scholars attribute the practice of fasting that can eliminate sin is fasting undertaken to please Allah SWT alone. This practice is also associated with a sincere heart, and Allah SWT alone knows the level of sincerity of his servants who are obedient (Muhammad Abdul Rahman al-Mubarakfuri, t.t). In addition, matters discussed by scholars based on this hadith is to do good to parents. Among the reasons why there is the obligation to do good to parents is that parents are the cause that all human beings are able to live on this earth and to enjoy the blessings of life. However scholars still make the association between parents and the belief, that is, the rationale that humans live as a result of other human beings, but in fact it is Allah SWT who gives life to man ('Atiyyah Muhammad Salim, t.t). All criteria, that is, fasting, uttering blessings on Prophet Muhammad SWT Allah and doing good to parents as mentioned in the Hadith are associated with the question of faith. In addition, such practices are also associated with the problems of the heart, namely a sincere heart. It is through a sincere heart that forms a noble character. Such deeds are the indicators to achieve something that is intangible. The following Figure 1, is a diagram that summarises the above discussion.

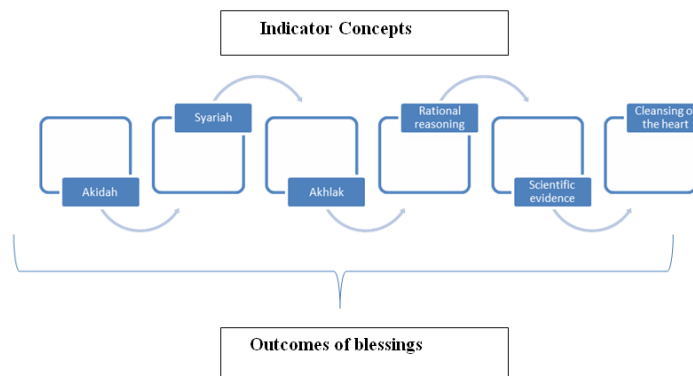


Figure 1 – The elements that make up an indicator based on the three divine proofs

Based on Figure 1, the elements that make up the concept of indicator has two categories of elements. The first category comprises of tangible elements such as the *Syariah*, *akhlaq*, and scientific rationality. While the other category comprises of the intangible elements such as faith and cleansing of the heart. Based on these elements, the concept of indicators from al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah can be built. The concept refers to the instructions of the indicators that attempt to achieve two elements, of indicator refers to both the tangible and intangible elements. The indicator that is built need to incorporate both these elements.

All the concepts have successfully produced the elements of blessing. Blessing is an Islamic concept that refers to the reason of a good outcome which in turn is closely related to truth. Blessing is associated with both truth and goodness which indicated that blessing is a vital concept in all conditions that are related to Islam and Muslim affairs. The concept of blessing needs to be highlighted when deliberating or investigating any issue that is related to Islam or Muslim affairs. Allah SWT states in the al-Qur'an:

“And this is the Book that we have sent down, blessed and affirming previous Books that have been revealed so that you could warn the population of the mother of the city (Mecca) and those who live outside the city. Those who believe in the hereafter will believe in the al-Qur'an and they always maintain their prayers.”

(Surah al-An'am, 6: 92)

Muhammad Yusuf Hayyan al-Andalusi (n.d.t.t) asserts that blessing is part of Allah's attributes. Al-Qur'an, which is revealed by Allah SWT, the owner of bountiful blessings, has the attribute of blessing. The attribute of blessing contained in the al-Qur'an refers to the attribute of al-Qur'an that is able to accord numerous benefits and advantages. Muhammad Hussain Mas'ud al-Baghawiy (2002), on the other hand, argues that the blessing that is found in the al-Qur'an refers to knowledge and wisdom. Apart from numerous advantages and goodness of blessings, blessings also continue to multiply endlessly (Abdul Rahman Muhammad al-Tha'alabiy, 1997).

Based on the explanation given by the Muslim scholars, it can be deduced that the elements of blessing are not only tangible and practical, they are also measurable. For instance, individuals will receive blessings when they accept, understand and practice all the knowledge that is contained in the al-Qur'an.

IV. CONCLUSION

The discussion concludes two things. First, matters related to Islam and the affairs of the Muslims require measurements that are also sourced from al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah. For researchers who study about Islam and the Muslim affairs, this is a matter of great importance. This is to ensure that the findings are valid according to the Islamic perspective. Secondly, things are intangible in nature have the ability to have variables that are tangible in nature, and that something that is tangible are not only to be measured by the use of statistical or numbering solely, the intangible aspects must also be accounted for. The element of blessing becomes the main indicator for changes that will take place through each constructed indicator. The element of blessing is also related to human senses and not purely intangible or spiritual. In this context, the rise of blessing is doable and could be used as an indicator to obtain outcome and changes that are blessing-driven.

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