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Editorial

This is the first volume of CENTRIS E-journal, an attempt to provide a platform for scholars to channel their thoughts in a university-based publisher, namely the Centre for Islamisation (CENTRIS), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). There is no fee requested from the authors, and we try our best to get all the articles to undergo the blind-reviewing process. To date, as it is its inaugural volume, there is no citation index applied for the e-journal. However, we do not deny that it may be indexed for its future volumes if the requirements suit our abovementioned principles. The e-journal is an open access journal which can be downloaded via CENTRIS website. Furthermore, there is no specific in-house referencing style to be adhered to as we believe that it will be more convenient for respective authors to use their own preferred style - as long as it is a standardized one.

The are three articles and three viewpoints in this volume. The first article is by **Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak, Abdul Latif Abdul Razak and Abdulhamid Mohamed Ali Zaroum** from the AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge (AHAS KIRKHS), IIUM. The article argues about the limitations of Western psychological treatments compared to the comprehensive and holistic approach of Islamic psychology. It compares both paradigms particularly on the conception of human nature, mental health and psychotherapy.

The second article is by **Mohamed Fouz Mohamed Zacky** (AHAS KIRKHS) and **Arafath Careem** (Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies (NIIS), Sri Lanka). It highlights the pivotal role plays by NIIS in spearheading the mainstreaming process of integration of knowledge discourse in Sri Lanka.

The third article is by **Firzan Haniff Abd Manap**, who just graduated from his Master of Political Science at AHAS KIRKHS. The article argues that between 2015 to 2023, the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) had been swinging back and forth from Islamism to post-Islamism as its strategy and thus arguing for a non-linear progression of both ideological strands.

For viewpoints, the first one is from **Shufaq**, who is currently finishing her PhD in Political Science at AHAS KIRKHS. In her viewpoint, she excavates the historical roots of Hindu nationalism and its subsequent evolution in relation to the problem of Islamophobia in India. The second viewpoint is from **Fatimah Karim** (AHAS KIRKHS) who stressed on the importance of maintaining or bringing back the Islamic values in families as it can foster social cohesion and moral development which are necessary in facing contemporary challenges. Lastly, we have the viewpoint from **Ramli Musa and Nur Aliah Afiqah Mohd Sidik** from the Kulliyyah of Medicine, IIUM. They link the issue of gender dysphoria with mental health and describe their efforts in helping people with the problem.

I would like to thank all our distinguished contributors and hope that the journal will be able to continue its volumes in the future.

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Exploring Mental Health: A Comparative Study of Western and Islamic Psychological Approaches[1]

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Abstract

This research is both timely and crucial, as the world grapples with a growing mental health crisis. As society embraces a more modern lifestyle, it also faces an increase in mental health challenges. Despite efforts by various organizations and concerned parties worldwide, a permanent solution remains elusive. This study explores the connection between human nature, mental health, and psychotherapy, comparing Western psychological frameworks with Islamic psychology. Mental health issues often stem from a deeper understanding of human nature, and psychotherapy aims to address these concerns by improving one's relationship with oneself, others, and the environment. In Western thought, mental health and psychotherapy are generally approached in a secular, scientific context, relying on psychological theories such as those of Freud, Jung, and humanistic psychologists. These theories focus on human experience and behaviour, offering therapeutic techniques grounded in empirical evidence, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and psychodynamic therapy. However, Western psychology has limitations, often overlooking cultural, existential, and spiritual factors that may be critical in treating complex mental health conditions. In contrast, Islamic psychology offers a more holistic perspective, integrating physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of human

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[1] The initial concepts of this research were first shared at a conference in Iran in 2017.

well-being. It draws on Islamic teachings, including the Qur'an, Hadith, and the wisdom of Islamic scholars, providing both preventive and remedial approaches to mental health. Islamic psychology emphasizes practices such as prayer, meditation, gratitude, and social relationships as preventive measures, fostering a sense of hope and purpose that contributes to mental well-being. This research uses a qualitative, contrastive methodology, drawing on textual analysis from books on psychology, Qur'anic teachings, and Hadith/*Sunnah* to comprehensively compare Western and Islamic approaches to mental health and psychotherapy.

Keywords

Mental health, psychotherapy, human nature, Freudian psychoanalysis, radical behaviourism, humanistic psychology, Islamic psychology

Introduction

Urbanization, modernization, industrialization, and globalization have all brought significant changes to human lives, transforming them from simple to a more advanced standard of living. In some cases, these changes have shifted human existence from primitive to cultured. While there are positive advancements in areas such as transportation, communication, and the use of technology in education and healthcare, there are also numerous negative impacts that have deteriorated the quality of life.

Though the negative effects are felt in various habitats, none are as pronounced as those experienced by residents of metropolitan areas. The increasing reliance on technology and mechanization has placed undue pressure on the psychological well-being of people. Economic challenges and the fast-paced lifestyle in urban environments have significantly contributed to common mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, frustration, depression, and grief. More severe mental health conditions can include schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, bulimia, anorexia, and obsessive-compulsive disorder, among others.

Since the statistics on mental health-related issues are on the rise, and sometimes people who suffer from mental health problems are not aware of their situation, there is a need to highlight what mental health is and its related topics, such as human nature and psychotherapy. It is hoped that by understanding positive mental health, mental illness, and psychotherapy, individuals will feel empowered to acknowledge their struggles and seek help and remedies. Given the existence of many schools of thought in psychology, this explorative research aims to examine the ideas of selected schools in Western mainstream psychology and compare them with concepts found in Islamic psychology.

Preliminary Remarks

The alarming statistics on the many reported cases of mental health in the media have drawn the attention of researchers toward this area of psychology. Driven by a passion to understand what mental health is, this small-scale research is directed toward exploring some existing concepts of mental health. More specifically, it will investigate ideas on mental health showcased to the world by Western mainstream psychology, namely Freudian Psychoanalysis, Radical Behaviourism, and Humanistic Psychology. In discussing Western ideas on mental health, the researchers primarily focused on contributions from Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) in psychoanalysis, J.B. Watson (1879-1958) and B.F. Skinner (1904-1990) in behaviourism, and Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) and Carl Rogers (1902-1987) in humanistic psychology.

Upon analysing these Western concepts of mental health, this research advanced by comparing them with the conceptualizations found in Islamic Psychology. Since no discussion on mental health could be comprehensive or engaging without addressing issues related to human nature and psychotherapy, this research also included a discussion on those two areas of psychology. The researchers contended that topics on human nature, mental health, and psychotherapy were interrelated and inseparable. As such, any discussion on mental health was expected to incorporate ideas on both human nature and psychotherapy.

What Does Mental Health Mean?

Mental health is often referred to as mental hygiene. Defining what mental health is can be a challenging task, as psychologists and counsellors offer a wide array of definitions. In contrast, experts find it much easier to define mental illness. Essentially, the term mental health refers to the balanced psychological makeup of a person. An individual who enjoys positive mental health is also free from mental disorders. Moreover, a good or positive state of mental health, or mental hygiene, describes an individual living in harmony with themselves and the social and natural environments surrounding them. According to WHO's Fact Sheet No. 220 (2014):

> "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. Mental health and well-being are fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. On this basis, the promotion, protection and restoration of mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individuals, communities and societies throughout the world.[2]

An individual who enjoys a good level of mental health is not entirely free from all psychological challenges in life. In other words, mental well-being does not imply the absence of normal day-to-day psychological issues such as stress, anxiety, and frustration. People diagnosed with serious mental health problems are those who are unable to cope with everyday matters related to their psychological well-being.

Individuals faced with mental disorders due to their inability to control their feelings and emotions are often classified as those who need the help of counselors, psychologists, physicians, and therapists to overcome their problems. The list of what constitutes a mental health problem is ever-expanding, reflecting the complexity of human lives during this era of industrialization and globalization. Among the more common cases of mental health issues are anxiety, grief, stress, mood disorders, learning disabilities, various addictions, relationship problems, and ADHD, among others.[3]

Many experts have highlighted that short-term use of psychotropic drugs can help patients overcome their problems; however, one should not rely on these drugs for an extended period. Long-term usage can lead to dependency and addiction. In both the West and the East, experts are increasingly recognizing spirituality and meditation as long-term solutions to mental health issues. They also suggest that medications should be prescribed only for serious cases and that their use should be limited, as these drugs can have significant side effects.

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[2] (http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en/). *Mental health: strengthening our response*
Retrieved on the 7th of January,2016
[3] (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental_health). *Mental health.* Retrieved on the 7th January, 2016.

Freudian Perspective on Human Nature

Freud's ideas on human nature sound very pessimistic and deterministic. According to him, man is no more than an animal enslaved to his sexual impulses. He further thought that man, being controlled by his libidinal impulses, is unsocialized and irrational in his behaviour. His pessimistic view of human nature is based on his assumption that man is evil and selfish by nature.

Besides being pessimistic, he also believed that the concept of human nature is deterministic due to his assumption that every human being is chained to his or her psychosexual developments in life. As such, man has no freedom to break free from the shackles of his psychosexual developments: the oral stage, anal stage, phallic stage, latency period, and genital stage.

Furthermore, Freud believed that there exist in man two types of instincts. One is the life instincts (Eros), and the other is the death instincts (Thanatos). The life instinct represents what is essential for man's survival on earth, such as hunger, thirst, and sex. All these instincts function themselves by using a form of energy called libido. Although the term libido means sexual energy, Freud used it extensively to refer to all life instincts. On the other hand, the death instinct, according to him, is related to aggression and destruction. Most psychologists agree that the death instinct is something Freud did not fully explain.[4]

In explaining the human psyche, Freud initially provided a topographical description by dividing it into three parts: the unconscious, preconscious, and conscious. Freud believed that the conscious mind represents a state of awareness of the things and events happening around an individual, while the preconscious state refers to the ability to bring to awareness things and events from the past whenever desired. The unconscious, on the other hand, pertains to the inability to access memories and experiences from one's life. According to Freud, although the contents of the unconscious cannot typically be brought to awareness under normal circumstances, they may occasionally emerge and manifest in dreams, through slips of the tongue, or when the individual is in a state of hypnosis.[5]

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[4] George, R. L. & Cristiani, T. S. (1990). *Counseling: Theory and practice* (3rd edn.), Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p. 41.

[5] Morris, C.G. (1990). *Contemporary psychology and effective behavior* (7th edn.).New York: Harper Collins Publishers, pp.32-33.
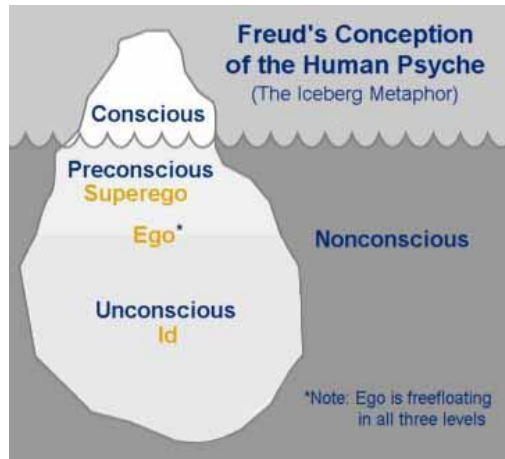
Figure 1: Freud's Conception of the Human Psyche[6]

Later, as an established psychologist who had conducted extensive research on the human mind, Freud showcased his structural model of the human psyche by using terms like Id, Ego, and Superego. These three terms do not refer to regions or areas of the mind; Freud referred to them in his theory as mental constructs. He also used this model to explain his theory of how personality develops in an individual.

According to his theory, the Id, which forms the biological component of the psyche, lies in the unconscious. The Id operates on the pleasure principle. Hedonism and Epicureanism, as philosophies of life, aptly describe the nature of the Id. Its main concern is pleasure-seeking and the avoidance of pain and suffering. By nature, it is greedy and seeks instant gratification without any consideration for the ethical principles of the external world.

The Ego, which forms the psychological component of the psyche, works on the reality principle. As such, it is more cautious of the external world and the social environment around the individual. It acts as a medium between the Id and the Superego. The Ego serves as the peacekeeper or policeman of the human psyche by negotiating the demands put forward by the Id and Superego. It has its way of fulfilling the wishes of the two by using one of its defense mechanisms and trying to impress society.

The Superego, which forms the third component of the psyche, is primarily concerned with social, moral, and ethical issues in an individual's life. It operates on the ideal principle. Further exploration of Freud's ideas on human nature requires clarification on how he portrays man as an intellectual animal who is enslaved by his psychosexual developments. An examination of Freud's concepts regarding the Id, Ego, and Superego reveals that man undergoes endless tension, stress, conflict, crisis, dilemma, chaos, and various other psychopathological problems, mainly caused by the Id and Superego. Many of the psychological problems in individuals are attributed to the ongoing tussle among the Id, Ego, and Superego. These three psychic forces fight for supremacy and dominance over the human psyche.

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[6] (http://www.crystalinks.com/freud.html). Retrieved on the 8th of January, 2016

Although his ideas on psychosexual development might sound unpleasant and vulgar to morally and spiritually oriented individuals, these ideas are essential for a solid understanding of his concept of man. Freud's theory suggests that the inner self of man is more dominant than his social environment. Man's adult life is largely shaped by his childhood experiences, which are predominantly sexual (psychosexual developments). In reading Freud, one might discover that by overemphasizing the role of the unconscious, he overlooked the significant impact and contribution of the environment, peer groups, and society as a whole on personal growth and happiness in people's lives.[7] It is hoped that the tables provided below will give a better understanding of the nature and functions of the Id, Ego and Superego:
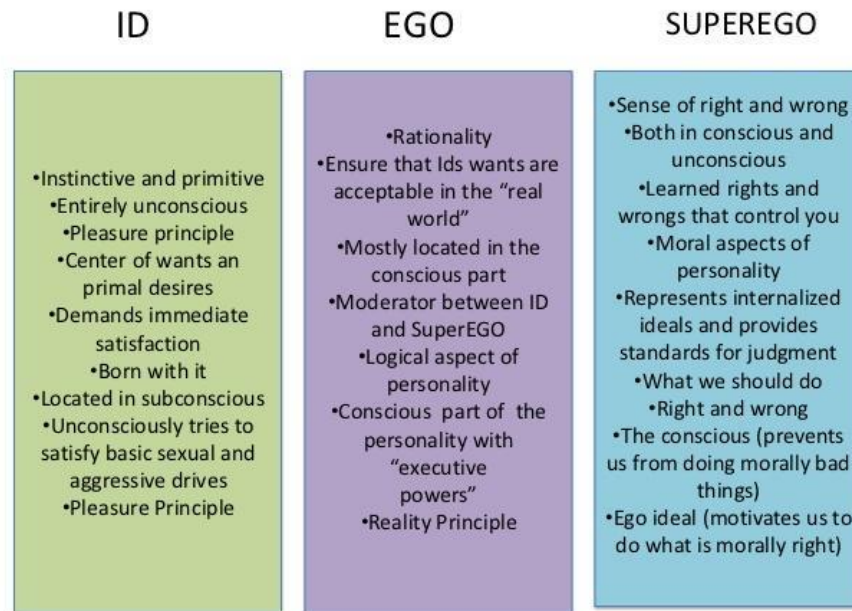
ID

- Instinctive and primitive
- Entirely unconscious
- Pleasure principle
- Center of wants an primal desires
- Demands immediate satisfaction
- Born with it
- Located in subconscious
- Unconsciously tries to satisfy basic sexual and aggressive drives
- Pleasure Principle

EGO

- Rationality
- Ensure that Ids wants are acceptable in the "real world"
- Mostly located in the conscious part
- Moderator between ID and SuperEGO
- Logical aspect of personality
- Conscious part of the personality with "executive powers"
- Reality Principle

SUPEREGO

- Sense of right and wrong
- Both in conscious and unconscious
- Learned rights and wrongs that control you
- Moral aspects of personality
- Represents internalized ideals and provides standards for judgment
- What we should do
- Right and wrong
- The conscious (prevents us from doing morally bad things)
- Ego ideal (motivates us to do what is morally right)

Figure 2: Feud's Structural Model of the Human Psyche[8]

Mental Health in the Freudian Concept

Mental health, as perceived by psychoanalysis, particularly by Freud, is the psychological state of well-being of an individual that relates to the harmonious relationship between the id, ego, and superego, as well as between the person and the real world in which he or she lives. A stable and harmonious condition of the human psyche is achieved through the ego's effort to reconcile the id, superego, and the external world by perceiving and choosing opportunities to satisfy the libidinal demands of the id without transgressing the standards required by the superego.[9]

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[7] See- Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak (2011). *Contribution of Iqbal's dynamic personality theory to Islamic psychology: A contrastive analysis with Freud and selected mainstream western psychology*, (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM.

[8] (http://www.slideshare.net/evrimb/week-5-presentation-personality-and-social-development-final).Retrieved on the 11th January, 2016.

[9] Stevenson, L. (1987). *Seven theories of human nature*. New York: Oxford University Press, p.77.

The failure of the ego to act as a peacekeeper among the id, superego, and the external world leads to chaos and disharmony in an individual's psyche. In a state of disharmony, an individual may experience psychological disturbances such as stress, anxiety, frustration, and many other mental illnesses. In the psychoanalytic concept of mental health, the ego plays a vital role as the neutralizing force, maintaining balance without succumbing to the extremes of the id, superego, or the demands of reality.

Therapeutic Approaches in Freudian Psychoanalysis

Freudian psychoanalytic therapy has two objectives. The first is to modify the individual's character and behaviour by making the unconscious conscious. The second objective is to strengthen the ego, which enables an individual's behaviour to comply with reality rather than being enslaved to the blind demands of libidinal forces. During psychotherapy, the client's childhood experiences are reconstructed, discussed, interpreted, and analysed. The therapist's effort in psychotherapy is not only to solve problems and suggest new behaviours but also to delve deeply into the client's past lifestyle. By doing so, the therapist can help develop the client's self-understanding, which is essential for a change in character.[10]

In a nutshell, psychotherapy in the Freudian concept refers to the effort made by the therapist to explore and analyse the contents of the id and to adjust it so that it complies with the existing world of reality. The therapist gains access to the contents of the unconscious during free association with the client, by interpreting dreams, and also when the client is in a state of hypnotism.

Human Nature in Radical Behaviourism

Behaviourism, as a school of thought in psychology, has its roots in John Locke's (1632-1704) theory of associationism. J.B. Watson (1878-1958), the founding father of behaviourism, shared the same ideas as Locke, which state that the child's mind is a 'tabula rasa' at birth—pure and clean, waiting to be written on by its experiences.[11]

This school of psychology does not believe in the innate knowledge possessed by humans. According to them, humans are nothing more than mechanical objects that can be conditioned and programmed to perform any task. J.B. Watson has strongly voiced this idea in his famous quote, which is often cited by scholars to explain the behaviourist stance on psychology:

> Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to
> bring them up in and I'll guarantee to take one at random and train him to become
> any kind of specialist I might select—doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief, and

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[10] Corey, G. (1986). *Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy* (3rd. ed.). California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, p.29.

[11] Hayes, N. (1995). *Foundations of psychology*. New York: Routledge, p. 249.

yes, even beggar-man and thief—regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors.[12]

Besides Watson, B.F. Skinner (1904-1990), one of the most influential experimental psychologists in behaviourism, also believed that only science can enable humanity to understand the truth about nature and human nature. By giving science top priority, he advocated that the empirical study of human behaviour is the most appropriate way to arrive at a true understanding of humanity.[13]

By introducing and applying a scientific approach in psychology, behaviourists came to the assumption that any human behaviour can be studied by taking individuals to the laboratory for observation and experimentation. Furthermore, they presumed and generalized that results obtained from experiments conducted on animals would be like those of human beings.

With the general assumption that the behaviours of animals and humans are primarily the outcome of learning experiences, they placed great emphasis on classical and operant conditioning to produce desired behavioural change. Moreover, behaviourists believe that all human behaviours can be explained solely in terms of stimulus-response reactions. In behaviourism, all of a person's stimuli comes from the environment, and nothing arises from an individual's inner self. The following are some of the major concepts in psychology regarding human nature, as given by Langgulung:

a) Psychology to them is a science of behaviour that is observable. It also means an objective science that depends on experimental and observable data.
b) All human actions and behaviours are the outcome of physiochemical processes. As a result of this, all human behaviours are very much related to the physiological and neurological reactions in the human body. This fact also reveals that psychology is related to the biological sciences. Therefore, human behaviours are nothing more than the way man responds to the stimuli that come from the environment.
c) Behaviourists accept determinism in their version of psychology. They deem that every human response (behaviour and action) can be predicted by the type of stimulus that triggers man's responses.
d) Environmental factors are the dominant factors that produce the different types of human personalities[14]

As radical behaviourists do not believe much in man's innate knowledge and other hidden potentials existing at birth that can emerge and manifest later in life, they take a neutral stance regarding the question of whether man is good or bad by nature. Their neutrality asserts that man is neither intrinsically good nor bad. Therefore, all human behaviours, whether good or bad, are learned from the environment in which they live. To them, man learns through both normal learning processes and social learning. Man can influence others through his behaviour and,

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[12] Watson, John Broadus. (1928). *The ways of behaviorism*. New York and London: Harper & Brothers, p.104.

[13] Op. cit. Stevenson, L., (1987), pp.106-107.

[14] Langgulung, Hasan. (1981). *Beberapa tinjauan dalam pendidikan Islam*. Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Pustaka Antara, p.127.

likewise, be influenced by others in his behaviour. As such, they place significant emphasis on stimulus-response, reinforcement, reward, and punishment in their concept of learning. Additionally, they believe that man can conceptualize and control his behaviour.[15]

By taking a neutral position in their concept of human nature, they do not believe in ideas such as universal values or ethics that can be common to all humanity. On the contrary, they argue that every individual is a product of the culture, norms, and customs in which he or she has been raised. Badri (1996), commenting on the behaviourist concept of human nature, states the following:

> Man's nature, if he can have any nature at all, is fully determined by his environment as though he were a feather or a dry leaf on a windy day. So, man's nature is neutral; a tabula rasa. His values are simply a product of his culture, and since every part of the world has its unique culture, then values and morals must be relative and there is no place in the behaviouristic conception for any fixed moral commandment or global ethical consciousness.[16]

Mental Health in Radical Behaviourism

The behaviourist concept of mental health explains an individual's ability to develop natural tendencies and habits that help them adapt, interact, and get along with others in society. It also addresses how one faces decision-making situations. An individual's habits should comply with the accepted practices of their immediate environment. Under such conditions, one is deemed to be in a good state of mental health. Conversely, when one develops or acquires habits that are not acceptable to society, they are considered to be in a poor state of mental health, resulting in disturbed emotions. Thus, the criterion that determines a person's well-being and mental health is the social criteria that relate to their environment.[17]

Therapeutic Practices in Radical Behaviourism

Psychotherapy under the behaviourist concept aims to change specific targeted behaviours as well as the pathological symptoms of clients, rather than attempting to alter some unseen or unconscious inner state of the human psyche, as advocated by psychoanalysis.[18]

In behaviourism, the terms "modification" and "behaviour therapy" are synonymous; they describe the effort made by therapists to help clients change their pathological behaviours. The behaviourist therapist functions as a teacher, director, and expert in diagnosing maladaptive behaviour while prescribing curative measures to help clients improve their behaviours. In

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[15] Op. cit., George, R. L. & Cristiani, T. S., (1990), p. 88.

[16] Badri, Malik Babikar. (1996). The AIDS dilemma: A progeny of modernity. In Al-Attas, Sharifah Shifah (ed). *Islam and challenge of modernity* (pp. 123-210). Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, pp.162-163.

[17] Op. Cit., Langgulung, Hasan, (1981), pp.128-129.

[18] Ewen, R.B. (1993). An introduction to theories of personality. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publications, p.486.

psychotherapy, behaviourists assume that clients, during therapy, can improve their pathological problems by modifying one or more of the various factors that influence their behaviour, using the techniques and skills of self-change provided. The main principle in behaviour therapy is that the client has the major say in deciding the objectives of the treatment. A client in therapy is encouraged to act rather than to ponder passively or introspect deeply on their problems.[19]

The following is an in-depth information on the nature and characteristics of the behaviourist psychotherapy:

     a) Behaviour therapy helps people respond to life situations the way they would like to respond. This includes increasing the frequency and/or range of a person's desired behaviours, thoughts and feelings; and decreasing or eliminating unwanted behaviours, thoughts, and feelings.
     b) Behaviour therapy does not try to modify an emotional core of attitudes or feelings within the personality.
     c) Behaviour therapy takes the posture that a positive therapeutic relationship is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for effective psychotherapy.
     d) In behaviour therapy, the complaints of the client are accepted as the primary focus of psychotherapy-not as symptoms for some underlying problems.
     e) In behaviour therapy, the client and the therapist come to an explicit understanding of the problem presented in terms of actual behaviour (e.g. specific therapeutic goals, stated in such a way that both client and therapist know when these goals have been attained.[20]

Human Nature in Humanistic Psychology

Humanistic psychology, which emerged after psychoanalysis and behaviourism, has often been called the "Third Force" in psychology. This school of psychology came into existence through inspiration drawn from existential and phenomenological philosophies that emphasized the importance of the "here and now" in human life. As the "Third Force," this school of psychology began in the United States and Europe in the 1950s. Since then, it has been steadily expanding in both number and influence. The reason for the advent of humanistic psychology can be clearly understood from the quotation below:

> The movement can be viewed as both a protest and a new programme, even as a new school and a system. Its protest is directed against the entire orientation of psychology since Hobbes and Locke, against its Newtonian and Darwinian models of man, against its mechanistic, deterministic and reductionist character. While both Freudian and Behaviourism emphasize man's continuity with the animal world, Humanistic psychology pays special attention to the characteristics and capacities which make man uniquely different from animals.[21]

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[19] Op. cit., Corey, (1986), pp.176-179.

[20] Fadimen, J. & Frager, R. (1994). *Personality and personal growth* (3rd. ed.). New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, pp.360-361.

[21] Misiak, H. & Sexton, V.S. (1973). *Phenomenological, existential and humanistic psychologies*. New York: Grune

Humanistic psychology, as a movement, was not satisfied with Freud's concept of human nature, which depicted man as an animal driven by sexual and aggressive energy, causing him to be wild and reckless in the pursuit of his selfish motives. Abraham Maslow (1908-1970), in his attempt to challenge the partial truth of Freud's ideas on human nature, made the following statement:

> It is as if Freud supplied to us only the sick half of psychology and we must now fill it out with the healthy half. Perhaps this healthy psychology will give us more possibilities for controlling and improving our lives and for making ourselves better people. Perhaps this will be more fruitful than asking "how to get unsick".[22]

One of the many concerns of humanistic psychology is to highlight the positive aspects of human nature that are overlooked by earlier schools of Western psychology. Humanistic psychologists pay much attention to and strongly emphasize the unique powers of human nature, such as reflection, reasoning, judgment, self-awareness, rationality, and creative imagination.

Even though humanistic psychologists emphasized the unique powers of individuals, they did not fail to acknowledge the existence of unconscious and irrational motives as part of human nature. To them, more important than these unconscious and irrational motives is conscious planning, which highlights that each person is unique due to his or her learning and personal experiences. According to them, the uniqueness of each individual should encourage everyone to discover who they are and what sort of person they want to be. Only through such effort can one fully develop his or her potential as a self-directing human being.[23]

The humanistic concept of human nature differs from the psychoanalytic and behaviourist schools of psychology. Humanistic psychologists oppose the ideas of psychoanalysis, which states that humans are irrational, unsocialized, and self-destructive, and behaviourism, which posits that humans are merely mechanical beings reacting to stimuli from the environment. In contrast, humanistic psychology presents an optimistic view of human nature. Psychologists in this school believe that humans are intrinsically good and can guide, regulate, and control themselves toward becoming fully functioning individuals and achieving self-actualization.

To understand further the humanistic concept of human nature one has to venture into their basic assumptions in psychology. Thus, the following are their major assumptions in psychology:

a) Man is good by his nature. His egoistic and aggressive natures are symptoms of mental illness which he develops due to disappointment, frustration and also due to his denial as a human being striving towards personal growth and self-actualization.

b) Man is different from all other creatures. Man's abilities and tendencies supersede that of animals and in many ways, animals cannot do the things man can do. He also can think and execute things according to his plans. The process of planning in man is a conscious intellectual process based on his tendency to recall what happened in the past, to perceive what happens in the present, and to hope for what is about to happen

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& Stratton, p.115.

[22] Maslow, Abraham. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being*. (2nd edn.). New York: D. Van Nostrand, p.5.

[23] Morris, C.G. (1990). *Contemporary psychology and effective behavior* (7th edn.). New York: Harper Collins Publishers, p.40.

    in the future. Another unique characteristic of man which is not present in animals is that he is capable of creating, developing and also of recording and transmitting cultural heritage from one generation to the other.

c) Human beings grow and progress in life. Man, continuously grows and advances in life for better progress and improvements in life to attain self-actualization.

d) Every individual is a potential person to experience his or her life. Individual or personal experience in life is a unique experience in every human being. The 'here and now' in man's life is more important than interpreting the past hidden experiences and feelings that lurk from the unconscious part of the human psyche.

e) All psychological data on the study of man's behaviour, personality, motivation, etc. should be collected from people who are psychologically well and also from those who experience life happily and pleasantly, and not from people who suffer from psycho-pathological illnesses. [24][25]

Before delving further into the humanistic concept of human nature, it is appropriate to examine the term "self-actualization" and the characteristics of a "self-actualizing" person as perceived and conceived by humanists. An in-depth exploration of a "self-actualizing" individual is deemed important at this juncture of the study because the noun "self-actualization" and the verb "self-actualizing" are terms frequently used by humanists. It is also worth mentioning that all their views on humanity—whether related to personality, mental health, creativity, psychotherapy, or motivation—are ultimately linked to self-actualization, a term coined by Kurt Goldstein (1878–1965) but later popularized by Maslow and Carl Rogers (1902–1987). Thus, the synthesized ideas of Maslow and Rogers on self-actualization are well defined by Zimbardo (1992) in these words:

> Self-actualization is described as a constant striving to realize one's inherent potential- to fully develop one's capacities and talents. Experiences that are perceived to maintain or enhance the self are evaluated positively and sought out. Those experiences that oppose the positive growth of the person are evaluated negatively and avoided. This innate striving toward self-fulfilment and the realization of one's unique potentials is a constructive, guiding force that moves each person toward generally positive behaviours and enhancement of the self.[26]

The above definition demands a closer understanding of the characteristics and qualities of individuals who fall under the category of 'self-actualizing' people. Maslow, who popularized 'self-actualization,' also listed fifteen qualities of 'self-actualizing' individuals. The following is a list of the qualities of a 'self-actualizing' person given by Maslow:

1. Able to perceive reality accurately and efficiently.
2. Accepting of self, of others, and of the world.
3. Spontaneous and natural, particularly in thought and emotion.

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[24] Op. cit., Langgulung, Hasan (1981), pp.131-132.

[25] Langgulung, Hasan (1991a). *Kreativiti dan pendidikan: Suatu kajian psikologi dan falsafah*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, pp.6-7.

[26] Zimbardo, P.G. (1992). *Psychology and life* (13th edn.). New York: Harper Collins Publishers, p.525.

4. Problem-centred: concern with problems outside themselves and capable of retaining a broad perspective.
5. Need and desire solitude and privacy; can rely on their own potentialities and resources.
6. Autonomous: relatively independent of extrinsic satisfactions, for example, acceptance or popularity.
7. Capable of a combined freshness of appreciation of even the simplest, most commonplace experiences (for example, a sunset, a flower, or another person).
8. Experience "mystic" or "oceanic" feelings in which they feel out of time and place and at one with nature.
9. Have a sense of identification with humankind as a whole.
10. Form their deepest ties with relatively few others.
11. Truly democratic; unprejudiced and respectful of all others.
12. Ethical, able to discriminate between means and ends.
13. Thoughtful, philosophical, unhostile sense of humour; laugh at the human condition, not at a particular individual.
14. Creative and inventive, not necessarily possessing great talents, but a naïve and unspoiled freshness of approach.
15. Capable of some detachment from the culture in which they live, recognizing the necessity for change and improvement. (Maslow cited in Mischel)[27]
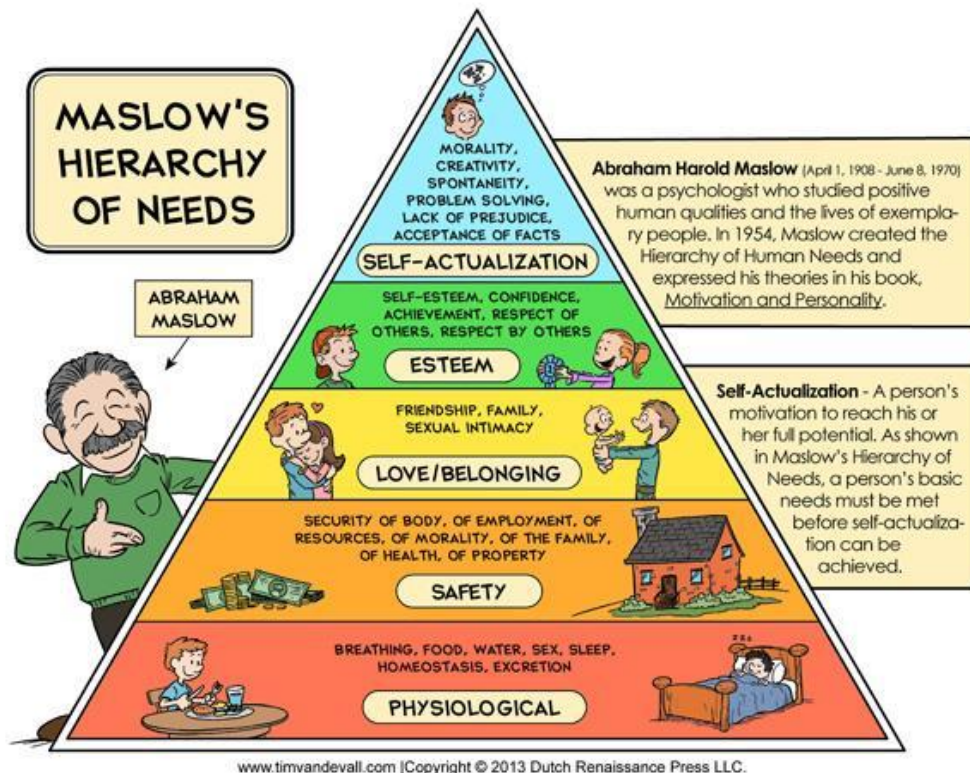

Figure 3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs[28]

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[27] Mischel, W. (1993). *Introduction to personality*. (5th edn.). Orlando: Harcout Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, p.267.

Humanistic Perspective on Mental Health

Humanistic psychology deems people who are psychologically healthy as those who can actualize their potential as much as possible. In Maslow's opinion, psychologically healthy individuals tend to accept themselves for what they are. They are more open to admitting their weaknesses, even though they do not make efforts to improve them. They also feel less restricted by cultural norms and customs, allowing them to express their desires freely. In other words, they are not ruled by the standards imposed and expected by society but by their character. Furthermore, Maslow thinks people who cherish good mental health tend to have relatively few friends, but they enjoy deep and rewarding friendships. He also considers creative individuals—according to his definition of creativity—to be people of good mental health. Last but not least, psychologically healthy individuals are considered potentially fit to experience peak experiences in their lives. Peak experiences, according to Maslow, are pleasant moments when people feel free from anxieties and experience a sense of togetherness with nature.[29]

Therapeutic Approaches in Humanistic Psychology

Psychotherapy in humanistic psychology is based on client-centred therapy. Carl Rogers, who popularized client-centred therapy, emphasized that the aim of therapy, while meant to solve clients' problems, is also to assist clients in their growth process, enabling them to cope with both immediate and future challenges. Furthermore, psychotherapy in humanistic psychology invites individuals to discover their real selves. The ultimate aim of the therapy is to help individuals undergoing therapy become fully functioning persons. Rogers further explained that the type of individuals expected to emerge after undergoing psychotherapy are those who become immensely actualized, with openness to experience, trust in themselves, an internal source of evaluation, and a willingness to continue growing. In humanistic psychology, the therapist builds a strong relationship with clients on a personal level, creating the much-needed freedom and courage for clients to venture into and explore areas of their lives that were either overlooked or distorted before therapy.[30]

In addition to the above, the therapist in the process of psychotherapy should listen very attentively to the clients and feel empathy and sympathy for what emerges from the deep recesses of the client's heart. Also, during psychotherapy, the therapist does not assume an authoritative position to direct the client in any decision-making. Hence, the goals in psychotherapy are decided by the client, such as any behavioural change that is desired, typically moving from bad to good, etc.

Psychotherapy in the humanistic context is more concerned with remedying the client's immediate situation and preparing them to handle future problems successfully. This approach is

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[28] (http://www.timvandevall.com/printable-maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-chart/). *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.* Retrieved on 18th Jan. 2016.

[29] Burger, J.M. (1986). *Personality: theory and research*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, pp.272-273.

[30] Op. cit., Corey (1986), pp.101-107.

diametrically opposed to the psychoanalytic approach, which places great importance on immediate and past experiences, particularly childhood experiences of the client.

Furthermore, humanistic psychologists do not apply methods used in psychoanalysis, such as hypnotism and dream interpretation, in psychotherapy to understand the psychological problems faced by the client. Instead, they seek the information they need directly from the client to assist with verbal communication. As such, they emphasize the importance of good listening skills for the therapist. They believe attentive listening can help the therapist reach the root of any psychological issue the client is experiencing.

Human Nature in Islamic Psychology

Among all creations in the heavens and earth, only man has been bestowed with many distinctive qualities. As the recipient of these qualities from Allah the Almighty, man is placed on the highest pedestal in the hierarchy of creations. Some of these distinctive features are: man has been created in the best of forms (Al-Qur'ān, *Al-Tīn*: 1-4), provided with creative intelligence (Al-Qur'ān, *Al-Baqarah*: 31-34), and given the power of speech and freedom of choice (Al-Qur'ān, *Al-Rahmān*: 4; *Al-Insān*: 3). Since man has been endowed with such noble qualities, or for some other reasons only known to the Creator, man has been chosen to be His *Khalīfah* (vicegerent) on earth. Furthermore, man has been further honored in stature and position when Allah made all things created in the heavens and earth to be of service to him (Al-Qur'ān, *Al-Jāthiyah*: 13; *Al-Isrā*': 70).[31] After giving a preview of the status enjoyed by man in the Qur'an, the following will be an elaboration on the preceding points highlighted on man:

The Islamic Concept of Man

The Islamic concept of man is a comprehensive and all-encompassing one. According to this concept, among all creations in the heavens and earth, only man stands at the highest pinnacle, worthy of being called the best creation of Allah the Almighty. It has been mentioned in the Qur'an that God has created man most beautifully and excellently: "*We have indeed created man in the best of moulds*" (Al-Qur'ān, *al-Tīn*: 4). This exalted position and stature make man superior to angels and other luminous creations like the sun, moon, and stars. The greatness of man has been further explained in the following verse:

> We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them transport on land and sea;
> given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special
> favours above a great part of our creation (*Al-Qur'ān, Al-Isrā'*:70).

Having achieved a noble position in the sight of Allah does not guarantee that a person will remain in that position forever. As explained in *Sūrah al-Tīn*, verse 5, a person will fall from the

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[31] Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak (2011). *Contribution of Iqbal's dynamic personality theory to Islamic psychology: A contrastive analysis with Freud and selected mainstream western psychology*, (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM), p.1.

honored position granted by Allah when he/she transgresses the limits set by Him. Thus, achieving honor or disgrace in the sight of Allah is a choice left to each individual.

Being the best creation, man in the Holy Qur'an has been addressed as *Khalifatullah fī al-ard* (Allah's vicegerent on earth). This esteemed position was conferred upon man despite the protest and remonstration from the angels on the eve of his creation. The exact dialogue between Allah and the angels, which explains why the angels protested, can be well understood by examining this verse from *Sūrah Al-Baqarah*.

> Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said: "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? - whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (names)?" He said: "I know what ye know not" (*Al-Baqarah*: 30).

The exegesis of the above verse explains that the angels foresaw some negative attitudes of man, while Allah, the All-Wise, saw many of the positive things that man is capable of performing on earth. As such, Allah granted man many gifts that would enable him to carry out his duties as the vicegerent of God. Among the gifts that man acquired from Allah were authority, freedom of action, and intelligence. In commenting on how man should use these God-given gifts, Afzalur Rahman (1988) explains:

> He was to be totally independent and autonomous in his sphere of work on the earth and would be well-equipped with knowledge so that he could discover the secrets of the Universe through study, research and experience, learn to explain the forces of nature for his benefit, and gain mastery over them according to his own requirements and plan.[32]

The title *Khalīfah* places man in an honored position as Allah's deputy, administrator, and representative on earth. His status as Allah's *Khalīfah* gives him the power and authority to rule, manage, and preserve the earth. Al-Maududi, in his commentary on the Holy Qur'an, explains that man's role as the *Khalīfah* (pl. *Khalā'if* and *Khulafā'*) of Allah does not make him the master of the universe but rather a deputy who is allowed to exercise the delegated powers given to him by Allah, the All-Supreme. He further expounds that the office of vicegerency can be used by man in two ways: to either abuse the power and authority for the spread of evil and injustice or to use them for the betterment of humanity.[33]

In Islam, man is born with the *Fitrah* (primordial nature). *Al-Fitrah*, in the Arabic language, conveys several different meanings that reveal the many positive and interesting dimensions of human nature. One of the meanings of Al-Fitrah explains that man comes into this world without any stain of sin. This Islamic concept of Al-*Fitrah* rejects the doctrine of the "Original Sin" as espoused in Christianity. Another meaning of *Al-Fitrah*, as stated in the Holy Qur'an, explains that naturally, man is born as a believer in Allah the Almighty.

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[32] Rahman, Afzalur (1988). *Muhammad: Encyclopedia of Seerah. Vol. 6*, (London: Seerah Foundation), p.1.

[33] Al-Maududi, Seyyed Abu A'la (1992). *The meaning of the Qur'an, Vol.1 (7th edn.)*, (Lahore: Islamic Publication (PVT) Limited, pp. 66-68.

> Therefore, stand firm in your devotion to the upright faith- the nature made by Allah, the one on which mankind is created- and laws of Nature ordained by Allah cannot be changed. That is the standard of true faith, but most among mankind do not know (*Al-Qur'ān, Al-Rūm*: 30).

Further exploration of the topic of man in the Holy Qur'an reveals that he has a dual nature: body and spirit (*Rūh*). The Holy Qur'an explains that after creating Adam (P.B.U.H.), Allah breathed into him His spirit: "*Behold! Thy Lord said to the angels: 'I am about to create man, from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape. When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him*" (Al-Qur'ān, *Al-Hijr*: 28-29). As such, all human beings, who are the progeny of Adam (P.B.U.H.), are made up of two elements: the physical body, which represents clay and is mortal, and the *Rūh*, or spirit, which is immortal and leaves the body upon the death of an individual.

Man, who has been made the most honored creation of Allah, is also entrusted with the *Amānah* (trust) from Allah: "*We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof. But man undertook it—he was indeed unjust and foolish*" (Al-Qur'ān, Al-Ahzāb: 72). The word *Amānah* in the Holy Qur'an has several meanings; it can refer to reason, intellect, or the faculty of volition.[34] The other aspects of *Amānah* also refer to the power and authority given to man through the office of vicegerency. Lastly, *Amānah* could also signify the total of all the decrees, commands (*Amr*), and prohibitions (*Nahy*) present in the *Sharī'ah*.[35]

Another aspect of man, contained within the Islamic concept of human nature, is that man has been given the *Mīthāq* (covenant). Through this covenant, humanity as a whole has accepted Allah to be their Lord and Cherisher while they were in the form of spirits in *'Ālam Al-Arwāh* (the realm of the spirits). This contract between man and his Lord was established long before he was born. The Holy Qur'an discusses this contract in *Sūrah Al-A'rāf*:

> When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam from their loins-their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): 'Am I not your Lord (Who cherishes and sustains you)?'- They said: 'Yea! we do testify!' (This), lest Ye should say on the Day of Judgement: 'Of this we were never mindful' (*Al-Qur'ān, Al-A'rāf*: 172).

According to Afzalur Rahman (1988), through this covenant, Allah has imbued in the heart of every human being the knowledge that He is Allah, the One and Only Lord who deserves to be worshipped. The content of this covenant is retained in the subconscious mind of man as potentiality that can be brought to consciousness. Factors such as the type of education and social environment could never totally efface or tarnish the covenant; at most, they could pervert and prevent it from coming to the conscious part of the human being. In addition, Rahman believes that despite the perversion and prevention caused by wrong education and negative social

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[34] Asad, Muhammad. *The message of the Qur'an,* (Notes no. 87-89), (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1980), pp.653.

[35] Op. cit., Rahman, Afzalur (1988), pp.15-16.

influence, the covenant, as a potential, lies embedded in man and will emerge into reality in response to positive external factors. Some of these factors that have consistently invited and called humanity to the remembrance of the covenant include the prophets, heavenly books, inviters to the Truth from among the followers of the prophets, a good social environment, and proper and correct education.[36]

Man, being the vicegerent of Allah, was also elevated in his stature and position when he was taught *Al-Asmā'* (the attributes of Allah/the beautiful names of Allah) by God Almighty Himself. The reference to this—man as the recipient of 'the names'—has been stated in the following verse:

> And He taught Adam the names of all things; then He placed them before the angels, and said: "Tell Me the names of these if ye are right." They said: Glory to Three: of knowledge we have none, save what Thou has taught us: in truth it is Thou who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom" (*Al-Qur'ān, Al-Baqarah*: 31-32).

As a result of Allah teaching Al-Asmā' to Adam, the human race as a whole was able to achieve the status of being the most knowledgeable of all creations in the heavens and the earth. Muslim scholars differ in their opinions regarding the exact meaning of *Al-Asmā'* mentioned in *Sūrah Al-Baqarah*, verse 31. In commenting on the views of early Muslim scholars on *Al-Asmā'*, Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1989) states:

> The names of things: "according to commentators means the inner nature and qualities of things, and things here would include feelings. The particular qualities of feelings which were outside the nature of angels were put by Allah into the nature of man. Man was thus able to love and understand love, and thus plan and initiate, as becomes the office of vicegerent.[37]

According to Langgulung (1986), *Al-Asmā'* mentioned in verse 31 of Al-Baqarah refers to *Al-Asmā' Al-Husnā* (the 99 Beautiful Names of Allah) mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. He further expounds that these beautiful names represent the attributes of Allah given to humans as potentials that need to be developed and actualized in the life of an individual Muslim. By doing so, the individual will be able to fulfill and perform his duties and obligations, which are considered in Islam as acts of *'Ibādah* (acts of worship done in seeking the good pleasure of Allah).[38]

The meaning deduced from the word *Al-Asmā'* reflects a clear aspect of human nature: man has been exalted in his potential and knowledge compared to what has been given to the angels. Regarding the knowledge granted to both angels and humans, Zafar Afaq Ansari (1992) opines that *Al-Asmā'* signifies an immense and unlimited potential for knowledge. He further asserts

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[36] Ibid., Rahman, Afzalur (1988), pp.9-10.

[37] Ali, Abdullah Yusuf, (1989). *The Holy Qur'an: Text, translation and commentary*, (Maryland: Amana Corporation), Note no. 48, 1989, p.24.

[38] Langgulung,Hasan.(1986). *Manusia dan Pendidikan: Suatu Analis Psikologi dan Pendidikan*, (Jakarta: Penerbit Pustaka Al-Husna), pp.263-264.

that the knowledge given to angels is limited and specific, while humans are endowed not only with knowledge but also with the capacity to generate new knowledge.[39]

Another aspect that needs to be highlighted here is the statement made by the angels in *Al-Baqarah*, verse 31. This verse reveals the humble acceptance of the angels regarding their limited knowledge compared to man. It also shows that their protest and underestimation of man's strengths and potential at the time of his creation were mistaken.

Moreover, man in contrast to the angels, has the freedom of choice to act, react, and respond to the various biological, psychological, and sociological (environmental) demands of his mundane life. In exercising this choice, man can be either good or evil; a righteous individual or a perverted transgressor to what has been instructed in the Holy Qur'an. This is stated in the Holy Qur'an: "*We showed him the way; whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will)*" (Al-Qur'ān, *Al-Insān*: 3). A similar statement regarding the freedom of choice is mentioned in *Sūrah al-Balad*, verses 8-10: "*Have We not given him two eyes, and a tongue and two lips, and shown him the two highways (of good and evil)*?"

In addition to man, another creation of Allah that is a 'rational' being and enjoys the freedom of choice is the jinn (genie). However, the freedom enjoyed by the jinn is limited compared to that of man.[40]

The final aspect of man in Islam is that he is forgetful. In the Holy Qur'an, one can read about the forgetful nature of man in the story of Adam (pbuh). As the father of humanity, he ate the fruit of the forbidden tree together with his companion Hawwa (pbuh) while in the garden of paradise. This incident is mentioned in *Sūrah Tāhā* 20:115: "*We had already, beforehand, taken the covenant of Adam, but he forgot, and We found on his part no firm resolve*" (Ali, 1989). This nature of being forgetful is a trait that the progeny of Adam has inherited from him.

In concluding the preceding discussion on human nature from the Islamic perspective, it can be said that man shares some of his basic characteristics with animals, and he also inherits some attributes found in the angels, as well as some of Allah's attributes. In his desire for food, sex, anger, greed, and rivalry, man resembles animals. In his interest in singing the praises of God and performing other meritorious acts of devotion, he resembles the angels. In creating discord and enmity among people, man resembles the evil *Shaitan* (the evil spirit). Finally, in showing love, care, kindness, sympathy, and empathy, man emulates some of the godly attributes of God Almighty.

The laxity on the part of man in developing and actualizing the angelic and godly attributes within him makes him steep and deep in his animal and satanic nature. As a result, he becomes a perverted transgressor, going beyond the limits set by Allah in the Qur'an. Conversely, when man develops and actualizes the angelic and godly attributes, he becomes an angelic as well as a godly individual, qualifying himself or herself for gaining Allah's good pleasure. It is envisioned

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[39] Ansari, Zafar Afaq (ed). (1992) *Qur'anic concepts of human psyche*, (Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought, Pakistan), pp.1-14.

[40] Op. cit., Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak, (2011), p. 81.

in the Qur'an and Hadith that such an individual will experience happiness in this world and everlasting felicity in the hereafter.[41]

Mental Health in Islamic Psychology

Mental health, in the context of Islamic psychology, does not only describe the state of an individual who is free from psychopathology; it also pays significant attention to the many positive aspects through which mental health can be maintained and improved. According to Hasan Langgulung (1934-2008), mental health in Islam describes the condition of the human psyche that feels content and tranquil by abiding the good morals of Islam in life. He further believes that the Islamic emphasis on good morals and the avoidance of bad habits and degrading conduct explains how following good morals leads to a good state of mental health, while bad habits and conduct lead to a poor state of mental health.[42]

Hasan believes that the good morals of Islam serve as a strong foundation for the Islamic concept of mental health because they encourage and nurture an individual to build positive relationships with Allah Almighty, with themselves, with nature, and with others in society. It is hoped that an individual who succeeds in establishing and maintaining these good relationships will experience a positive state of mental health. Many psychological problems, such as stress, anxiety, conflict, envy, and rage, often arise when any one of the relationships falters.

Islamic psychology further explains that, in his effort to achieve positive mental health, man must go through a process of spiritual purification popularly known as '*Tazkiyat al-Nafs*'. During this course, many of man's spiritual diseases are cured not physically with drugs and surgery, but through spiritual cures and healing such as *Dhikr* (meditation and remembrance of Allah), *Tilawah* (reading of the Qur'an), and *Taubah* (repentance), among others. Early Muslim scholars wrote extensively on how to maintain positive mental health. Notably, Al-Ghazali (1058-1111), a great thinker, philosopher, and Sufi scholar, wrote passionately about human nature and the spiritual path of man. In his monumental work, '*Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*' (Revival of the Religious Sciences), he discusses the journey of the human *Nafs* (soul).[43]

In "*Ihya*", Al-Ghazali elaborates on the many dimensions of human life related to physical and spiritual cleanliness, knowledge, worship, and relationships—both with God and with others. He explains how one can purify the soul from lowly, animalistic passions through religious rituals and meditation. Al-Ghazali also provides ways to change behaviour to become a better person, ultimately leading to spiritual upliftment that grants happiness in this life and everlasting felicity in the hereafter. Regarding the spiritual dimension of humanity, he discusses the nature of the human soul and its psychospiritual development toward perfection. His ideas on personality development, such as *Insan Kamil* or *Insan Salih* (the perfect man or righteous man), include maintaining positive mental health and engaging in spiritual training to avert the diseases that linger in the human soul.

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[41] Ibid., Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak, (2011), pp.77-96.

[42] Langgulung, Hasan. (1991b). *Kreativitas dan pendidikan: Analisis psikologi dan falsafah*. (Jakarta: Penerbit Pustaka Al-Husna), pp. 203-204.

[43] See Imam Al-Ghazali. n.d. *Ihya ulum al-din*. Vol. 1, (Egypt: Dar Misr lil- Tiba'ah).

In *Kitab Riyada al-Nafs* (spiritual training) from the *Ihya*, Al-Ghazali explains the *Amrad al-Qulub* (spiritual diseases of the heart). In this chapter, the great Imam dwells at length on the different kinds of spiritual diseases that attack the human soul. As a mystic, Al-Ghazali not only highlights the spiritual diseases experienced by humanity but also provides remedies for overcoming many of the spiritual and psychological problems faced by individuals. Among the spiritual diseases identified by scholars like Al-Ghazali, Suhrawardi (1154-1191), and others are:

1. Nifaq (hypocrisy)
2. Pride and arrogance
3. Hawa or desire
4. Self-beholding
5. Avarice
6. Negligence
7. Restlessness and levity
8. Ostentatiousness or Ria (Cited in Amjad)[44]

Further reading into Al-Ghazali explains that the stability and harmony of the human soul act as prerequisites for an individual to enjoy good mental health and happiness. To Al-Ghazali, the human soul is the "king of the body," and all other parts of the body act as servants that follow its command. When the soul is well-guided by the Divine Will, enriched with good spiritual qualities, and inculcated with true knowledge, all of a person's mental attitudes and dispositions will be good and positive.

Islamic psychology, based on the teachings of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, explains that human personality development and mental health are closely related to the spiritual dimension of man. In the Qur'an, the spiritual dimension of man is described using terms like *Ruh* (spirit), *Qalb* (heart), *'Aql* (intellect), and *Nafs* (self). The constant interplay and struggle among these four entities in the human psyche will determine an individual's personality type and the level of mental health they enjoy. Islamic psychology emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance among the demands placed by these four psychic entities. An investigation into the spiritual dimension explained in Islam reveals that among the four entities, the *Qalb* plays a greater role and function compared to the others. The following discussion will focus on the *Qalb*.

The word *al-Qalb* appears one hundred and forty-four times in the Qur'an. The heart (*al-Qalb*) mentioned in the Qur'an should not be mistakenly understood as the gross physical organ that lies in the bosom of an individual. The *Qalb*, as explained by Muslim scholars, refers to the subtle spiritual light that is contained within the cone-shaped structure of the human heart. The physical human heart can be considered the point of interaction between the body and the *Qalb* as a spiritual entity.[45] Concerning the role and function of the *Qalb*, Ansari (1992) said the following:

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[44] Amjad, Naumana. (1992). Psyche in Islamic Gnostic and philosophical traditions. In Ansari, Zafar Afaq (ed.), *Qur'anic concepts of human psyche* (pp.39-56). (Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought (Pakistan)), pp.49-50.

[45] Haq, Manzurul. (1992). The locus of human psyche. In Ansari, Zafar Afaq (ed). *Qur'anic concepts of human psyche* (pp.57-67). (Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought Pakistan), p.62.

> [It] represents the faculty or capacity of human personality which enables the person to know and understand the reality of things, make evaluative judgements, and sift the right from the wrong. The functions of the *qalb* are described quite frequently in the Qur'an along with the sensory capacities of human beings, indicating that what the *qalb* does is an extension and a superior function of what is being done at the lower level by the sensory organs like eyes and ears. However, if the functions of the *qalb* are blocked the sensory organs lose their utility.[46]

The relationship of the *Qalb* with the sense organs and sense perceptions can be well explained: these organs act as windows or gateways through which the transcendental *Qalb* receives information about the physical world. The data received by the *Qalb* is processed by its inner illumination, revealing their interrelationships and meanings to the self. Later, this meaning forms the basis for judgment and decision. As such, the *Qalb* makes the evaluative judgment and arrives at a decision, while the brain and nervous system function as instruments to implement it.[47]

The *Qalb*'s role as the evaluative decision-maker in the human psyche makes it the center or seat of personality, alongside its other roles as the seat of intellectual faculties, understanding, affections, and emotions. The human *Qalb*, when functioning properly, can enhance the positive tendencies of the human personality, leading to a state of constant awareness and self-understanding. Conversely, when it becomes subdued by the continuous persuasive demands of the *Nafs Ammarah* (the *Nafs* impelling toward evil/the evil self), it loses its proper perceptual and cognitive functions. As a result, a person's God-consciousness and capacity for knowledge and sound judgment become clouded. [48] [49]

As a consequence of the above state, man loses his honoured position as the best of creations, descending to a level below that of animals in his nature. This downfall is caused by the spiritual blindness of the *Qalb*, which affects man's sensory organs, emotions, affections, cognition, and personality. The following verse vividly elucidates the condition of a man whose *Qalb* is defeated by the onslaught of the *Nafs Ammarah*.

> Many are the Jinns and men We have made for Hell: They have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle-nay more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning) (Al-A'raf 7:179).

The additional information on the *Qalb*'s vital and central role in producing a person with a sound personality—one who is strong intellectually, spiritually, morally, socially, and emotionally—has been candidly mentioned in the following Hadith. This emphasizes the idea

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[46] Op. Cit. Ansari, (1992), p.6.

[47] Op. cit., Haq, Manzurul, (1992), p.62.

[48] Op. cit., Ansari, (1992), p.11

[49] Ahmad, Absar. (1992). Qur'anic concepts of human psyche. In Ansari, Zafar Afaq (ed.), *Quranic concepts of human psyche* (pp. 15-37). (Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought (Pakistan)), p.32.

that all human potential and goodness can only emerge and materialize when an individual's *Qalb* is in a good spiritual condition.

> "Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart"[50]
>
> (Narrated by Imam Bukhari cited in Khan), 1986, Vol. 1: 44).

Another aspect of the *Qalb* (heart) that deserves mentioning here is its meaning in Arabic, as well as its nature and relationship with the *Ruh* and *Nafs*. In Arabic, the noun *Qalb* is derived from the root word "*qalaba*" (verb), which means to turn around or to revolve. Its unfixed, unstable, and moving condition puts it in a state where it will have an inclination or tendency either to follow the *Ruh* or the *Nafs*. When the *Nafs Ammarah* becomes the dominant entity in the human psyche, the *Qalb* weakens and descends to the lowest level of the *Nafs*, joining the *Nafs Ammarah*. At this stage, the *Qalb*'s divine light fades, causing it to lose its power of cognition. Conversely, when the *Nafs Mutmainnah* becomes the dominant entity in the human psyche, the *Qalb* moves towards the *Ruh*. In this case, the *Qalb* becomes luminous and enjoys peace and tranquillity.

Unlike Western schools of psychology, Islamic psychology not only addresses the problem of mental health but also provides effective ways and means by which good mental health can be maintained and improved. Therefore, the following discussion focuses on some mechanisms through which psychopathological problems can be avoided.

One of the many causes of human mental illness is the feeling of frustration and despair that arises from envy and jealousy present in the human psyche. The effects of these negative emotions can lead to anxiety and depression. The Qur'an, which serves as a remedy and healing for the human soul, advises individuals not to compare their situation with others who may be in a better condition, as this can breed envy and jealousy.

> Hence, do not covet the bounties which Allah has bestowed more abundantly on some of you than on others. Men shall have a benefit from what they earn, and women shall have a benefit from what they earn Ask, therefore, Allah (to give you) out of His bounty: behold, Allah has indeed full knowledge of everything (Al-Nisa 4:32).

Besides avoiding envy and jealousy, man is also encouraged by the Qur'an to cultivate *Sabr* (patience) and *Shukr* (gratitude and contentment with Allah's blessings). By embodying these qualities, one can experience peace and harmony within the inner self. The emphasis on *Sabr* and *Shukr* is highlighted in the following verses of the Qur'an:

> O ye who believe seek help with patient perseverance and prayer: for Allah is with those who patiently persevere (*Al-Baqarah* 2: 153).

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[50] Khan, Muhammad Muhsin. (1986). *The translation of the meanings of Sahih al-Bukahari.* (6th edn.).
Vol.1. (Lahore: Kazi Publications), Vol. 1: 44

> And remember your Lord caused to be declared (publicly): "If ye are grateful, I
> will add more (favours) unto you; but if ye show ingratitude, truly My punishment
> is terrible indeed (*Ibrahim* 14:7).

Furthermore, man is bound to face trials and tribulations in life. At times when he faces grief and utter helplessness, this is what he has to say by calling out to the Almighty Allah in these words:

> Who say, when afflicted with calamity: "To Allah we belong, and to Him is our
> return (*Al-Baqarah* 2:156).

One more thing that causes depression and many other psychopathological problems is the concept of guilt in human lives. In Western psychology, particularly in psychoanalysis, repression of guilt causes many psychological tensions. In contrast, Islamic psychology introduces the concept of *Taubah* (repentance), which provides hope for a new life free from sin, anxiety, and depression. The concept of *Taubah*, which brings hope, peace, and harmony to the human self, has been mentioned in these verses:

> When those come to thee who believe in Our signs, say: "peace be on you." Your
> Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule of) Mercy: Verily, if any of you did evil
> in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct) Lo! He is Oft-
> Forgiving, Most Merciful (*Al-Anam* 6:54).

> And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own
> souls, earnestly bring Allah to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins – and
> who can forgive sins except Allah? - and are never obstinate in persisting
> knowingly in (the wrong) they have done (*Ali 'Imran* 3: 135).

> Say "O my servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the
> Mercy of Allah for Allah forgives all sins for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful
> (*Al-Zumar* 39: 53).

In addition to the above, the Qur'an also has the potential to easily subdue man's anger or rage which can cause a certain imbalance in his psyche, by motivating him to be patient. For those who can subdue their anger and love the acts of forgiveness and charity, Allah promises that they will be loved by Him:

> Those who spend (freely) whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain
> anger, and pardon (all) men – for Allah loves those who do good (*Ali 'Imran* 3:
> 134).

In general, the concept of mental health from the perspective of Islamic psychology can be well understood and explained by referring to this verse of the holy Qur'an:

> Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of
> Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction
> (*Al- Ra'd* 13: 28).

In the remembrance of Allah, man becomes free from stress, anxiety, frustration, mental conflict, and all other forms of mental illness. He becomes psychologically and spiritually strong,

enabling him to sail through all bitterness and hardship in life, regardless of the magnitude of the psychological burdens he must shoulder. The Islamic concept of mental health prepares individuals to face difficult situations and conditions without succumbing to the psychological pressures exerted on them. Among the challenges one may encounter are adversity, calamity, destruction, and tragedy. Thus, the Islamic concept of mental health provides the much-needed patience, perseverance, and persistence to confront life's challenges. These inner qualities form the psychological and latent spiritual powers that help individuals stay on the right track, without being misled by Satan or worldly forces. Ultimately, the Islamic concept of mental health fosters peace and harmony within the self, allowing individuals to feel satisfied with all that happens in their lives, without harbouring a rebellious attitude toward Allah the Almighty.

Psychotherapy from an Islamic Psychological Perspective

The way psychotherapy is viewed, conducted, and advocated by Islamic psychology differs significantly from the diverse theories conceptualized and practiced by Western schools of psychology. At this juncture of the research, it is interesting to highlight some of the major differences that exist between Western and Islamic perspectives on psychotherapy. After outlining these differences, this research will delve into the specific details of the Islamic concept of psychotherapy.

According to Malik Badri, existing Western theories of psychotherapy—particularly those advocated by popular schools such as psychoanalysis, behaviourism, and humanistic psychology—are based on secular and non-judgmental principles. Being secular in their approach, Western counsellors and psychotherapists do not incorporate religious discussions into their work and do not engage clients in any form of religiously directed dialogue to find solutions to their problems. Instead, they adopt a rationalistic stance, applying modern scientific methods to alleviate clients' psychological issues, such as stress, anxiety, depression, and conflict.

The non-judgmental principle in Western schools of psychology explains that psychotherapists and counsellors should not attempt to indoctrinate their clients with their beliefs and values. Thus, psychotherapists and counsellors should see themselves as scientists who apply a 'value-free' science that enables them to predict, control, and change the maladjusted human behaviours of their clients without conditioning any philosophical, ethical, spiritual, or religious views in deciding what is good, bad, or evil for the clients.[51]

In addition to the above, another aspect that is clear about Western counselling and psychotherapy is that counsellors and psychotherapists do not provide their clients with ideal role models to follow and imitate in terms of behaviour or how to face the many challenges in their daily lives.[52]

In contrast to the Western perspective of counselling and psychotherapy, the Islamic perspective presents a spectrum of interesting ideas and concepts. First and foremost, psychotherapy and counselling within Islamic psychology are based on the religion of Islam. As such, the teachings

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[51] Ibid. Badri, Malik Babikir, (1995), p.13.

[52] Ibid.Badri, Malik Babikir, (1995), p.25.

of Islam form the guiding principles in counselling and psychotherapy. Since Islamic principles form the cornerstone of Islamic psychotherapy, there is no room for 'value-free' psychotherapy, as practised in the West, within the Islamic Ummah. Islamic psychotherapy and counselling are 'value-laden' in nature and directed towards helping those in need. Therefore, psychotherapists and counsellors should always direct their clients to all that is good and permissible in the religion of Islam. Malik Badri, who views therapy and counselling as a form of *da'wah* (preaching), cautions that Muslim psychotherapists and counsellors rendering their help to clients should be aware that:

> All human actions of a Muslim are carefully categorized by jurists into Fard, good deeds and obligatory religious duties, Mustahabat, good deeds which are not obligatory, Halal, actions which are neither forbidden nor necessarily rewarding, Makruh, deeds that are frowned upon, and Haram, tabooed and clearly evil actions.[53]

With the guiding principles mentioned above, Muslim psychotherapists and counsellors do not apply the "no evil and no good" paradigm practised by Western schools of psychology. Instead, they should seize every opportunity to practice *al-amr bil ma'ruf wa al-nahyu 'an al-munkar* (to encourage people toward what is good and prevent them from what is evil). By doing this, psychotherapists and counsellors uphold the teachings found in the following verses of the Qur'an.

> And let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity (*Ali 'Imran* 3:104).

> Ye are the best of people, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah (*Ali 'Imran* 3: 110).

> Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancour: fear Allah: for Allah is strict in punishment (*Al-Ma'idah* 5:2).

Besides the above Qur'anic verses, the following Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) also emphasized the prevention and eradication of evils:

> He who amongst you see something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue; and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of faith.[54]

Concerning the above Hadith, Muslim psychotherapists and counsellors adopt the second position mentioned, viewing themselves as individuals who utilize their knowledge and good

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[53] Ibid.Badri, Malik Babikir,(1995), p.20.

[54] Imam Al-Nawawi. (1405/1984). *Sahih muslim bi-sharah al-nawawi.* 3rd edition. Vol.2, (Beirut: *Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi*), pp.22-25.

manners to provide valuable advice to their clients. The positive impact of their good words and examples is likely to create a significant effect in the hearts and minds of those they assist. This influence can foster new tendencies within clients, encouraging them to abandon negative, confused, or immoral thoughts and behaviours.

Another distinctive aspect of Islamic psychotherapy and counselling is that it is not solely the domain of specialized individuals. In particular, counselling can be conducted by parents, teachers, preachers, and all those who possess wisdom and a religiously oriented mindset. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of counselling as a means of assisting those facing problems, underscoring the obligation of *al-amr bil ma'ruf wa al-nahyu 'an al-munkar* (encouraging righteousness and preventing evil and shameful deeds).

Additionally, a marked difference between Western and Islamic perspectives on counselling and psychotherapy is the presence of role models in the Islamic tradition. Clients can draw inspiration from the biographies of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), his companions (*al-Sahabah*), and spiritual leaders as they navigate their psychological challenges. Furthermore, therapists themselves should serve as shining examples for clients seeking to transform their character, attitudes, and behaviours from negative to positive. Malik Badri notably emphasizes the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as an exemplary role model for clients and all of humanity, highlighting his profound influence:

> The ideal personality of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and his spiritually rich life as a Messenger of God, as a parent, as a army general, as a politician, as a teacher and counsellor and as a husband is a living example for the Holy Revelation he received. It concretizes all aspects of his blessed life in sickness and health, in suffering and pleasure in Divine contemplation or humour. All this is sentimentally and cognitively engraved in the hearts and souls of Muslims, and as patients or counselled, this rich psychic and spiritual reservoir can easily be tapped to treat, motivate, redeem or change negative habits.[55]

Badri's view stating that the Prophet's biography can be utilized as a reference in guiding people to improve their conduct and behaviour finds justification in the following verses and Hadith below:

> We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures (*Al-Anbiya* 21: 107).

> And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character (*Al-Qalam* 68: 4).

> I have been sent only for the purpose of perfecting good morals
> (Narrated by Imam Baihaqi (n.d.): 192).

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[55] Op. cit., Badri, Malik Babikir. (1995), p.28.

Najati (1985) and Badri (1979) believe that the holy Qur'an can be an efficacious remedy when used in counseling and psychotherapy. Both scholars believe that the Al-Qur'an, as a heavenly book that speaks significantly about man's psychological and spiritual well-being in this world as well as in the hereafter, can bring about dramatic change in clients who suffer from depression, tension, anxiety, bereavement, conflict, dilemma, and more. Their view, or rather their conviction, is based on the following verses of the holy Qur'an:

> We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy
> to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss (*Al-Isra* 17:
> 82).

> O mankind! There hath come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for
> the (disease) in your hearts- and for those who believe, a Guidance and a Mercy
> (*Yunus* 10: 57).

Malik Badri (1979) reports many interesting cases of how he solved the psychological problems of his clients by reading to them the many passages from the holy Qur'an about their problems. According to him, many of his clients were emotionally moved and burst into tears when they listened to his recital of the holy Qur'an[56].

Individuals reading of the Qur'an by people who face crisis, conflict and dilemma in their lives can feel relief and comfort in their hearts when they contemplate the meanings of the verses they read. Besides that, it is also accepted by most Muslim scholars that reading the Qur'an is not only considered an *Ibadah* (worship) but also forms a kind of communication that takes place between man with Allah the Almighty. In line with the verse that states the reading of the Qur'an as a remedy for the hearts, the following verse promises that believers who read it will taste peace and tranquillity in their hearts:

> Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of
> Allah: for without doubts in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction
> (*Al-Ra'd* 13:28).

By employing the Qur'an in psychotherapy, the therapists endeavour to dynamize the clients through the spiritual dynamism present in the Qur'an. The Holy Book of Islam on its part has the dynamic power to awaken and to invite those who come closer to it towards greater consciousness in life. As such, men who come under the light and guidance of the Qur'an will feel as though they are rejuvenated again in life.[57]

In addition to the above, the Qur'an, as the divine guidance for mankind, promises Allah's forgiveness to those who have sinned against their souls. It invites those who read it to contemplate the mighty works of Allah in the universe, and it offers hope and direction for people to amend and adjust their ways in life, transforming from bad to good. The Qur'an, without fail, promises felicity in the hereafter for those who are good and warns of punishment

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[56] See Badri, Malik Babikir. (1979). *The dilemma of the Muslim psychologists*. (London: MWH London Publishers).

[57] Najati, Muhammad 'Uthman. (1406/1985). *Al-Qur'an dan ilmu jiwa*. (Ahmad Rofi' Usmani Trans.), (Bandung: Penerbit Pustaka), p.284.

for those who are bad and evil. All these dynamic teachings of the Qur'an can serve as effective remedies and healing for those undergoing psychotherapy.

Besides reading the Qur'an, Najati (1985)[58] also believes that total submission of the clients to Allah with a strong faith in Him can also be one form of psychotherapy. Having a strong faith in Allah will give one the feeling that he or she is closer to Allah, and there should be no fear and anxiety in all situations of life as everything that happens in life, happens with the Will of Allah. The verse from Surah Al-Baqarah supports this idea of Najati:

> Nay-whoever submits His whole self to Allah and is a doer of good-he will get his reward with his Lord; on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve (*Al-Baqarah* 2: 112).

Other forms of worship, like *Solah* (ritual prayers), *Siyam* (fasting), *Zakah* (giving alms), and *Haj* (pilgrimage), can serve as a form of psychotherapy for those facing psychological challenges in their lives. By performing these acts of worship, peace and harmony prevail within an individual's soul. Particularly, *Solah* and *Du'a* (supplication) performed after prayers have a positive impact, instilling hope and confidence in gaining Allah's pleasure. They also act as a psychological push, an impetus, and a source of vitality for individuals to confront the challenges in their lives. Allah's assurance to help those who seek His assistance is stated in the verses below:

> And your Lord say: "Call on Me; I will answer your (prayer) (*Al-Ghafir* 40:60).

> When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed closer (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me: Let them also, with a will, listen to My call, and believe in Me: that they may walk in the right way (*Al-Baqarah* 2: 186).

Conclusion

This study highlights that all Western theories on human nature, mental health, and psychotherapy discussed within this research are based on the 'here and now' of materialistic and secular worldviews. As such, these Western theories do not reference religious views, focusing instead on scientific investigations of humanity and its disposition. This marginalization of religious perspectives in favor of science has roots in the 14th-century European Renaissance movement, which sought to keep religion and science separate. Consequently, this secular and dichotomous worldview emerged in Western society as a response to the oppression experienced during the European Dark Ages. Each Western paradigm in psychology discussed in this research contributes uniquely to understanding humanity; however, none comprehensively addresses questions about where humans come from, their purpose in life, and their ultimate destination. Freudian psychoanalysis focuses on the unconscious, while radical behaviourism emphasizes conditioning, and humanistic psychology champions human freedom. Recently, the

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[58] Ibid. See Najati, Muhammad 'Uthman. (1406/1985).

inability to resolve all issues related to humanity, mental health, and psychotherapy through science alone has prompted Western psychology to integrate some religious and philosophical ideas from the East, a shift most evident in transpersonal psychology. The West has recognized that psychological issues cannot solely be addressed with psychedelic drugs; thus, psychologists and therapists now recommend meditation and other relaxation techniques to combat mental health problems. In contrast, this research also highlights the concepts of man, mental health, and psychotherapy held by Islamic psychology and Muslim psychologists. The understanding of human nature in Islamic psychology is distinct and unique from that of Western psychology, as it provides detailed insights into humanity. A thorough exploration of its concepts reveals a comprehensive understanding of humanity, addressing origins before birth, life in this world, and the possibilities of destiny after bodily death. Islamic psychology not only offers solutions for treating mental health issues but also suggests preventive measures, aligning with the saying, "prevention is better than cure." In many ways, Islamic ideas present a perspective on life as a challenge and provide strategies to prevent mental illness before it can disrupt lives.

Insights and Recommendations

The researchers are convinced that the long-term prescription of psychedelic drugs by psychologists and psychiatrists to treat mental illness may be counterproductive, as such drugs can lead to addiction and dependency among patients. While Islamic psychology aims not only to cure but also to prevent mental illness, it should not overlook the latest findings in psychology and psychiatry. Psychiatrists in the Muslim world should give due consideration to the use of modern medicine in treating severe psychological problems faced by their Muslim clients. Integrating the spiritual ideas of the Qur'an with a scientific approach to mental health issues in the Muslim world would be beneficial. The ideal trend in Islamic psychology is not to reject all scientific ideas and approaches from Western psychology, but to be selective in adopting, adapting, and assimilating beneficial concepts without contradicting the existing metaphysical framework (*aqa'id*) in Islam. Ultimately, both Western and Islamic psychologies have their strengths; therefore, psychologists from both sides should acknowledge each other's advantages and synergize efforts wherever possible to provide the best solutions for clients facing mental health challenges.

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Integration of Knowledge Discourse in Sri Lanka: Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies and Its Quest for Islamic Religious Education Reform

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Abstract

The establishment of the Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies (1973) is seen as a crucial moment in the history of religious education for Muslims in Sri Lanka. The institution is committed to improving Islamic religious education by graduating students who are knowledgeable in both Islamic sciences and humanities. Given this background, this paper seeks to assess the institution's impact and effectiveness in promoting the integration of knowledge discourse in Sri Lanka. The findings suggest that the institution has succeeded in mainstreaming the basic idea of integration of knowledge and creating awareness about the importance of synthesizing Islamic studies, social sciences, and humanities into a unified framework over the five decades of its academic journey. However, this study finds that the institution has not yet systematized or conceptualized its integration model considering the contemporary debates about Islam and modern knowledge.   As a result, this study recommends that NIIS refine its academic outlook and be involved in some intensive intellectual conversations about enhancing its academic commitment to the integration of knowledge framework and finding new modalities. Finally, this is a qualitative study that drew its data from both primary and secondary sources.

Keywords

Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies, Sri Lankan muslims, integration of knowledge

Introduction

During the era of European colonialism, the Sri Lankan Muslim community, like other parts of the world, experienced significant impacts. The colonial period brought about changes in the legal system, education philosophy, economic regulations, and political organization in the country. Towards the later part of this period, the Muslims encountered a conflict between tradition and modernity. This conflict was particularly evident in the field of education and the knowledge system. The emerging developments compelled Muslims to embrace modern secular education, knowledge, sciences, and the English language in order to thrive within the colonial system. The new secular education system aimed to redefine the traditional role of religion, the significance of religious knowledge, and learning in public life in accordance with its educational philosophy (Samaraweera, 1986, p.p- 369-372). Consequently, the issue of secular knowledge and the concept of social progress prompted the Muslim community to reassess their traditional beliefs in preparation for the future.

The prominent Muslim thinker who sought to offer a fresh perspective in response to the intellectual and socio-political challenges in colonial Ceylon was M.C. Siddi Lebbe (1838-1898). He stressed that Sri Lankan Muslims to embrace modern developments and pursue modern education. He suggested that the Muslim community did not need to compromise their religious principles and ethical values while engaging with modern knowledge. Instead, they could embrace modernity while upholding Islamic religious ideals. He criticised the traditional Islamic learning methods and structure stating that it did not respond to the developing question of the modernity (Anas, 2007, p. 349 & Numan, 2007, p. 165).   The next phase of Islamic education and reform in Sri Lanka is primarily examined through the ideas of AMA Azeez (d.1973). His thoughts were developed in response to the emergence of an independent Sri Lankan state. Azeez aimed to promote educational empowerment while safeguarding Islamic culture. Anas (2007) emphasizes Azeez's mission by noting, 'Azeez, one of the prominent Muslim scholars of his time, sought to instil optimism about modern education within the Muslim community. His central message was that ignoring modern knowledge would hinder progress. In this process, Azeez emphasized the importance of rationalism in both secular and religious discussions. He believed that rationalism forms the basis of knowledge in Islam' (p.358). These discussions led to a broader agreement among Muslim leaders on two crucial issues in 1960s. Firstly, the Muslim community must adopt modern education in order to thrive and be empowered. Secondly, there is a need to reform Muslim religious education to address present challenges. Specifically, it should aim to produce Islamic studies graduates who have a deep understanding of both the religion and contemporary society and its challenges. Against this background, the Naleemiah Institution of Islamic Studies (NIIS) was established in 1973 with the vision of creating an Islamic religious education institution that integrates Islamic knowledge with modern sciences. This marked an important turning point in the history of Islamic religious education reform in Sri Lanka (Numan, 2007, P. 170).

This paper aims to study the intellectual origins of NIIS, its evolution, and current dynamics, particularly focusing on its efforts to promote the integration of knowledge discourse in Sri Lanka. The main argument of this paper is that NIIS has significantly contributed to mainstreaming the integration of knowledge discourse through its Islamic studies program. Nevertheless, the institution has had limited success in terms of projecting its efforts through

clear conceptualization and modality. In elaborating this argument, the remaining of paper is divided into four sections: section two gives an overview of the contemporary debate on the interplay between Islam and modern knowledge, section three provides an overview of the Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies and its institutional structure, and the fourth section analyses the intellectual origins of NIIS, the evolution of its curriculum, and its implications in light of the integration of knowledge discourse. The paper concludes with an analytical conclusion and recommendations. This qualitative study is based on data from both primary and secondary sources, and thematic content analysis is used for data analysis.

The Integration of Knowledge: Genesis, Evolution and Contemporary Developments

The impact of colonialism significantly transformed the knowledge production landscape of the Muslim world. Colonialism introduced a new knowledge structure while marginalizing traditional sources of knowledge. Empirical science and rationality became the dominant criteria for evaluating classical sources such as revelation, spirituality, and tradition, leading to an epistemological dichotomy between rational and traditional knowledge in the Muslim world (Masood, 2007 & Tabrizi, 1996). In response to these changes, early modern scholars like Afghani, Abdu, and Sayyed Ahamed Khan argued against adopting a binary view of modern science versus Islamic tradition. They believed that modern knowledge and empirical sciences are not un-Islamic but are integral to Islamic tradition. They advocated for Muslims to embrace modern knowledge and incorporate it within their epistemological framework. Furthermore, they asserted that modern science and empiricism are universally valuable and can be adopted and utilized by all communities for their progress. They aimed to present Islam as a science-friendly religion and argued that the lack of readiness among Muslims to acknowledge the value-neutrality of science and to perceive it as a primary source of social development was a fundamental reason for the decline of Muslims (Tabrizi, 1996 & Furlow, 1996). They even proposed that embracing modern science was the solution to the problem of colonialism. This viewpoint was institutionalized by Sayyed Ahamed Khan, who established Aligarh Muslim University, and by Abdu, who reformed the academic structure of Al-Azhar to actualize their ideas.

Islamic revivalists such as Maududi were also deeply interested in reforming modern education. However, they held the perception that modern universities were essentially undermining Islamic identity. They believed that these institutions sought to instil a secular vision of knowledge and science within the Muslim community. They further advocated for the need to reform education based on an Islamic world view. In doing so, specially, Maududi critiqued the Islamic modernist paradigm, which sought to reconcile Islamic and Western knowledge, by arguing that these two worldviews are fundamentally different and cannot be easily synthesized as envisioned by the Islamic modernists (Maududi, 1993, pp.24-41).

These initial ideas were further developed by the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) movement, which emerged in the 1970s and led to a paradigm shift in the discourse on Islam and modern knowledge. It noted that the revival of the Muslim community requires a re-evaluation of educational objectives and the knowledge production process in the Muslim world. Educational institutions in the Muslim world should reform their existing curricula, which are currently

focused on Western-centric social and natural sciences, to consider the Islamic worldview and to Islamize them. Within this broader discourse, the larger Islamization movement generated various ways of conceptualizing the idea and the process.

 Naqib Al-Attas's vision of Islamization aimed to incorporate Sufi visions of human perfection into knowledge production activities. He argued that the core of Islamization is to integrate spiritual elements into educational philosophy and redefine the objective of knowledge to achieve spiritual goals and connect with God (Iqbal, 2016, p.336). On the other hand, Al-Faruqi proposed actionable concrete steps and frameworks for Islamizing knowledge. He suggested that Muslims should master Islamic and modern sciences as well as Islamic legacy to Islamize modern knowledge. To accomplish this, he recommended that the Muslim world invest in building Islamic universities, institutions, and new teaching materials that promote the Islamic perspective of knowledge (Moten, 2023, pp. 92-110). Another variant of Islamization of knowledge was proposed by Abdul Hamid Abu Sulaiman, who aimed to reform traditional principles of Islamic methodology. He believed that the Muslim world needs a new Islamic methodology to address both Islamic and modern socio-political challenges (Moten, 2023, p. 110-127). Similarly, Taha Jabir Alawani proposed an epistemological scheme that considers both reason and revelation as two ways of interpreting God's signs. He argued that the Islamic vision of knowledge must combine both to produce new knowledge, as neither revelation nor reason can independently operate within the epistemic hierarchy (al-Alawani. 1995).

Since 2000, scholars working on the Islamization of knowledge have embraced a new concept called the 'integration of knowledge'. There has been a heated debate about whether Islamization and integration of knowledge convey similar ideas. Some argue that Islamization of knowledge involves completely reorganizing modern knowledge based on Islamic principles, while integration aims to combine Islamic and Western perspectives in social and human sciences into a unified framework. In his famous work 'Radical Reform', Tariq Ramadan (2009) proposed a new framework for approaching modern knowledge from an Islamic perspective. He (2009) argued that both revelation and reason are independent sources of knowledge, as both the sacred texts and the universe are creations of God. According to Ramadan, the texts provide a detailed ethical map, while modern sciences advance humanity's knowledge about the universe in which they live. He also emphasized the need for both textual scholars (Islamic scholars) and contextual scholars (natural and human sciences) to consider each other's work and develop new knowledge that respects both religious ethics and the principles of modern knowledge.

The debate on integration of knowledge discourse highlights that Islamic scholars have conceptualized the idea in diverse ways. Sayyed Ahmad Khan and Abdu proposed a structure that motivates students to learn modern sciences alongside basic training in Islamic ethics. In contrast, Al-Faruqi believed that modern sciences need to be Islamized first, and then Islamic Universities should be developed to implement reformed curricula. Al-Attas envisioned an educational institution that produces Islamic scholars and experts in other sciences but with deep knowledge of Islamic spirituality and metaphysics. Alawani aimed to produce Islamic studies experts with broader knowledge of human sciences, who would further develop the Islamic framework to work in other sciences using their expertise in Islamic primary sources. Tariq Ramadan's model was to have Islamic scholars collaborate with experts in modern sciences to produce new knowledge. Different models for Islamic education have been implemented in

various institutions. For example, the International Islamic University requires students majoring in Islamic studies to also minor in human sciences, and vice versa. In the UK, the Cambridge Muslim College trains students to approach modern disciplines from the perspective of classical Islamic scholarship. Additionally, in Qatar, the Hamad bin Khalifah University runs an Islamic ethics project that trains students to apply Islamic ethics to contemporary issues using a multidisciplinary approach. This project allows students from diverse backgrounds to study Islamic ethics and apply it to the issues within their respective disciplines.

Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies: Founder, Vision, Mission and Institutional and Academic Structure

The Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies (NIIS) was established in 1973. It was founded by MIM Naleem. MIM Naleem's contributions provide a classic case study on the impact of philanthropy on educational empowerment in Sri Lanka. Philanthropy involves providing financial support to address the root cause of a social problem, while charity is known for offering occasional assistance (Terway, A. & Ridge N. Y, 2019, p. 06). As a renowned gem merchant and a front-line community activist, he initiated, supported, and backed several projects aimed at addressing fundamental issues related to the educational development of the Muslim community. His projects became a benchmark for Muslim philanthropic activities in the country. One of the notable initiatives was the NIIS, which MIM Naleem established to introduce a new approach to religious education in the country. He initiated this project with academics, and intimate friends from his hometown, China Fort, Beruwala (Shukri, 1993).

The institution's mission aims to produce intellectually sound, professionally competent, morally enriched, balanced, and integrated personalities committed to generating and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, training, learning, and research while contributing to society, nation, and humanity as a whole. The goal was to produce a new generation of scholars and thinkers who would be multi-skilled, economically independent, and knowledgeable enough to respond to myriad challenges emanating from a rapidly changing world. The NIIS is divided into two central departments: the Centre for Foundation Studies (CFS) and the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FIS). The CFS provides students with preliminary knowledge in Arabic and Islamic studies while preparing them for the governmental Advanced Level examination. It also teaches languages and moral subjects at this stage. The FIS offers advanced courses in Islamic studies as well as selected secular subjects. FIS students are allowed to enrol with state universities to gain a recognized degree as external candidates. The NIIS operates an independent unit called the 'Unit for Extra-Curricular Activities', which is formed with the purpose of improving the skills of students. Students are trained to develop writing, speaking, and other required skills. Academic conferences create an environment of critical thinking and intellectual culture. The rich library of NIIS includes more than 45,000 books in various languages, mainly English, Arabic, Sinhala, and Tamil.

Furthermore, NIIS engages in expanding its academic activities to a broader audience. Accordingly, it established the Academy for Development, Research, and Training (ADRT) in 2006. ADRT continuously holds training programs for different categories such as media personnel, lecturers at Arabic colleges, and community leaders. The Naleemiah Virtual Learning

Centre (NVLC), initiated in 2020, offers numerous online courses, such as Qur'anic Interpretation and Translation, to the general public. The Research and Publication Unit plays a pivotal role in promoting research and publications. The Unit also publishes a quarterly research journal called *Islamiya Sinthanai* or Islamic Thought in Tamil Language. In addition, the Institute of Arabic Language offers courses to empower the Arabic language skills of students. Finally, the Salam Centre for Peace and Dialogue aims to promote social harmony through inter-religious interactive programs and publications.

Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies: Intellectual Origins, Curriculum and Impacts

Intellectual Origins

Many scholars and academics with diverse academic backgrounds contributed to shaping the intellectual foundation of the NIIS in the 1970s. However, it can be argued that the educational ideas of AMA Azeez, a prominent Sri Lankan Muslim educationist and one of the institute's founders, played a crucial role in its ideational formation when looking from a broader historical perspective. In the 1960s, Azeez wrote a series of essays on Muslim education reform, emphasizing the underperformance of Sri Lankan Muslims in education and its potential impact on the community in a diverse nation. He pointed out that one of the main reasons for the educational backwardness of Sri Lankan Muslims was their focus on and obsession with otherworldly dimensions of religion. Thus, for him, the Muslim community should formulate a new philosophy of Islamic education that embraces both Islamic and human knowledge within a coherent worldview. In order to operationalize this philosophy, Azeez proposed that Muslim leaders should prioritize the education of Islamic religious scholars who are proficient in both Islamic and modern sciences and are able to connect religious teaching with the socio-political affairs of the community. He also believed that the existing traditional religious educational system was inadequate and advocated for an alternative Islamic education system (Azeez, 1963, pp.131-36). In the early 1970s, he wrote an important essay titled '*We Want an Islamic University'* outlining his vision. Although the essay and its insights did not directly lead to the formation of NIIS, it is believed that the essay implicitly paved the way for subsequent debates on forming an alternative Islamic religious education system. In that essay Azeez (1963) writes:

> We cannot overcome our significant challenges without cultivating Islamic scholars who are equally proficient in both Islamic and modern knowledge. In our current situation, we have struggled to find Islamic scholars who possess such a diverse range of expertise. As a community, we must strive to produce religious scholars who have a deep understanding of both Islamic and modern knowledge. Additionally, it is crucial to recognize that our traditional religious educational system requires substantial reform (p.117).

AMA Azeez was a Muslim thinker whose ideas were mainly shaped by Allamah Iqbal's perspectives on Islamic reform. He mentioned that his essays on the socio-political and educational reform of Muslims in Sri Lanka were primarily written to provide solutions considering Iqbal's philosophy (Azeez, 1963, p.iv). Certain aspects of Iqbal's philosophy

particularly attracted Azeez's attention. Firstly, Azeez believed Iqbal offered a dynamic path to navigate the scientific world with an Islamic spirit. Secondly, he was deeply convinced of Iqbal's discourse that merging the rationalism of the West with the spirituality of the East is the possible solution to the problems of Humanity. Thirdly, Iqbal provided an idea of spiritualism that moves human beings towards actions and productivity. Azeez suggested that the Sri Lankan Muslim community should adopt this Iqbal's vision as the only way for them to progress in the country (Azeez, 1963, pp.218-22).

Azeez also believed that in addition to combining rationalism and spiritualism, the Muslim community should find a balance between traditionalism and modernism. He criticizes both modernists and traditionalists for being too extreme, which he saw could weaken the Muslim community. Beyond that he invites the Sri Lankan Muslim community to connect itself with and get inspiration from larger Islamic civilizational heritage in shaping their socio-political future (Azeez, 1963, pp. 130-43). As an educator, Azeez suggests that the key to achieving these changes lies in adopting a comprehensive approach to education based on the Islamic worldview and specifically establishing religious educational institutions that will produce a new generation of Islamic scholars with knowledge of religion and human societies. In a separate essay recalling his visit to Egypt, Azeez mentioned that he met prominent Islamic scholars of Al-Azhar, including Mustafa Abdul Razak, who supported his idea that Islamic scholars should be knowledgeable in both Islamic and modern sciences. He also stated that some of the reformist leaders of Al-Azhar attempted to revise the curriculum to align with this vision (Azeez, 1963, pp. 99-110). As an implication of these evolving ideas of Azeez, he was involved in the Naleemiah project thinking it embodied his reformist vision. Encapsulating this dynamic relationship between Azeez and the formation of the education philosophy of NIIS, Shukri, Azeez's student and a founder member and later became the director of the institute, writes (2020) as follows:

> The genesis of the idea of Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies owes its origin to the interaction of two trends of thought in the field of education all over the Muslim world, consequent primarily, to the impact of European activities in Afro-Asian countries. The learned (*Ulama'*) among the traditionalist, resisted all modern influence from Europe and contemplated a return to the Islamic past; while some of the modernists among Muslim educationists opted for an uncritical emulation of the West. This bifurcation in the Muslim educational thought impaired the progress of the Muslim community. In any case the Muslim educationists could not remain in a state of ambivalence for long. Azeez arrived at a harmonious blend of these two trends. Jamiah Naleemiah which he helped to set in motion is a reflection of this blend in our educational outlook. Here we are trying to bring about a balanced integration of the rich cultural heritage of Islam with the modern disciplines and methodologies in education. The progress this Institution has made justifies the speculations and anticipations of Azeez.

Along with Azeez, several other scholars also contributed to the refinement of the idea of NIIS in its early stages. Among those, Tahism Nadvi, a prominent Islamic scholar who graduated in Al-Azhar University and afterward became the first principal of the Institute in 1973, was a crucial figure. In explaining the objective of the NIIS project, Tasim Nadvi stressed the fact that traditional Islamic religious education institutions contributed to protecting the religiosity of the

Muslims of Sri Lanka in their limited capacity. However, the modern challenges of a complex world cannot be tackled by those traditional Islamic religious knowledge centers. Instead, there is a need for a new mode of religious education and scholars (Arafath, 2023, p. 64). Another prominent scholar-activist, ALM Ibrahim, a scholar-activist, who also contributed to the early development of NIIS, shared a similar concern that the traditionalist Islamic education method did not have the necessary intellectual foundations to face the modern challenges of Muslim society (Arafath, 2023, p. 64). These scholars supported the Naleemiah project anticipating that it would liberate the religious education from the dominance of traditionist religious authorities and their religious discourse that lacks substances to induce Islamic activism in their analysis.

The education philosophy of NIIS was shaped not only by local Muslim thinkers and Islamic scholars like Azeez, Tahsim Nadvi, MAM Shukri, Movlavi Masood, and ALM Ibrahim in its early stages but also by the ideas of prominent international Islamic scholars. According to Shukri, some of the critical works of Islamic scholars such as Sayyed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi on the impact of secularism and materialism on the Muslim mind were translated into the local language. These works were widely read by Muslim community leaders in the 60s and 70s. As a result, these writings and ideas inspired Muslim community leaders to recognize the need for a new generation of Islamic thinkers who could better understand modern philosophies and their harmful effects on the Muslim mind. It was agreed that traditional religious education systems could not produce Islamic scholars of that kind, and a new religious education and learning mode must be developed. Shukri also notes that community activists who internalized the ideas of Nadvi and other Islamic revivalist thinkers joined the Naleemiah project on their own grounds (Shukri, 1993, p. 53 & Shukri, 1969). Therefore, he views that the emergence of NIIS can also be seen as a local response to the global rise of secularization and westernization (Shukri, 1993, p. 53).

Personal interviews with founder members who are still alive revealed two important sources that guided the founder members to develop the idea of NIIS further. Firstly, founder members were influenced by the educational reform ideas of Egyptian thinker Mohamed Abdhu and Indian scholar Mohamed Ali. Both Abdu and Ali argued that Muslim religious education institutions needed to be reformed but presented modernist solutions to the problem (MHM Hibatullah, personal communication, June 12, 2023, & ARM Sulaiman, personal communication, June 30, 2023). They emphasized that Muslim religious education should incorporate natural and human sciences alongside religious education. It is safe to say that the founding members were not modernists, but Abdu's reformist ideas might further embolden their conviction that they share the same vision of leading Islamic authorities in the Muslim world. In addition, the founding members of the NIIS were directly inspired by the Aleemiyyah Institute of Islamic Studies in Pakistan and its founder, Fazlur Rahman Ansari. The founder members highlight that although they determined to form a new institution that would offer a curriculum combining Islamic science and human sciences, they couldn't find a model to emulate in Sri Lanka. As a result, they travelled to Pakistan to explore potential integration models. During their trip, they met with various university rectors and Islamic thinkers, including Maududi, who all suggested that the integration model the Sri Lankan community leaders were seeking did not exist in the Muslim world and that they would need to build their own model. Nonetheless, they identified the Aleemiyyah Institute of Islamic Studies in Pakistan as a potential model that could be replicated in Sri Lanka (Arafath, 2023, p. 64-65).

This institute, active in the 1960s and 70s, aimed to educate Islamic scholars with expertise in both Islamic studies and human sciences. Surviving founder members say that the structural design of the Alimiyyah institution gave them a clear framework for a Islamic religious education project that combing both religious science education and modern education. More than that, they highlight that the ideas of its director, Fazlur Rahman Ansari, greatly influenced their thoughts and perspectives of philosophical outlook and helped them to conceptualize the Naleemiah project. It is important to mention that Fazlur Rahman Ansari extensively wrote (2012) about the philosophy of unity and the negative impacts of the division of knowledge in modern universities on Muslim communities. He explained that Islam rejects the classification of knowledge into religious and secular categories. Instead, he stressed that all knowledge comes from one source: God. Moreover, he coined the term 'integralistic civilization of Islam,' arguing that Islam is an exemplary model for future human civilization because it integrates both empirical and rational sources of knowledge and revelation into a single worldview. Ansari believes that the Islamic philosophy of unity is the basis of *'integralistic Islamic civilization'*. He writes about this in his famous work, *The Quranic Foundations and the Structure of the Muslim Society*:

> Because of its comprehensive and integralistic approach—which is the demand of its unique Philosophy of Unity, the Holy Quran reconciles the elements of value in Rationalism and Empiricism, affirms the reality of both the rational and the empirical -of course, in accordance with the status of each, demands belief in the Unseen as well as in the Seen, in the supra-sensible as well as in the sensible, and synthesises the Ideational and the Sensate, projecting thereby a perfect and sound Integralistic or Idealistic Culture (p.217).

These ideas of Fazlur Rahman Ansari greatly influenced the vision of the founder members. Further evidence of Ansari's impact on the founder members was that they invited him to Sri Lanka again for more discussions. While he was there, Ansari delivered a special lecture on the Islamic worldview in their presence (MHM Hibatullah, personal communication, June 12, 2023).

This analysis shows that the early proponents of the Naleemiah project believed that the lack of a comprehensive education philosophy integrating both Islamic and modern sciences was the main cause of issues in Muslim societies. This led them to envision the Naleemiah project as a mean to produce graduates who could embrace a broader perspective of Islamic education inspired by the Islamic worldview and civilizational heritage. It is obvious that they did not use the term '*integration of knowledge*' to introduce the vision of Naleemiah in the early 1970s but an exploration of their discourses reveals that they intended such an ambition. Moreover, their focus was primarily on producing Islamic religious scholars rather than experts in other sciences, as they believed that religious scholars played a key role in leading the community and setting a new societal direction. To put it in the contemporary language, the founders of the Naleemiah project aimed to attract students interested in majoring in Islamic sciences and equip them with knowledge in human sciences. Therefore, their conception of the integration of knowledge revolved around Shariah-based scholars. Interestingly, Rashid Moten notes that Taha Jabir Alawani, the former head of the International Institute of Islamic Thought, had promoted such a

conception of integration of knowledge in early 2000 arguing that Islamic scholars need to take the leadership of the project (Moten, 2023, p. 139).

Evolution of Curriculum of NIIS from An Integration of Knowledge Perspective

The curriculum of the NIIS has evolved through four stages: 1973-1984, 1984-1996, 1996-2011, and 2011 to the present. During the first decade of its formation, the founder members drew inspiration from a variety of local and international scholars while facing two critical challenges in implementing the project. Firstly, they struggled to develop a proper curriculum for Naleemiah as they could not find a sophisticated model elsewhere. Secondly, finding lecturers who had good knowledge about the new vision of the institution also became a tough challenge (Shukri, 1993). As a result, the initial draft of the curriculum did not reflect a radical departure from the past but hinted at the intention to move in a new direction. Reviewing the institution's curriculum in the early and mid-1970s shows that their strategy was to teach some subjects from the national education plan along with traditional Islamic religious subjects. The early founders and proponents believed that this arrangement would provide students with basic knowledge about Islamic and modern sciences to a limited extent (MAM Mansoor, personal communication, September 5, 2019). The initial draft of the curriculum consisted of two kinds of subjects falling under Islamic and modern education. The curriculum encompassed traditional Islamic studies such as Islamic theology and basic jurisprudence, taught using textbooks already employed by traditional religious seminaries. However, it also included a few subjects like agriculture, gemmology, electronics, etc., with the intention of increasing graduates' employability and providing them with a better understanding of modern sciences. On the overall performance of the NIIS, Ayoob Ali, an early graduate of NIIS and then became a lecturer, observed that during the early stages, the institution's curriculum and strategic decisions were primarily managed by traditionally trained Ulama from various theological backgrounds (Ayoob Ali, Personal Communication, September 25, 2019). This was due to the fact that the educated founder members, like Azeez, passed away shortly after the institution was formed. As a result, the responsibility for the institution's development fell upon the remaining traditional *Ulama'* and some dedicated founder members. However, these individuals and lecturers did not possess the necessary skills to effectively address the initial challenges faced by a unique project like NIIS. During the second stage (1983-1996), there was a change in the curriculum when the institution started hiring its graduates as lecturers in 1983. This had an impact on reforming the Islamic studies aspects of the curriculum. The new lecturers introduced books that contained the ideas of more reformist Islamic thinkers and contemporary approaches to Islam, such as comparative jurisprudence. This reflected the changing direction of the institution (MAM Mansoor, Personal Communication, September 5, 2019).

However, NIIS transformed its curriculum into a standard direction in 1996 when it established academic collaboration with the International University of Islamabad, Pakistan. In 1996, Hussian Hamid al-Hassan, an Egyptian Islamic scholar, renowned economist, and chancellor of the International Islamic University of Islamabad (IIUI), visited NIIS. His visit marked a significant turning point in the academic thinking of NIIS. He offered post-graduate opportunities for NIIS graduates on the condition that the institution would adjust its existing curriculum to meet the requirements of IIUI. In response to this offer, NIIS reevaluated its overall curriculum and academic strategy, leading to several structural changes. As a result, new

elements were incorporated into the curriculum and academic planning of NIIS (Ushama & Fouz, 2023). NIIS updated its academic strategy in three main areas: program structure, curriculum, and operational system. In terms of curriculum, in addition to organizing Islamic studies subjects based on IIUI's standards, it included specific humanities subjects such as sociology, philosophy, and comparative religions. According to the available data, NIIS's overall academic framework, established in 1996, remained unchanged until 2010 (Ushama & Fouz, 2023).

During the fourth phase of NIIS's curriculum review process (2012 onward), there were significant improvements made to the quality and sophistication of the curriculum. Global and local socio-economic and political developments during this phase influenced NIIS to update its content in alignment with national higher education and job market requirements. National education policies specifically required higher education institutions to adjust their course outlines to reflect national economic and employment policies. The impact of national policy is evident in the latest NIIS course outline book. It starts with a statement that:

> The Faculty of Islamic Studies curriculum has been reviewed based on the suggestions and the advice of internal auditors in the Faculty Board. The Academic Council of NIIS considered the job market demand during the revision. The revision process especially contemplated the policies and the criterion of Sri Lankan higher education (NIIS curriculum, 2020)

It's important to note that NIIS does not view the changing dynamics as a threat to its existence. Instead, they saw it as an opportunity to further develop its original education philosophy, which combines Islamic studies with modern sciences in light of comprehensive farmwork. For those purposes, NIIS looked for international models that they can get inspiration from. As a result, the influence of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) was significant in the recent curriculum review process. The entire process was primarily designed in consideration of Islamic revealed knowledge courses at the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, IIUM (Haris, Personal Communication, September 20, 2019). It's worth mentioning that Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies established a memorandum of understanding with International Islamic University Malaysia in 2012 and also entered into a similar agreement with Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) in 2024—a Malaysian university that promotes the Integration of knowledge from an Islamic perspective. (Usim, 2024) Interestingly, a majority of the institution's academic staff who have attained their doctoral degrees are alumni of IIUM (naleemiah, 2024). These developments indicate how NIIS is striving to maintain a balance between its strong commitment to its original education philosophy and the evolving dynamics of the national and international education systems.

A close examination of the updated course plan helps us to better understand the Institute's direction. For instance, the most recent NIIS handbook (2020) outlines the institute's vision to be internationally recognized as a leading center of excellence in higher education for *Islamic Studies, Human Sciences, and Technology* (p.05). The current rector, Agar Mohamed, emphasized the importance of integrating knowledge in his foreword to the handbook, expressing the institute's goal to produce scholars well-versed in *Islamic Studies and modern disciplines*. NIIS aims to educate a generation of scholars with broad knowledge in both Islamic

sciences and contemporary fields (NIIS handbook, 2020, p.08). Moreover, the stated learning outcomes of NIIS's degree programme, according to the handbook, also strongly stress the importance of integration of Islamic sciences with human sciences (NIIS handbook, 2020, p.33). In the field of Islamic studies, which is a fundamental part of NIIS, the handbook outlines that students will gain extensive knowledge of the core texts of Islam. They will also be able to demonstrate a broad understanding and utilize appropriate methods to critically analyze the foundational texts of Islam in their original Arabic form, including Quranic exegesis, prophetic traditions, as well as key areas of theology, law, and mysticism (NIIS handbook, 2020). In addition to the specific Islamic studies-related learning outcomes, the handbook also states that students will develop the ability to address real-world problems, gain knowledge in the field of political science, and acquire an overall understanding of sociology, social anthropology, and cultural analysis (NIIS handbook, 2020). The course structure provides deeper insights into the integration of different areas of knowledge. The updated version now includes more advanced subjects in Islamic studies and traditional Islamic sciences, such as the objectives of Islamic Shariah, Islamic Jurisprudence of Muslim Minorities, and Islamic Banking and Finance, among others (NIIS handbook, 2020). It also covers human sciences subjects like human resource management, social psychology, education, peace and social harmony, contemporary politics, and the study of Sri Lankan society (NIIS handbook, 2020).

This historical evolution of the curriculum at NIIS shows the institution's commitment to integrating knowledge discourse. Since the mid-1990s, NIIS has taken assertive steps to incorporate human science subjects into the Islamic studies specialization program. Recently, NIIS has seriously considered local education policies while collaborating with IIUI, IIUM, and USIM in terms of broadening its education outlook. Despite the institution has made efforts to integrate Islamic studies and human sciences, there is a need for more sophisticated conceptualization in this integration process. The institution should assertively engage in more sophisticated academic efforts to highlight its approach to integration. To facilitate this, the institution can introduce a new course on the Integration of knowledge, organize expert seminars on Islamic discourses on modern knowledge, and hold idea-sharing sessions on the Integration of knowledge and Islamic Studies. Additionally, they can consider restructuring their programs to offer a major in Islamic studies and a minor in human sciences. These initiatives can help the institution engage in a more committed debate on the integration of knowledge and enhance its educational vision locally and internationally.

NIIS and Integration of Knowledge: Impact and Implications

This section aims to analyze NIIS' efforts to promote the integration of knowledge discourse in the local context. For that matter, this study explores selected themes of the flagship journal of NIIS. Secondly, it also explores the perception and experience of the graduates of NIIS with regard to their efforts of integrating Islamic worldview in their respective fields. As the graduates of NIIS are the main agents who embody the institutions' vision, their experience, and involvement have to be recognized in any analysis of the institutions' overall commitment to the integration of knowledge discourse.

Major Themes of Islamic Thought Journal.

Islamic Thought is the flagship journal of NIIS. Since the mid-1970s, the journal has acted as a key instrument to carry the message of NIIS to the wider society. Although the journal policy claims that the institution is not responsible for articles published in the journal, its authors and titles are very much reflective of the NIIS educational philosophy. The authors were either graduates of the institution or academics and activists closely associated with the institution. A brief survey of the themes of the articles reveals that the journal has shown a series of interest in publishing two kinds of articles. Primarily, it has published hundreds of articles on themes related to Islamic primary sources, Islamic legal thought Islamic scholars, etc. Secondly, the journal published continuously numerous articles on conceptualizing different fields of studies in natural and social sciences from an Islamic worldview. For that matter, the journal has addressed many themes such as Islamic education philosophy, Islamic philosophy of history, Islamic civilizational heritage, Islamic economic thought, Islamic political philosophy, Islamic perspective of art and literature, Islamic concept of architecture, and Islamic theory of environmentalism and Islamic ethics of research and innovation. In addition, the journal has widely addressed the theme of Islamic epistemology extensively for the last four decades. It addressed the idea of Islamic epistemology either directly or through exploring the epistemological ideas of Al-Ghazali, Iqbal, Ibn Rushd and themes related to Islamic civilization (Journal of Islamic Thought Catalogue, 2021).

The objectives of these articles were to contrast and compare the Islamic and Western perspectives of the issue. Those journal articles clearly outline that the Islamic conception of those different fields of studies is clearly different from the Western conception. Furthermore, they call for separate theorization of those fields of studies from an Islamic worldview. Besides, it did not reject the Western perspective but rather to attempted to add an Islamic perspective to the discussion. An overall review of the articles published in the Journal of Islamic Thought of NIIS reveals that NIIS has initiated and contributed to a wider discussion on the Integration of knowledge discourse in the local context. In terms of publications of the graduates of NIIS, the existing data says that they have made substantial contributions to the development of Islamic perspectives of contemporary social sciences and humanities. Obviously, the greater numbers of their publications are related to Islamic reformist discourses. However, they have published on Islamic education, Islamic psychology, global affairs, Islamization of knowledge, Islamic ethics of communication and media, Islam and political theory and organizational Management, Islam and Human Rights discourses, and economics (Graduates Books Catalogue, 2021).

Graduates of NIIS on Integration of Knowledge Discourse.

The graduates of NIIS embody the vision and mission of the institution. This study conducted interviews with five selected graduates who have obtained or are pursuing post-graduate degrees in Islamic studies and other human sciences within the country and outside. The interviews mainly focused on how the educational philosophy of NIIS and its existing curricula contribute to their understanding of integrating knowledge in their respective fields and how it can be further improved.

In response to the first question, all interviewers unanimously agreed that the NIIS curriculum and its educational structure have helped them understand that contemporary issues cannot be addressed by a single field of study but from a multidisciplinary knowledge production process. Some respondents said that the NIIS curriculum gave them a solid introduction to central debates and themes of social sciences, helping expose them to various disciplines along with Islamic studies (Respondent 02, Personal Communication, July 14, 2024). Another respondent noted that the existing education structure of NIIS reflects the integration of knowledge framework, which was the main reason for many NIIS graduates seeking opportunities to pursue their post-graduate studies in universities that embody such a vision like IIUM (Respondent 03, personal communication, July 25, 2024). Another respondent noted that the NIIS education philosophy and curricula shaped his perspective that knowledge cannot be divided, and it also helped them to be involved in debates in rethinking modern social science and humanities from an Islamic perspective (Respondent 04, personal communication, July 26, 2024). Many interviewees have stressed that Islamic studies subjects at NIIS are being taught with a focus on major contemporary issues. Understanding those issues requires a general comprehension of modern societies and social change. For that purpose, students discuss the basics of modern humanities and social sciences during Islamic studies courses. As a result, students are encouraged to integrate knowledge, even through the Islamic studies courses at NIIS (Respondent 01, personal communication, July 16, 2024).

The interviewees acknowledged that their education at NIIS enhanced their ability to engage with Islamic studies and human sciences. However, they also highlighted the limitations of NIIS in this area, stating that the institute thus far failed to put its integration model into a proper perspective. Elaborating on this point, one respondent commented:

> We studied human sciences courses along with Islamic studies at NIIS. However, we learned those subjects without a proper conceptual background. We were not clearly informed of why we studied those human sciences along with Islamic courses. I heard that very recently NIIS has taken some serious steps in developing a conceptual outlook for their courses by introducing subjects like Islamic world view (Respondent 01, personal communication, July 16, 2024).

Another respondent shared a similar concern as follows:

> In my experience, the lack of a clear integration model for NIIS has led some students to believe that human sciences subjects are included in the curriculum solely to increase job opportunities for graduates. They feel that these subjects have no academic merit. Furthermore, this belief is reinforced by the fact that human sciences subjects are not given proper weight compared to Islamic studies courses in NIIS's education structure. While Naleemiah is dedicated to promoting Islamic studies graduates, it emphasizes its uniqueness in integrating both Islamic studies and human sciences. Therefore, NIIS needs to take this aspect into account (Respondent 05, personal communication, July 223, 2024).

The third respondent raised a critical point in the interview:

> NIIS merely introduces some social sciences subjects, but doesn't effectively work towards integrating Islamic and social sciences. Although we study social sciences, we are not trained to evaluate how what we learn in these subjects impacts our understanding of Islamic themes. If we learn human science along with Islamic studies, we should be given a clear idea about how it helps us to understand our core subjects. There is not any substantial discussion about it. In that sense, NIIS lags far behind in attempts to truly [involve in] integration of knowledge debates. I believe NIIS needs to have a thorough conversation on this aspect (Respondent 02, personal communication, July 14, 2024).

In a similar vein, the graduates have shared some suggestions to improve the current states of the curriculum and academic structure with regard to integrating Islamic studies with human sciences. One respondent suggested:

> The curriculum of NIIS needs to be updated every five years and should include the latest global debates concerning Islamic studies and human sciences. It is important for NIIS to incorporate fundamental social sciences and humanities subjects and give them slightly higher credit hours in its academic structure to increase their importance. In addition, it is crucial to bring in experts in these fields to conduct seminars and workshops for students. Our Islamic studies lecturers cannot fully handle those subjects. In addition, it is imperative to make effective collaboration with some other universities that try to integrate Islamic studies with Human sciences. The purpose of the collaboration should be to exchange the experiences and modalities of this concept. In addition, NIIS should organize seminars to train students to understand social issues from a multidisciplinary perspective (Respondent 01, personal communication, July 16, 2024).

The second respondent said:

> The lecturers, especially, need to be trained in this concept because they are the ones who bring this vision to the students. Therefore, NIIS's academic strategy should focus on equipping both students and staff with this framework. The human sciences courses need to be taught by experts, and NIIS must establish a collaborative network with these experts and plan how to integrate these subjects within the context of Islamic studies (Respondent 05, personal communication, July 223, 2024)

The third respondent highlighted that:

> It is important to teach students that the integration of knowledge was the heartbeat of our intellectual tradition. Nearly all our Islamic thinkers of the past were polymaths. I am not asking anyone to try to make graduates of such caliber, but we should be mindful that our tradition is an integrative one, and we cannot have abstract Islamic studies courses without interacting with other sciences. We

> need to develop an environment that constantly exposes students to such an idea (Respondent 02, personal communication, July 14, 2024).

The insights shared by NIIS graduates in the interview reveal several important points for analyzing NIIS performance in terms of the internalization of the integration of knowledge framework within the institution. This analysis can be approached from two aspects: contributions and limitations.

In terms of contributions, NIIS can be recognized for promoting discourse and popularizing it in the Sri Lankan context. According to some graduates, this was one of the reasons why many NIIS graduates have pursued post-graduate studies in human sciences alongside Islamic studies. This resulted from the institution's broader integrated perspective of knowledge and the way it instilled this perspective in its students. As a private university college in the country with limited resources, this achievement should be highlighted. In other words, it can be argued that NIIS provided foundational training for students to pursue future expertise in the integration of knowledge paradigms. Additionally, it's important to note that NIIS has achieved this primarily through its Islamic studies program. NIIS does not offer human sciences courses per se, as it is dedicated to the Islamic studies project. Nevertheless, the interviews with graduates indicate that NIIS's curriculum embodies the spirit of Islamic reformism, and therefore, Islamic subjects are discussed within the context of contemporary socio-political and economic dynamics and change. Despite issues of systemization, this reformist spirit naturally led the institution to integrate ideas from other social sciences within its educational structure.

In terms of limitations, the interviews reveal that NIIS has thus far achieved limited success in conceptualizing its integration model and its philosophy. This has led to three notable issues affecting the institution's performance in promoting the integration of knowledge discourse. First, the lack of clear conceptualization has created confusion among students about whether the purpose of including human science subjects in the curricula is to meet the job market demands or to develop a systematic academic discourse. Second, graduates feel they did not receive adequate training on how human sciences subjects can help them understand the core subjects of their course. Third, they perceive that human sciences subjects are not treated as being as important as Islamic studies subjects, and that teachers are not properly trained to address this issue. They also highlight that the institution has to review its structure and include more human sciences subjects that would help students engage in a meaningful debate between Islam and modern knowledge. As an overall note, the insights from the interview collectively point out that that NIIS must systematically position human sciences subjects within the Islamic studies paradigm and conceptualize their modality in light of the ongoing larger debate on Islam and modern knowledge.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper is motivated by desire to explore the experience of the Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies (NIIS) in promoting the integration of knowledge discourse in Sri Lanka. The study found that NIIS originated from local and global debates on reforming Islamic education, with the goal of producing graduates who could present Islamic solutions in light of modern

challenges. It was also noted that many thinkers and scholars played a vital role in shaping the institute's educational philosophy, with both AMA Azeez and Fazlur Rahman Ansari making substantial contributions by sharing global experiences and emerging ideas about the integration of knowledge debates with the institute's founding members. The study argues that, although the initial drafts of NIIS did not explicitly define their mission as promoting the integration of knowledge, the essence of the idea was very much present in their minds.

The historical evolution of the curriculum at the institute reveals that NIIS has consistently focused on structuring its programs to align with its mission. Over four stages of development, the curriculum has increasingly encompassed human sciences subjects along with Islamic courses to provide graduates with a broad perspective on contemporary issues and exposure to a multidisciplinary approach. Collaborations with IIUM and University Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) underscore further the institute's commitment to the integration of knowledge. However, the graduates feel that while NIIS's curriculum reflects the essence of this framework, it lacks a systematic representation of a specific vision for the ongoing integration of knowledge debates. They argue that NIIS should take current debates about Islam and modern knowledge more seriously and reflect this in its academic structure. Taking all these considerations into account, the study suggests that NIIS has to reframe its current academic program considering contemporary modalities of integration of knowledge by restructuring existing courses and increasing current academic commitments to enhance its involvement in the evolving debate. Considering all these observations, this paper suggests three key recommendations to enhance NIIS's academic commitment to the Integration of knowledge discourse:

1) NIIS can further increase its collaboration with international universities such as IIUM and USIM to explore models of integration of knowledge.

2) NIIS should arrange student and staff-level academic sessions to critically reflect on its education philosophy, its functioning process, and its modality.

3) NIIS should develop a systematic mechanism to evaluate its education philosophy's impact within the institution and community level.

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Post-Islamist Dynamics of Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) and Its Impact on Electoral Performance 2015-2023

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Abstract

Post-Islamism is described as a tendency for Islamist movements to take moderate stances and embrace democratic ideas after the exhaustion and failure of Islamist rhetorics, commonly seen during the 1990's. This paper challenges post-Islamism by presenting the case of Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) in 2015 that systematically eliminated progressive leaders from their ranks and embraced Malay communalistic ideas. This phenomenon would be a reverse of post-Islamism to Islamism, but PAS still achieved an unprecedented success in elections. Continued silence over Islamic state and ḥudūd agenda was proof that Islamism was never fully reinstated in PAS after the events that transpired in 2015. Instead, two ideas filled the vacuum; ideas resembling post-Islamism and Malay communalist politics. This paper supports the current understanding of non-linear progression of Islamism and post-Islamism, while arguing the plausibility of intra-party dynamics between Islamism and post-Islamism.

Keywords

Islamism, post-Islamism, Parti Islam Se-Malaysia, elections

Introduction

Post-Islamism was a concept coined by Asef Bayat (1996) to describe the moderation of Islamist ideals in Iran after the death of her spiritual leader, Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989. Since the seminal work, extensive studies have been written on the subject. Roy (1994) critiqued the failure of political Islam even before post-Islamism became mainstream. Other scholars such as Sadeghi (2021), Mozaffari (2007), and Yilmaz (2011) extended the discussion by examining other cases outside of Iran and providing other dimensions in the conceptualization of post-Islamism.

Even though Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) was widely regarded as an Islamist party in Malaysia, studies that examined the party from the post-Islamist framework was scarce. Abdul Mutalib and Wan Zakaria (2015) for instance, analysed PAS's political alliance from the post-Islamist perspective. Apart from that, other scholars such as Abdul Hamid (2018b) and Noor (2014) presented a historical, discursive account of Islamism in PAS. The party's ideological dynamics was robust, reflecting its adaptability within the changing landscape of Malaysian political discourse. Historically, PAS resonated a myriad of pre-independence alternative discourses ranging from Islamism, socialism, and pan-Malayism. The party became staunchly Islamist in the 1980's, then moderated their position during the 1990's, which was in line with the post-Islamist theory.

However, in 2015, PAS systematically eliminated a large portion of its progressive leaders and pandered closer towards ethnoreligious sentiments. This phenomenon presented several apparent discrepancies with the post-Islamist development analysis, in which this research looks to investigate. Firstly, resurgence of the Islamists in 2015 challenged the fundamental position of post-Islamism itself. It suggested that post-Islamism was not necessarily the historical end of Islamism, and that Islamism may return after a post-Islamist shift.

Even though the salient Malay communalistic ideas demonstrated by PAS recently cannot be regarded as Islamism in a strict sense, they may indicate an overall conservative shift in ideological tendency. Despite that, Islamic state and *ḥudūd* agendas that were central to Islamism was still kept silent, in favour of other frameworks taken outside of Islamic traditions, which resonated more towards post-Islamism. The dynamics of Islamism, post-Islamism, and Malay communalism existing within a party at the same time therefore presented another challenge towards the evolutionary position of Islamism to post-Islamism.

Finally, the recent series of elections showed that PAS gained unprecedented success by pandering onto Islamist and Malay conservatism. This is in contrast with the post-Islamist argument that Islamism has failed and lost its appeal.

With regards to the aforementioned discrepancies, this paper examined the ideological dynamics within PAS during the period of 2015 until 2023, centred upon three main objectives; firstly, to examine the salient Islamist and post-Islamist characters demonstrated by PAS. Secondly, to analyse PAS's electoral performance at parliamentary and state level. Thirdly, to find the relationship between Islamist and post-Islamist characteristics and electoral performance of PAS.

Research Methodology

This study was conducted based on the systematic analysis of political discourse. Rajandran and Lee (2023) outlined three key elements in this method; context in which a political event existed, function of actors within the context, and function of text within the context. Contextualizing a political phenomenon with the determinants that shaped it would contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon. This was increasingly common in Malaysian political studies, particularly in analysing the discourse of Islam within the state.

In expounding the recent trend of ethnoreligious nationalism after 14th General Election (GE14), Abdul Hamid and Zawawi (2023) framed the shift within the context of race, religion, and royalty that have always been embedded within the Malaysian political fabric. Ethnoreligious nationalism hence is not novel, rather a re-emergence and evolution of an already existing discourse. With regards to PAS, Noor (2014) explained its ideological evolution not only in the context of counter-hegemonic discourse to Western imperial democracy, but also in relations to the nationalist and socialist discourses existing in pre-independence Malaya.

Extending from the methodologies, this paper attempted to define the dynamics of Islamism and post-Islamism in PAS from the period of 2015 until 2023. Then, it measured the manner in which the ideological shifts affect electoral performance during GE14, 15th General Election (GE15), snap elections in Johor and Melaka, and 2023 elections involving another six Malaysian states. Both primary and secondary sources were consulted, including books written by key PAS figures, official party documents, government data, and secondary literature.

Islamism and post-Islamism

Asef Bayat in *Post-Islamism at Large* (2013) described Islamism as "ideologies and movements that strive to establish some kind of an Islamic order; a religious state, *sharī'ah* law, and moral codes in Muslim societies and communities." Mozaffari (2007) provided another definition of Islamism as "a religious ideology with a holistic interpretation of Islam whose final aim is the conquest of the world by all means." Yilmaz (2011) confined his definition only to the political and ideological aspect of Islamism, arguing "Islamism is a set of ideologies enunciating the view that Islam is not only a religion but also political system." He further elaborated Islamism generally referred to political Islam, ideologisation of religion and instrumental use of Islam in politics. The central element of Islamism, and by extension post-Islamism is the problematization of Islam and state relations. Islamism claimed Islam has specific prescriptions with regard to state and governance, and is determined to follow these prescriptions.

On the other hand, post-Islamism was introduced to describe Iranian socio-political development after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989. Asef Bayat (1996) defined post-Islamism as "an ideological tendency to re-secularize religion after the decline of Islamism in its appeal, energy, symbols, and sources of legitimacy." In another work, he added post-Islamist development occurred due to discrepancies and weaknesses that led to criticism when Islamism was brought into the society. The Islamists, either through an inevitable process or a conscious project, were forced to moderate their discourse (Bayat, 2005). Olivier Roy (1994) highlighted the internal failure of Islamism to establish the Islamic state as what led to post-Islamism as shown in politics of Iran, repression in Egypt, and other Muslim minority groups in Europe. In a more practical definition, Ihsan Dagi (2013) defined post-Islamism as the "embrace of participation, inclusion, tolerance, emancipation, and human rights and liberties blended with Islamic morality, brotherhood, and solidarity in order to compensate for the loss of the divine in shaping the model of governance."

The salient features of post-Islamist development can therefore be summarized as follows; firstly, from a universalist to rationalist view of Islam, secondly, from monopoly to decentralization of religious truth, and thirdly, from rejectionist attitude to toleration towards non-Islamic cultures.

Islamism and Post-Islamism in PAS

Islamist phase of PAS was often attributed to the development in 1980's against the backdrop of global Islamic resurgence and catalysed by competition with United Malay National Organization (UMNO) to win over the Malay electorate. A massive internal party reform was introduced through the establishment of *'Ulamā'* Leadership and engagement with global Islamist movements. Yusof Rawa's era saw a holistic internal transformation of PAS towards a more Islamist position. The ideologies and organizational structure were remodelled into resembling other Islamist movements in the world. The biggest structural transformation was the inauguration of the *'Ulamā'* Leadership. Under this concept, *'Ulamā'* Council, a council of religious experts was established consisting of 12 religious scholars and headed by a *Murshid al-'Amm*. The *'ulamā'* council and frequent *ḥalaqah* adopted by PAS were heavily inspired by the Egyptian *Al-ikhwān al-Muslimūn* movement (Noor, 2014).

Islamic revivalism in PAS was characterized by the desire to establish an Islamic state and Islamized various aspects of life, including educational institutions, government agencies, and financial institutions (Saat & Alatas, 2022). These inclinations often put PAS at odds with UMNO who actively ran their own top-down Islamization projects and co-option of Islamist leaders into the party. In this period, termed by Noor (2014) as Islamization Race, UMNO and PAS tried to portray themselves as more Islamic than the other. PAS accused UMNO's Islamization project as insincere and hypocritical because while projecting an Islamic image, UMNO propagated ethnocentrism, and maintained an infidel, oppressive regime (Müller, 2013). Many accounts of statements such as from Besut PAS leader Mustapha Abu Bakar and Abdul Hadi Awang were found to directly or indirectly excommunicate UMNO from Islam (Yusoff, 2004) which led to major confusion and conflict in the Malay-Muslim community.

On the other hand, post-Islamism in PAS was attributed mainly to their alliance with Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) and Democratic Action Party (DAP) through Barisan Alternatif (BA) in 1999 and later Pakatan Rakyat (PR) in 2008, an approach introduced by PAS as *taḥalluf siyāsī*. This was a historic and very significant shift in strategy for PAS, as for the first time it

agreed to enter into a formal coalition with DAP (Wan Jan, 2020). Islamic state agenda was silenced in place of Welfare State; a more neutral slogan, but still maintained the Islamic spirit propagated by PAS (Mohd Zain, 2007). An emphasize on democratic values such as renouncement of dictatorship, *shūrá*, freedom of speech, and accountability was salient, as President Abdul Hadi Awang (2011) argued Islam encouraged participation of its followers in a parliamentary democratic system that promotes people's participation in electing leaders. Even though significant inroad electoral success was made, PAS also faced severe backlash as the Muslim electorate were reluctant to support alliance with DAP (Abdul Mutalib & Wan Zakaria, 2015).

The advent of this phase was often attributed to Fadzil Noor's acceptance of sacked Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in 1999. Complementing the alliance in BA, PAS also underwent active internal changes and the rise of an alternative discourse to the conservative ideas. These developments even proliferated after Fadzil Noor's demise through progressive figures in PAS. Figures such as Dr. Zulkefly Ahmad and Mujahid Yusof Rawa departed from the prevalent conservatism in PAS and preferred to be recognized as democrat Muslims, taking inspiration from Rachid Ghannouchi's Ennahda movement in Tunisia that was also gaining traction (Malik & Shukri, 2018).

Mujahid Yusof Rawa was one of the progressives who had genuine intention to reform the party, as has been proven by his extensive writing to prescribe transformational ideas for PAS. His key contribution to PAS was the inclusion of non-Muslims into the party. He proposed a constitutional amendment to open party membership to non-Muslims, establishment of a non-Muslim wing, appointment of non-Muslims representing PAS in elections, as senators, and into governmental positions (Yusof, 2009), into which it was accepted and implemented. On the ground, his position as the Head of National Integration Committee enabled him to initiate dialogues and discussions with non-Muslim groups such as United Chinese School Committees Association of Malaysia. The engagements served to break the wall of relationship between PAS and the non-Muslim community (Mohd Zain, 2018) and paved way for eventual establishment of PAS Supporters Wing (DHPP), a wing for non-Muslims supporters of the party (Yusof, 2010). Unlike other wings, DHPP were not legally members of PAS as the constitution required the members to be Muslim. Nevertheless, DHPP represented a fringe, yet important segment of non-Muslim who believed in PAS's brand of political Islam. On the other hand, PAS seemed genuine in its recognition of DHPP, as DHPP was always featured to represent the party in elections.

Mujahid Yusof Rawa also deliberated on the need to reform *'Ulamā'* Leadership, which led to controversy topic among the conservatives. He criticised the *'Ulamā'* Council for complicating party administration due to redundancy in membership of the body with PAS Central Committee, creating an excessively religious image of PAS, and failing to prevent centralization of power as envisioned by his late father. He suggested members from non-religious background to be included in *'Ulamā'* Council to provide a wider range of expertise to the body and reduction of the council into an advisory, non-authoritative body (Yusof, 2012). The idea, however, was met with criticism.

2015 PAS-AMANAH Split: The Return of Islamism?

Disagreement between the conservatives and progressives culminated during Kajang Move, a political manoeuvre aimed to instate Anwar Ibrahim as the Chief Minister of Selangor. The manoeuvre, accompanied by a harsh smear campaign against the incumbent Chief Minister, Abdul Khalid Ibrahim, was deemed unnecessary by the conservatives. The progressives however were more inclined to support the move in order to protect existing alliance in PR (Malik, 2017). This disagreement led to an internal division within PAS that spilled into the public sphere during the September 2015 *mu'tamar* which saw a fierce contest between the conservatives and progressives. The party election was preceded by a systematic dismantling of the progressives. A series of well planned, pre-arranged speeches smeared the progressives as liberals and traitors to the party.

In addition, a list of conservative candidates was distributed to influence the voting process. As a result, all progressive candidates lost except Mazlan Aliman in the PAS Central Committee, but he later resigned, making the *mu'tamar* as a platform of total wipe-out of the progressives (Wan Jan, 2018). The progressives eventually left PAS and formed another Islamic-based party, Parti Amanah Negara (AMANAH). AMANAH did not believe the Islamic state and *ḥudūd* agenda is suitable to be implemented in Malaysia due to its multiracialism, in addition to preference towards cooperation in PR rather than prolonging UMNO's culture of corruption, cronyism, and lies (W.A.Ghapar & C.M. Razali, 2017). Their respective views on 'agree to disagree' principle in PR alliance were hence different; while the conservatives believed PAS reserved the right to advocate *ḥudūd* without interference from other partners, the progressives believed the agenda should be sidelined in favour of PR agenda. Mujahid's prescription to pluralize the *Majlis Syura 'Ulamā'* was also followed the trend of hermeneutic, non-exclusivist interpretation of religion that attempted to challenge the hegemony of Islamists over religious interpretation.

The progressives that were eliminated from PAS therefore were those of post-Islamist tendencies, which prompted scholars to suggest the event as a systematic purge of the progressives and return of the Islamist (Kassim, 2017). While the PAS-AMANAH contestation over Islamist narrative was obvious, very few recognize that there was also a rivalry over the post-Islamist discourse. Since AMANAH argued that all the progressives have left PAS, PAS led its own systematic and rigorous transformation. Jabatan Professional Muda (JPro) was established under the Youth Wing to recruit members from a wide range of professional expertise to address and solve national issues. Ahmad Samsuri Mokhtar, a distinguished aerospace engineer and lecturer that commented rigorously on MH370 tragedy was revealed as Abdul Hadi Awang's personal aide, and later became his replacement in Rhu Rendang seat and the party's Election Director (Ngah, 2018). Samsuri proceeded to win the seat and led an excellent first term as Chief Minister of Terengganu. When PAS filed a defamation lawsuit against Claire Rhewcastle Brown who accused PAS of having received RM90 million bribe from Barisan Nasional (BN), it was its own lawyers that represented the party on a pro-bono basis (Baharin, 2019). These showed within a short period of time, progressives that left PAS were already replaced, and in many cases surpassed by these newly emerging professionals.

Introduction of *Budaya Politik Matang dan Sejahtera* (BPMS) as a new political approach was important as strategic manoeuvre for the changing political landscape after GE14. BPMS has two overarching ideas; firstly, a changing approach in *da'wah* (Islamic propagation) and

ta'āwun siyāsī (political cooperation) and secondly, a nation-building vision based on technocratic Islamic democracy (Awang, 2019). BPMS did wonders in providing somewhat religious justifications of cooperation with UMNO which has historically PAS's archenemy. For over one year, systematic grassroots mind reconditioning was done by both parties (Mohd Akmal & Ahmad Hadi, 2020). The cooperation was explained as a noble effort of *da'wah*, a process of maturing and looking beyond sentimental hatred for the greater Islamic interest. BPMS also justified the toning down of criticism against BN with regards to goods and services tax (GST) and 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) scandal; a logical approach considering the ongoing cooperation on RUU 355 Bill while also neutralizing the excessive politicization and smear campaign by PH on the issues.

In addition, *Wawasan Induk Negara Sejahtera 2051* (WINS2051) and *Dokumen Hijau* were two supplementary documents to BPMS. WINS2051 was PAS's nation-building vision in its 100th anniversary that envisioned Malaysia as a technocratic government centred around economic development and public welfare. WINS2051 outrightly denounced theocracy and anti-democracy (Awang, 2019). On the other hand, *Dokumen Hijau* highlighted immediate solutions for existing economic problems in Malaysia, namely implementation of GST, depreciating value of ringgit, and increasing cost of living. The proposed solutions such as introduction of corporate saving tax, capital gain tax, import substitution, and value engineering (Pusat Penyelidikan PAS, 2017) were clearly taken from mainstream approaches in economics, not Islamic jurisprudence.

Aside from internal reforms, PAS also initiated Gagasan Sejahtera (GS), an intra- ethnic Malay-Muslim political integration consisting of PAS alongside smaller political parties, non-governmental organizations and individuals (Ismail, 2020). Despite that, as the only major political party in GS, PAS practically went solo into the GE14; creating a three-corner fight that was undesirable by both BN and PH. PAS claimed their target was to be a 'kingmaker' in the event of no clear winner in the election (Kassim, 2017). Fielding their highest number of candidates, PAS flaunted the candidate list as the most professionally- studded in their history with the most diverse expertise and the highest number of educational and professional certification, as per required by the envisioned technocrat government. PAS also highlighted the fact that they have never been investigated, moreover charged with any corruption cases. This portrayal of a clean, corruption-free party was an indirect attack towards the BN who entered the election surrounded by corruption scandals.

Post 14th General Election Realignments

PAS's pursuance towards a political alignment with UMNO started parallel with internal disagreement between the conservatives and progressives. During the 2015 Chempaka state legislative assembly by-election, UMNO made way for PAS in respect of the incumbent, late Nik Abdul Aziz (Yaakub et al., 2016). It was this year that the discourse of UMNO-PAS *ummatic* unity came to prominence. Discussions were centred around common grounds between the parties in facing the Malay-Muslim economic, political, and social challenges. It was followed by a joint rally for the Rohingya community in December 2016 and built up to UMNO's support for Abdul Hadi Awang to table a private parliamentary bill amending Act 355 of the Federal Constitution to increase punishment for religious offences, commonly known as RUU 355 Bill (Sabtu, Ismail, & Suhaimy, 2020). Even though PAS open-heartedly accepted the offer, it was also an effort by Najib Razak to split the opposition parties and swing some of the conservative Malay votes in UMNO's favour. Strategic cooperation with

UMNO as part of the *ta'āwun siyāsī* framework was later enhanced after Pakatan Harapan (PH) won in GE14.

RUU 355 Bill was evidence of clear bolstering of Islamist credentials for both PAS and UMNO, albeit arguably done as a political manoeuvre. The private bill proposed an increment in the punishment for religious offences from the existing limit of 3 years of imprisonment, RM5,000 fine, and 6 lashes to 30 years of imprisonment, RM 100,000 fine, and 30 lashes. It majorly benefited PAS in facing the election due to firstly, support for RUU 355 Bill was seen as a religious duty by the general Malay-Muslim electorate. The public supported the amendment on grounds it may pave way for implementation of *ḥudūd* (Zabri & Omar, 2019), even though there was no evidence it was framed by PAS as such. Secondly, opposition of the non-Muslims to the proposed amendment was regarded an intrusion into Muslim affairs, and even if it was done by Muslims, it was seen as a betrayal to the religion (Ali, 2017). This condition put PH in a politically difficult position as it was forced to take a more reserved opposition to the move, not to offend the Malay electorate. Thirdly, there were calls for enhancement of Islamic law from pro-establishment scholars such as the mufti of Pahang (Abdul Hamid, 2018b) that propelled public support for PAS and discredited PH's reluctance to support the bill.

Even though it was predicted a PAS-UMNO alliance would lead them to victory - on the basis of ethnoreligious preference (Case, 2018), the alliance never materialized. Despite that, PAS was relatively successful as they surprisingly won a simple majority in Kelantan and Terengganu, and almost won in Kedah. Malay votes were still dominated by BN with 47%, PAS 28%, and PH 25%. Also, a majority of PAS' votes came from Kelantan and Terengganu (Abdul Hamid, 2018b).

After BN's defeat in GE14, the friendship between PAS and UMNO thus became stronger. PAS and UMNO made way for each other to contest the first four post GE14 by- elections in Sungai Kandis, Balakong, Seri Setia, and Port Dickson. When PAS decided to campaign for UMNO Semenyih and Rantau, they won the two by-elections (Mohd Akmal & Ahmad Hadi, 2020). On 14 September 2019, a gathering was organized with the main agenda to establish *Muafakat Nasional* (MN), a formal UMNO-PAS political alliance. A five-point charter was signed by PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang and UMNO president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (Ufen, 2022) aimed at uniting the Malay-Muslim for electoral purposes and maintaining their political power in light of perceived liberal and secular threats within PH particularly DAP (Isa et al., 2022).

On the other hand, PH efforts to reform the government into a more plural, egalitarian one backfired severely. Policies such as appointment of non-Muslim Lim Guan Eng, Tommy Thomas, and Richard Malanjum as Finance Minister, Attorney General, and Chief Justice respectively (Chin, 2020), recognition of Unified Examination Certificate (Yaakub, 2021), and attempt to ratify International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Abdul Hamid & Zawawi, 2023) were seen, or rather presented as a threat to the Malay-Muslim hegemony. In addition, many communal related issues emerged including denunciation over *Jawi* script in standard four Malay language subject, death of a firefighter during an Indian temple riot, extradition of controversial preacher Zakir Naik, acquittal of DAP members accused of involvement with Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) terrorist group (Mohd Akmal & Ahmad Hadi, 2020), LGBT and communist gatherings, display of an oversized cross symbol on an apartment building, exposure of videos related to Christianization movements, and organization of Octoberfest (Abdullah, 2021). All these

events were not properly addressed by PH, thus creating a perception of PH's indifference and ineffectiveness with regard to Malay-Muslim issues.

MN was later expanded into a larger political cooperation with Perikatan Nasional (PN) that included Parti Peribumi Bersatu Malaysia (BERSATU), (GPS), and several PKR members led by Azmin Ali, forming a strong conservative Malay-Muslim political bloc, and PAS were a central member of both cooperations. It culminated in Sheraton Move, a staged backdoor political transition allegedly organized in Sheraton Hotel. What transpired afterwards was a four-year downward spiral in Malaysian politics that also coincided with outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and its recovery period. The PN government led by BERSATU president Muhyiddin Yassin only lasted for 17 months. As BN withdrew their support, Muhyiddin Yassin was forced to resign and replaced by Ismail Sabri (Chin, 2022).

Internal tension between UMNO and BERSATU was apparent despite being in a political cooperation. The very existence of BERSATU was an existential political threat to UMNO. As a splinter of UMNO, BERSATU's unsanctioned criticism of UMNO in the last election was not forgiven. BERSATU contested and won many of UMNO's seats, in addition to several post-electoral defections (Wan Jan, 2020). It is thus impossible for them to agree on constituency allocations in the future, which prevented a long-term electoral pact between the two parties. This was evident when UMNO withdrew their confidence in Muhyiddin Yassin.

UMNO proceeded to trigger state elections in Melaka and Johor and contested them as BN instead of PN or MN. Triggering snap state election was strategic in two ways; it made any attempt for a backdoor transition futile and enabled BN to gauge their electoral relevance. In the Melaka state election held on 20 November 2021, BN decisively won a two thirds majority with 21 seats, while PN only won 3 with none from PAS (Boyman, 2021). Confident with their capability, BN pressured Ismail Sabri into calling for a dissolution of parliament. Hence, MN was practically put to the shelves.

PAS and Perikatan Nasional in 15th General Election

GE15 saw a three-cornered fight between PH, BN, and PN, where BN and PN used the threat towards Malay-Muslim community that particularly came from DAP and liberalism as their major campaigning theme. Sentiments of threat towards Malay and Islam by non- Muslims that started post GE14 persisted. Hence religious and ethnic oriented political parties fiercely fought over the Malay votes. This led to the rise in ethnoreligious based campaigning between PN and BN where each political alliance tried to surpass each other (Iman Research, 2023).

As the election result was revealed, no political alliance secured a simple majority. PH led the seats count with 82 seats, PN 74 seats, and BN 30 seats. PAS however managed to make inroads development into rural Malay majority seats traditionally won by BN in Perlis, eastern and central Pahang, mainland Penang, northern and central Perak, northern and western Selangor, and parts of Melaka. Dividing the seats in Peninsular Malaysia further into Malay majority, marginal, and non-Malay majority seats, (Mohamad and Suffian (2023) found a large portion of PN's victory was in Malay majority constituencies, which was 67 out of 86. Furthermore, they only won 4 out of 32 marginal seats and lost all non-Malay majority seats.

Following the political stalemate, lengthy negotiations were made between parties to secure at least a simple majority. Even though PH and PN had the largest and second largest number of seats, PN adamantly refused to establish political cooperation with PH. Abdul Hadi Awang even stated that PAS were more willing to become an opposition party than work with PH (Syed Sopi & Ambak, 2023). Finally, an agreement was reached between PH, BN, and West Malaysian parties to form a government with an aggregate of 148 seats; commanding a strong two thirds majority.

The remaining six states of Kedah, Pulau Pinang, Negeri Sembilan, Kelantan, and Terengganu held their state elections on 13 August 2023, this time pitting only PH-BN against PN as the major contesting parties. Again, contending views on ethnic relations were the major setting parameter in the state elections; PH-BN held the view of justice for all Malaysian regardless of ethnic difference, while PN brought the Malay supremacy, survivability of the Malays and political domination of DAP. The state elections bore no change in status quo; PH-BN and PN won in their respective states. PH-BN won 29 out of 40 seats in Pulau Pinang, 34 out of 56 seats in Selangor, and 31 out of 36 seats in Negeri Sembilan. Meanwhile PN won 43 out of 45 seats in Kelantan, 33 out of 36 seats in Kedah, and won all 36 seats in Terengganu (Awang Besar et al., 2023). PAS also obtained a similar trend of support as in GE15; dominance in rural Malay majority areas previously won by UMNO. However, the key takeaway was the importance of PAS in solidifying existing votes while making more inroads progress. PN won a significant number of rural Malay seats in Penang and Negeri Sembilan, in addition to denying two thirds majority in Selangor.

Post-Islamist Dynamics in PAS

Ideological shift within PAS during the period of 2015 until 2023 had two major intertwined themes; a rightward shift towards Islamist ideas and Malay communalistic ideas. This shift was described as a Malay-Islamist supremacist ideology attempting to have *sharīʿah* in a future Islamic state of Malaysia (Abdul Hamid & Zawawi, 2023), pursuing an orthodox juridical Islamic state (Abdul Hamid, 2018a), and following the remnants of *takfīri* politics brought about by *Amanat Hadi* (Abdul Hamid, 2018b). It happened with respect to both internal and external factors. Internally, when the Islamists reassumed dominance, a systematic effort was engineered to instil fear towards 'the others' among the Malay polity (Chin, 2020) and was central to the post-GE14 political scene.

External political development also served as a catalyst to PAS's rightward shift as they benefited from it electorally. PAS capitalized Malaysia's polarizing divide by tapping into issues of Malay displacement and threat to Islam that resulted from flawed attempts of reform by PH (Welsh, 2020). Central to this threat was DAP, a party that maintained solid non-Malay electoral support for PH, and commanded a numerical significance in the PH government. Moreover, DAP was associated to Chinese chauvinism, communism, and Christian evangelism among the Malay public, thus creating the impression DAP was pressuring the PH government into making decisions and policies, in which PH failed to counter. Among Malay-based parties, this effort has propelled PAS as the genuine defender of the Malay-Muslim community and their interest (Awang Besar, Mohd Basori, & Abdul Ghani, 2020). Against PH, it was a dependable approach to edge over the Malay electorate. The survey showed a dwindling public approval towards PH due to their failure to manage ethnic polarization. Even though PH was very popular after GE14, it was found that in a period of only 22 months, their public approval rating had declined, the worst being among the Malays at only 26% satisfaction (Mohamad & Suffian, 2023).

While Malay supremacism seemed quite peculiar for PAS, it was not totally novel. Even though PAS had historically denounced Malay communalism as a political ideology, it was involved in political cooperation with Malay-based parties such as BN in 1974-1978 and Semangat 46 party in the 1990's (Yusoff, 2004). Following PR's significant success in 2008 General Election, Abdul Hadi Awang proposed a revival of the idea through formation of a unity government between BN and PR (Mohamed, 2019). However, the idea was shut down by the party leadership and grassroots. Today, PN and MN heavily resonated with the remnants of this idea. In his speech during the mu'tamar, Abdul Hadi Awang inferred Malay unity as similar to Prophet Muhammad's effort to unite the Arabs before expanding the religion to non-Arabs (Wan Jan, 2020). PAS saw the creation of a Malay-Muslim united political block as a religious duty that must be undertaken by the party. This marked a distinct ideological shift in PAS where the party reassumed an increasing Malay communalistic tendency in addition to Islamist ideas.

However, simply defining PAS as a Malay-Islamist supremacist party without acknowledging the intricate progressive elements that persisted within the party is simply a shallow analysis. Firstly, PAS maintained the omission of a juridical Islamic state and *ḥudūd* agenda in favour of other non-Islamic frameworks. The last time Islamic state appeared as the state framework for PAS can only be traced back in 2003 with the introduction of *Negara Islam* document (Yusoff, 2004). Since then, PAS shifted towards a nation-state framework with proposed improvement on leadership and governance, as outlined in WINS2051 and *Dokumen Hijau,* hence arguments on the reinstatement of a juridical Islamic state were plainly baseless. In addition, the *ḥudūd* agenda also has ceased to exist. Even though widespread allegations on RUU 355 Bill being a backdoor transition to *ḥudūd* (Chin, 2020), PAS never framed it as such. Instead, Mazida and Samudin (2022) argued based on their analysis of RUU 355 Bill, PAS's intention was primarily to enable state autonomy on legislation of Islamic law and as a means of education to offenders.

Secondly, there was an organized decentralization of the party away from *'ulamā'* to accommodate more professionals. PAS allowed the institutions left by the progressives to flourish, and arguably strengthened them further. The professionals in PAS kept growing in credibility and importance. In addition to an increasing proportion of electoral candidates chosen from among non-religious background, three out of four current PAS Chief Ministers are also from non-religious background, namely Ahmad Samsuri Mokhtar of Terengganu, Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor of Kedah, Mohd Shukri Ramli of Perlis. PAS also chose N. Balasubramaniam, DHPP Head as their Senator in the upper house (Ali, 2020).

In addition to Malay-Islam discourse, other non-ethnic factors also contributed to PAS's success in GE15 and 2023 state elections. Lowering the voting age to 18 years old significantly benefited PAS, as a large portion of the 5.8 million youth voted for PN (Awang Besar, 2023). Mohd Zain et al. (2023) also reaffirmed the young voters' influence, however adding another interrelated factor, which is effective social media campaigning that gave advantage to PN. It was found that there is a strong correlation between TikTok usage among Malay first time voters with political interest and participation (Huey, 2023).

Another factor was the perception that PAS is the alternative of UMNO for the Malays. UMNO's dominance diminished in recent years due to trust deficit in light of Zahid Hamidi's criminal charges relating to corruption, abuse of power and money laundering (Mohamad & Suffian, 2023). PAS hence was seen as a potential replacement for UMNO because the party

was perceived to be free from corruption and misconduct, in addition to having the same foundation on Malay-Muslim interests as UMNO (Awang Besar, Mohd Basori, & Abdul Ghani, 2020). The trust deficit of the Malay electorate was aggravated by BN's consequent cooperation with PH after GE15, which further swung BN's vote towards PN.

This paper concludes PAS exhibited both Islamist and post-Islamist characters simultaneously; Islamist in the terms of increased advocacy on the threat towards Islam and elimination of the progressives in 2015, and post-Islamist in terms of silence of Islamic state and ḥudūd agenda as well as increasing accommodation of the non-religious group. In addition, PAS also took a Malay communalistic stance in light of contemporary Malaysian political development. Analysis on PAS presented a recent trend of criticism towards post-Islamism in explaining evolution of Islamist movements. Mozaffari (2007) highlighted a lack of clear definition what Islamism and post-Islamism is that led to the fundamental difficulty in classifying movements into either category.

However, assigning a clear-cut definition prompted other questions. Firstly, mere categorization of Islamist movements was never Bayat's intention when he proposed the term, as he explained post-Islamist could either be a process or a conscious project (Bayat, 2005). Even though it is possible to regard Islamism and post-Islamism as two distinct categories, post-Islamism was coined to describe the changes that happened in post-Khomeini Iran in an evolutionary, not categorical manner. Secondly, Sadeghi (2021) also found many cases where Islamism and post-Islamism existed parallel to each other, for example post-Islamist Ikhwan Al-Muslimin in Islamist Syria, and post-Islamist Mahmoud Mohamed Taha in Islamist Sudan. Hence, she suggested a non-linear evaluation of post-Islamism. In this line of analysis, post-Islamism does not mark the historical end of Islamism. Instead, Islamism and post-Islamism may exist simultaneously within the same context where movements may adopt both characters, or interchange between the two.

The case of PAS between 2015 until 2023 presented another example that fits this evaluation. While taking more "exclusivist" stances towards DAP and AMANAH, PAS maintained a certain degree of acceptance towards other groups such as DHPP, the professionals, UMNO, and BERSATU. This case demonstrated Islamism and post-Islamism existed simultaneously and interchangeably. Moreover, it also suggested a new dimension to the theory; non-linear progression between Islamism and post-Islamism may also occur within a party. The fact that PAS contested in all of Malaysia's election since 1955 shows that the party had a certain degree of post-Islamist democratic acceptance. This happened far prior to any other major Islamist movements' acceptance of democracy and also earlier than the party's supposed Islamist turn in early 1980's.

Cases of parallel existence of Islamism and post-Islamism should not discredit the theory itself. Instead, the main objective is to appreciate the dynamics of Islam-state discourse by problematizing post-Islamism as a key development in the area. The Islam-state discourse hence is not monolithic, but includes a myriad of ideas expanding, evolving, and competing against each other. Islamist movements were also very dynamic depending on the context in which they exist. The relatively democratic and plural Malaysia prompted PAS to transition towards post-Islamism, however in recent days also resorted to Malay communalistic ideas.

Conclusion

Post-Islamism was described as a tendency for Islamist movements to take moderate stances and embrace democratic ideas after the exhaustion and failure of Islamist rhetorics, commonly seen during the 1990's. This paper challenged post-Islamism by presenting the case of PAS in 2015 that systematically eliminated progressive leaders from their ranks and embraced Malay communalistic ideas. This phenomenon would be a reverse of post-Islamism to Islamism, but PAS still achieved an unprecedented success in recent elections. Continued silence over Islamic state and ḥudūd agenda was proof that Islamism was never fully reinstated in PAS after the events that transpired 2015. Instead, two ideas filled the vacuum left by the progressives. Firstly, the prevalence of ideas resembling post-Islamism in the sense of adoption of an improved nation-state framework and accommodation of non-religiously educated professionals into central positions. Secondly, Malay communalist politics in light of the perceived threats from liberal PH and closer alliance with Malay-based parties in GS, MN and PN. This paper supported the current understanding of non-linear progression of Islamism and post-Islamism, while adding intra-party dynamics between Islamism and post-Islamism are also possible.

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VIEWPOINTS

INVESTIGATING THE INTERSECTION OF HINDU NATIONALISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA IN INDIA: HISTORICAL ROOTS AND EVOLUTION

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Introduction

Islam's presence in India has a long history. Long before the advent of Islam, spices and other goods from India and Southeast Asia have been in high demand in regions such as Egypt and southern Europe. such as Egypt and southern Europe. Arab traders, who played a dominant role in the transit trade, transported these commodities from Indian ports to Yemen in southern Arabia. From there, the goods were carried overland to Syrian ports before being shipped to Egypt and Europe, facilitating a thriving trade network that connected India to the wider world. Although the trading relationship with India did not begin with the arrival of Islam, it did provide the network of commerce a new facet.[1] With the advent of Islam in Arabia during the 7th century, the religion made its way to the Indian subcontinent through established trade routes. Islam had established itself in the area by the eighth century CE, and it rose to prominence throughout time via both peaceful conversions and conquests. In various regions of India, Muslim dynasties and kings started to establish themselves, influencing the country's history, culture, and society.[2] Although Islam was introduced to India in the 7th century, the roots of modern Islamophobia can be traced to the Mughal era.[3] During this period, many Hindus perceived the Muslim rulers as foreign invaders, which sowed early seeds of suspicion and fear. Over time, Hindu nationalists distorted Mughal history, portraying Muslim rulers as barbaric oppressors.[4] The arrival of the British further deepened the divide between Hindus and Muslims, as colonial policies exacerbated communal tensions. This widening rift led to a new wave of Islamophobia, fuelled by nationalist movements. The situation of Muslims further deteriorated when India got its independence from British rule in 1947 and got divided into two sovereign nations, India and Pakistan. The partition led to the series of violence perpetuated against Muslims in India. Later, the Islamophobic sentiments reached unprecedented heights at the time of demolishing of Babri Mosque in 1992. The political rise of Bhartiya Janata party in the same era added to the cause.[5]

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[1] Mohamad Ikram Sheikh, *Muslim civilization in India*. (Columbia University Press, 1964), 6.

[2] Arshad Islam, "The civilizational role of Islam in the Indian subcontinent: The Delhi sultanate." *Intellectual Discourse* 25, no. 1 (2017).

[3] Zehra Mehdi, "Phobia of religion: religion as Islam a political argument and a psychoanalytic inquiry of Islamophobia in India." *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* 14, no. 3 (2017): 222-244.

[4] Cynthia Talbot, "Inscribing the other, inscribing the self: Hindu-Muslim identities in pre-colonial India." *Comparative studies in society and history* 37, no. 4 (1995): 692-722.

[5] Thameem Ushama, "Islamophobia in India: an exploration of its roots, rise and history." *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)* 25, no. 1 (2020): 1-29.

The historical convergence of Hindu nationalism and Islamophobia

Mughal emperors had Central Asian and Persian ancestry and were primarily Muslims.[6] For three centuries, they reigned over a large mass of areas of the Indian subcontinent. This empire treated native Hindus and followers of other religions, who make up the majority of the Indian people, with tolerance while still recognizing Islam as the state religion.[7] The Mughal dynasty gained renown for its over two centuries of effective governance in India, coupled with the exceptional abilities of its emperors. Across seven successive generations, they maintained an impressive record of skilful leadership and administrative prowess. Another noteworthy achievement was the Mughal's endeavour to unify Hindus and Muslims into a single state in India.[8] In a recent study, Truschke makes the case that there was substantial intercultural appreciation and interchange during the Muslim rule in India, as opposed to conflicts related to religion or culture. According to her, this divisive interpretation of Mughal empire developed during the colonial period from 1757 to 1947. Truschke acknowledges that the Mughals maintained their rule through force, a common aspect of imperial governance. However, she emphasizes the importance of avoiding assumptions that this aggression was solely driven by religious motives. According to her research, the Mughal empire had no intention of transforming India into an Islamic state. [9]

Studies have highlighted the Mughal emperors' inclusiveness and tolerance toward non-Muslims, emphasizing their efforts to foster harmony. Conversely, Hindu nationalists have distorted historical narratives, portraying Muslim rulers as foreign invaders. They claim that they have fought Hindu rulers to control the Indian sub-continent. But this is not the case for example, in his conflict with Maharana Pratap, the Raja of Amber, a Hindu Rajput, supported [Mughal emperor] Akbar. Rana Sanga received assistance from Sultan Mahmud Lodi and Hasan Khan Mewati to defeat Babur, while the Sultan of Jaunpur joined forces with a Hindu chieftain to battle the Muslim rulers of Kapila. Such instances can be found throughout Indian history. It should be clear that political factors had a greater effect on mediaeval kings than religious ones. Hindu generals served as counsellors and generals under the Mughal emperors. Most of the Mughal emperor Akbar's esteemed advisors were Hindus.[10] Historians have occasionally emphasised particular facets of Mughal administration, such as Aurangzeb's (the last of the Great Mughals) religious views, to present a poor picture of the whole empire. Aurangzeb, was a pragmatic leader who supported Hindu institutions and hired more Hindus than his forebears in the imperial bureaucracy.[11] Many Hindu activists used the writings of Orientalist researchers on India as inspiration, spurred on by the structural and ideological effects of colonial authority, to demand for the restoration of the "Golden age" which, according to colonialism narratives, was destroyed by the foreign "race" of Muslim invaders.[12]

After the Industrial Revolution began, India and other less powerful countries were colonized. The decline of the Mughal Empire marked the end of Muslim sovereignty over the Indian

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[6] Michael H. Fisher, "Islam in Mughal India." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. 2018.

[7] Haneef C. Muhammad, "Tolerance and Co-Existence in Muslim India: The Religious Policy of The Mughal Empire." *Cenraps Journal of Social Sciences* 2, No. 1 (2020): 1-13.

[8] Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Mughal dynasty." Encyclopedia Britannica, April 26, 2023. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mughal-dynasty.

[9] Audrey Truschke, *Culture of encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal court*. Columbia University Press, 2016.

[10] Kalim Siddiqui, "A critical study of 'Hindu Nationalism 'in India." *Journal of Business and Economic Policy* 3, no. 2 (2016): 9-28.

[11] Irfan Habib, *The making of history: essays presented to Irfan Habib*. Anthem Press, 2002.

[12] Zaheer Baber, "'Race', religion and riots: The 'racialization 'of communal identity and conflict in India." *Sociology* 38, no. 4 (2004): 701-718.

subcontinent and created a power vacuum that paved the way for British imperial domination in the region. Since the British had wrested control from Muslims, who, despite being a minority, had held significant power in India, they perceived Muslims as their real opponents.[13] As per Gottschalk and Greenberg, Islamophobic tendencies were discernible in British literature prior to 1857, particularly in works not authored by missionaries.[14] The British colonial rulers in India, mainly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, used the "divide and rule" policy. It was a calculated move to preserve dominance and increase their authority over the Indian subcontinent. Although there were religious distinctions between Hindus and Muslims before British colonization, these identities tended to be very localised and dependent on their cultural and linguistic surroundings. [15] As a result of colonialism, communal politics took shape and acquired divisive dimensions in India. The British policy of "Divide and Rule" created artificial divisions and propagated communal politics and organizations as a result of imperialist manoeuvres.[16]

The British government accorded the Muslims specific benefits in acknowledgment of the need to secure their cooperation. One such favour was the creation of separate electorates, which was also considered as a defence against the increasing power of the anti-colonial movement. The community representation idea trains men to think like partisans instead of citizens and eventually results in the formation of political factions that are structured against one another. Lord Ronaldshay, the Governor of Bengal from 1917 to 1922, noted that the differences between Hindus and Muslims are significant because they go beyond religious belief and practise to include profoundly divergent worldviews that lead to social systems that are diametrically opposed to one another. These ideas shaped the Muslim identity in Indian politics and promoted the expansion of communal alliances.[17] It destroyed earlier local claims to cultural identity and belonging and consolidating religion as the main vector of identity formation for local and federal elections under the imperial British Raj.[18] Concurrently, a burgeoning Hindu nationalist movement began to manifest itself in the Indian subcontinent during this era.

The Arya Samaj's *shuddhi* (purification campaign to reclaim people who had switched from Hinduism to other religions) and *sangathan* (organisation in defence of Hindu interests) activities helped bring militant Hindu assertion to new heights in the 1920s. Unprecedented communal conflicts occurred in Uttar Pradesh.[19] The creation of Hindu "*sabhas*" across the nation and the creation of the All India Hindu Sabha as their representative organisation in 1915 were early examples of this urge in action. When Vinayak Damodar Savarkar joined its leadership in the 1920s, this organisation became active as the Hindu Mahasabha.[20] The Hindu reformers like Dayananda, Vivekananda, and Aurobindo which were associated with

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[13] Ilyse R. Morgenstein Fuerst, *Indian Muslim minorities and the 1857 rebellion: religion, rebels and jihad*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017: William Wilson Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans: are they bound in conscience to rebel against the Queen?* Trübner and Company, 1871.

[14] Peter Gottschalk, and Gabriel Greenberg. "Common heritage, uncommon fear: Islamophobia in the United States and British India, 1687–1947." In *Islamophobia in America: The anatomy of intolerance*, pp. 21-51. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2013.

[15] Sudipta Kaviraj, "The imaginary institution of India." *Occasional Paper* (1992): 41-64.

[16] Zoya Khaliq Hasan, "Communalism and communal violence in India." *Social Scientist* (1982): 25-39.

[17] Zaheer. "Race', religion and riots"

[18] Amarnath Amarasingam, Sanober Umar, and Shweta Desai. ""Fight, Die, and If Required Kill": Hindu Nationalism, Misinformation, and Islamophobia in India." *Religions* 13, no. 5 (2022): 380.

[19] Charu Gupta, "Hindu women, Muslim men: Love Jihad and conversions." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2009): 13-15.

[20] John Harriss, Stuart Corbridge, and Craig Jeffrey. "Is India Becoming the 'Hindu Rashtra' Sought by Hindu Nationalists? (SWP 60)." (2017).

the development of Hindu nationalism want to rekindle interest in classical literature, particularly the Vedas, Upanishads, and Puranas.[21] Dayananda and Vivekananda concentrated mostly on how to forge a strong and devoted group identity, whereas Aurobindo came up with a plan in which Muslims were cast as the 'hated other'.[22]

Dayananda leveraged his criticism of Islam to argue that Muslims could never be reliable partners in nation-building. He claimed this was due to their supposed limited outlook, which he alleged hindered their ability to empathize with the suffering and struggles of others, as well as their narrow perspective on humanity. The basis of Dayananda's argument is his own skewed belief that the Vedas are a superior source of knowledge that cannot be refuted. Dayananda frequently seemed to be advocating the exclusion of non-Hindus from Indian nationalism in his calls for the resurgence of Hindu nationalism. The Muslim community found his preaching and writings particularly offensive because they saw a danger to their long-standing hegemony and control over various facets of people's life in the nation in his demand for a Hindu revival.[23] Deendayal Upadhyay (1916–68), M. S. Golwalkar (1907–73), and V. D. Savarkar (1883–1966) all worked to bring Hindus together in opposition to Muslims. The Congress recognized Muslims as equal partners through pivotal events such as the founding of the Muslim League in 1906, the ratification of the Lucknow Pact in 1916, and the Khilafat Non-Cooperation Movement in 1919. In response, Hindu nationalism emerged as a political ideology designed to counter both the Congress and the Muslim community. This gave rise to the development of Hindu-centric political parties, first with the Hindu Mahasabha in 1915, followed by the Jan Sangh in 1951, and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1980.[24]

The 1947 partition of India had a significant and long-lasting effect on how Muslims and Hindus in the Indian subcontinent perceived one another as well as in the newly established Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The events leading up to Partition, which were marked by intense bloodshed, large-scale migrations, and the establishment of two distinct states along religious lines, left a lasting impression on both the populations.[25] Millions of people were displaced, and many lives were lost as a result of the bloodshed and communal tensions that occurred during partition. Following the partition of India, riots targeting Indian Muslims became a regular and organised cycle.[26] The relocation brought on by partition had a significant socio-economic and political impact in addition to its geographic effects. As power structures changed and communities dealt with the fallout of the division, Muslims who stayed in India frequently found themselves marginalised and disadvantaged. This loss of status and the fear of potential discrimination heightened Muslim fears.[27]

After independence, India declared itself a democracy with secularism at its core. India describes itself as a "secular" nation, but its understanding of the term differs significantly from the American concept of secularism, which demands complete separation of church and state, as well as the French model of *lacité*, which ensures the state's neutrality towards religious beliefs and the complete separation of the religious and public spheres. In actuality,

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[21] Bidyut Chakrabarty and Bhuwan Jha. *Hindu nationalism in India: ideology and politics*. Routledge, 2019, 3

[22] Ibid, 14

[23] Ibid, 23

[24] Ibid, 2

[25] Amarnath Amarasingam, Sanober Umar, and Shweta Desai. "“Fight, Die, and If Required Kill”: Hindu Nationalism, Misinformation, and Islamophobia in India." *Religions* 13, no. 5 (2022): 380.

[26] Asghar Ali Engineer, *Lifting the veil: Communal violence and communal harmony in contemporary India.* Sangam books, 1995.

[27] Zoya Khaliq Hasan, "Communalism and communal violence in India." *Social Scientist* (1982): 25-39.

India was proclaimed a Sovereign Democratic Republic in the preamble. It wasn't until January 3rd, 1977 that the word "secular" and the term "socialist" were added to the Constitution Act, popularly known as the 42nd Amendment. The Indian Constitution's preamble forbids the establishment of a theocratic government and forbids it from endorsing or otherwise favouring any specific religion. However, there is no distinction between religion and the state in either the law or in practise; rather, the two frequently intercede in each other's territory within limits that have been imposed by the law and determined by the courts.[28] According to Singh, the inclusion of 'Bharat' as a symbolic representation at the outset of the constitution to denote the nation; the emphasis on strong centralization aligning with Hindu nationalist ideals; direct involvement of the state in reinforcing Hindu identity through reforms within the Hindu religion; the delineation of 'Hindu' to support a Hindu assimilation approach towards Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs; emphasis on cow protection; elevated status for Hindi in the Devanagari script; and special significance given to Sanskrit, these aspects collectively imbue the constitution with a pronounced Hindu-centric undertone that significantly affects its claim of being secular.[29] The demolition of the Babri Masjid posed a significant challenge to the foundational principles of secularism in India, marking a critical turning point in the nation's secular narrative.[30] This event not only violated the constitutional mandate to maintain the status quo of religious sites post-1947 but also emboldened Hindutva nationalists to demand the demolition of other religious sites belonging to minority communities, particularly Muslims.

Conclusion

The intersection of Hindu nationalism and Islamophobia in India is deeply rooted in historical narratives, colonial policies, and modern political dynamics. Islamophobia, initially shaped by Mughal-era tensions and colonial distortions, found new expressions in the post-independence era through communal politics and cultural divisions. The British colonial policy of "divide and rule" played a pivotal role in institutionalizing these divisions, framing Muslims as "the other" and setting the stage for contemporary Islamophobic ideologies. Hindu nationalism emerged in opposition, promoting the idea of a Hindu cultural resurgence that marginalized minority communities, particularly Muslims. This narrative was further solidified through events like the Babri Masjid demolition, which became a symbol of Hindu nationalist assertion and a rallying point for the Bharatiya Janata Party's political rise. The BJP's ascent has since amplified these tensions, with Islamophobia becoming a tool for political mobilization.

Despite India's constitutional commitment to secularism, the lived reality often reflects the dominance of Hindu-centric narratives. The enduring legacy of colonial policies, coupled with the modern political exploitation of religious identities, has entrenched divisions that continue to shape India's socio-political landscape. Addressing this intersection requires not only revisiting historical narratives but also fostering an inclusive national identity that transcends religious divides.

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[28] Iqtidar Karamat Cheema, *Constitutional and Legal Challenges Faced by Religious Minorities in India*. US Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2017.

[29] Pritam Singh, "Institutional communalism in India." In *Communalism in Postcolonial India*, Routledge India, 2018, 78-100.

[30] Manoj Mate, "Constitutional erosion and the challenge to secular democracy in India." Constitutional democracy in crisis (2018).

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Strengthening Family Bonds Through Islamic Values:
A Path to Harmonious Society

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Introduction

The family is the cornerstone of Islamic society, serving as the primary institution for transmitting values, social norms, and religious teachings. From the advent of Islam, the family has been recognized not only as a biological and social unit but also as a spiritual one, deeply intertwined with the religious and moral fabric of the Muslim community. The strength and stability of family relationships are crucial in Islam, laying the foundation for individual well-being and, by extension, the overall health of society.

In the Islamic worldview, the family is the first environment where faith is nurtured, and the principles of Islam are lived and experienced daily. It is within the family that individuals learn about their duties towards Allah, society, and themselves. The Quran, Hadith, and classical Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) provide comprehensive guidance on maintaining and strengthening these familial bonds, ensuring they contribute positively to the broader social order.

The significance of the family in Islam is underscored by numerous Quranic verses and Hadiths that emphasize familial duties, mutual respect, and love. These teachings are not merely abstract ideals but practical directives that govern day-to-day interactions between family members. For example, the Quran instructs believers to honor their parents, care for their children, and maintain kinship ties, all of which are considered acts of worship. The verse "*And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents good treatment...*" (Al-Isra: 23) exemplifies the ethical framework concerning family life in Islam.

Islamic jurisprudence offers a detailed framework for fostering strong family bonds, highlighting values such as compassion, respect, responsibility, and mutual support. Jurists like Imam Al-Ghazali and Imam Al-Shafi'i have extensively elaborated on these values, providing timeless guidance that remains relevant today. Their writings cover a wide range of issues, from the rights and duties of spouses to the responsibilities of parents and children, and the importance of maintaining kinship ties.

The family's influence extends beyond the personal sphere, impacting the well-being of society at large. A society where families are strong, cohesive, and rooted in Islamic values is likely to be just, peaceful, and prosperous. Conversely, the breakdown of family structures can lead to social fragmentation and moral decay. Thus, the health of the family is directly linked to the health of the community and the nation.

This article delves into how Islamic values strengthen family ties and contribute to societal harmony, drawing on classical Islamic jurisprudence, Quranic injunctions, and Hadith literature. By exploring these sources, we can gain a deeper understanding of how Islamic teachings can be applied to contemporary family life, ensuring that the family remains a source of strength and stability in an ever-changing world.

The Importance of Family in Islamic Jurisprudence

Islamic jurisprudence, or *fiqh*, places a significant emphasis on the family as a core institution within the Muslim community. The family is seen as a microcosm of society, where the principles of justice, mercy, and social responsibility are first inculcated. Classical jurists like Imam Al-Ghazali and Imam Al-Shafi'i have written extensively on the obligations and rights of family members, reflecting the central role of the family in Islamic law.

Imam Al-Ghazali, in his seminal work *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, emphasizes the importance of fulfilling familial duties as a means of attaining spiritual and social harmony. He writes, "The family is a trust from Allah, and the fulfillment of its rights is among the greatest acts of worship" (Al-Ghazali, 2005, vol. 2, p. 112). This statement underscores the sacred nature of family relationships and the religious obligation to maintain them.

The Quranic verse, "*And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination*" (Al-Luqman: 14), is frequently cited by jurists to highlight the duties owed to parents, particularly the mother. This verse forms the basis for many rulings in Islamic law regarding the treatment of parents and the obligations of children (Al-Sarakhsi, 1986, vol. 10, p. 352).

Islamic Teachings on Marriage and Family Bonds

Marriage is regarded as a contractual relationship in Islamic law, but it is also imbued with spiritual significance. The contract (*nikah*) is designed to establish a family unit based on love, mercy, and mutual rights and responsibilities. The Quran states, "*And among His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought*" (Ar-Rum: 21). This verse is often referenced in *fiqh* texts to illustrate the ideal characteristics of a marital relationship (Ibn Rushd, 1996, vol. 1, p. 42).

Imam Al-Shafi'i, in his work *Al-Umm*, discusses the contractual nature of marriage and the importance of fulfilling the rights of the spouse. He asserts that the well-being of the family depends on the mutual fulfillment of these rights, as established by the Quran and Sunnah. Al-Shafi'i emphasizes, "The contract of marriage is a means of protecting the dignity and rights of both spouses, and through it, the family is fortified against the challenges of life" (Al-Shafi'i, 2001, vol. 5, p. 183).

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "*When a man marries, he has completed half of his religion; so let him fear Allah regarding the remaining half*" (Al-Tirmidhi, 1987, vol. 3, Hadith 1080). This Hadith, cited in many jurisprudential discussions, highlights the

spiritual significance of marriage and its role in completing a Muslim's faith (Al-Nawawi, 1992, vol. 1, p. 160).

Parental Duties and the Upbringing of Children

Islamic jurisprudence places significant emphasis on the duties of parents, particularly in the upbringing and education of children. Parents are seen as the primary educators, responsible for instilling Islamic values and teachings in their children. The Quran instructs, "*O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones...*" (At-Tahrim: 6). This verse is interpreted by jurists as an obligation on parents to ensure the religious and moral education of their children (Al-Mawardi, 1996, vol. 4, p. 414).

Imam Ibn Qudamah, in his work *Al-Mughni*, elaborates on the responsibilities of parents, stating, "The obligation of a parent is not limited to providing physical sustenance but extends to the moral and spiritual development of the child" (Ibn Qudamah, 1985, vol. 9, p. 97). He further emphasizes the importance of good character, quoting the Hadith, "*No father gives his child anything better than good manners*" (Al-Tirmidhi, 1987, vol. 4, Hadith 1952).

The process of educating children in Islamic values is not only a parental duty but also a communal responsibility. Jurists like Al-Mawardi have discussed the role of the community in supporting parents and ensuring that children grow up in a morally sound environment. He writes, "The upbringing of children is a shared responsibility, and the community must support the family in this noble task" (Al-Mawardi, 1996, vol. 5, p. 419).

The Role of Extended Family and Kinship Bonds

Islamic law also places a strong emphasis on maintaining extended family ties, known as *silaturrahim*. The severance of these ties is considered a serious offense, with significant spiritual and social consequences. The Quran warns, "*And those who break the covenant of Allah after contracting it and sever that which Allah has ordered to be joined and cause corruption on earth: for them is the curse, and they will have the worst home*" (Ar-Ra`d: 25). Jurists often cite this verse when discussing the importance of maintaining kinship bonds (Al-Sarakhsi, 1986, vol. 14, p. 387).

Imam Al-Nawawi, in his commentary *Al-Minhaj*, discusses the obligations of Muslims to their relatives, emphasizing that these obligations extend beyond immediate family members to include aunts, uncles, and cousins. He states, "The maintenance of kinship bonds is among the greatest virtues in Islam, and its neglect is among the gravest sins" (Al-Nawawi, 1992, vol. 3, p. 213).

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "*He is not one of us who does not have mercy on young children, nor honor the elderly*" (Al-Tirmidhi, 1987, vol. 4, Hadith 1919). This Hadith emphasizes the importance of respecting and caring for both the young and the elderly within the family structure. The respect for elders is seen as a cornerstone of Islamic family ethics, ensuring that the wisdom and experience of older generations are valued and passed on (Ibn Hajar, 2001, vol. 10, p. 306).

Family as a Foundation for Societal Well-being

The stability and strength of the family are directly linked to the overall well-being of society. Islamic jurisprudence underscores that a well-functioning family unit contributes to social cohesion, moral development, and the prevention of societal ills. Jurists like Ibn Taymiyyah have argued that the family is the first line of defense against social corruption, writing, "The family is the cornerstone of society, and its preservation is essential for the maintenance of public morality and justice" (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1985, vol. 4, p. 44).

The Quranic injunction, "*And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...*" (Al-Ma'idah: 2), is often applied to the family context, where cooperation among family members is seen as essential to fostering a righteous and just community (Ibn Kathir, 2000, vol. 2, p. 92).

Imam Malik, in his *Muwatta'*, discusses the role of family in upholding justice and preventing wrongdoing. He notes, "When the family adheres to the principles of justice and compassion, it sets an example for the broader society, leading to the establishment of justice and peace" (Malik, 1985, vol. 2, p. 63).

Challenges and Modern Applications

While Islamic jurisprudence provides a robust framework for family life, contemporary challenges require a thoughtful application of these principles. Economic pressures, cultural shifts, and technological advancements have all impacted family dynamics in the modern world. It is essential for Muslim families to remain anchored in their faith while adapting to these changes.

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim, in his work *Tuhfat al-Mawdud bi Ahkam al-Mawlud*, addresses the importance of balancing tradition with contemporary needs. He writes, "The preservation of family values in the face of modern challenges requires a return to the fundamental principles of Islam, combined with a practical understanding of the current context" (Ibn al-Qayyim, 1993, vol. 1, p. 145).

Economic challenges, in particular, have been discussed extensively in *fiqh* literature. Jurists like Al-Mawardi emphasize the importance of mutual support within the family during times of financial hardship, stating, "The economic stability of the family is a collective responsibility, and the extended family must provide support when needed" (Al-Mawardi, 1996, vol. 6, p. 421).

Conclusion

Islamic jurisprudence provides a comprehensive and detailed framework for strengthening family bonds and ensuring the well-being of society. By adhering to the principles of justice, mercy, and mutual responsibility, families can become the bedrock of a harmonious society. The teachings of Islam emphasize the importance of marriage, the upbringing of children, the maintenance of kinship ties, and the role of the family in upholding societal values. These teachings, derived from the Quran, Hadith, and classical jurisprudential works, offer timeless

guidance for Muslim families navigating the challenges of the modern world. As society evolves, the application of these principles must be both rooted in tradition and responsive to contemporary realities, ensuring that the family remains a source of strength and stability for generations to come.

Findings:

1. Islamic teachings on marriage emphasize the spiritual and social responsibilities of1 spouses, which, when adhered to, strengthen family bonds and contribute to societal stability.
2. The obligation of parents to provide not only physical sustenance but also moral and spiritual guidance to their children is pivotal in nurturing a righteous and cohesive family.
3. Maintaining kinship ties (*Ṣilaturraḥim*) is a key Islamic value that helps preserve social harmony and prevents the fragmentation of family structures.
4. Strong family units, rooted in Islamic values, contribute to the broader social fabric by promoting justice, compassion, and moral integrity.
5. Islamic jurisprudence offers a framework that allows families to adapt traditional values to modern challenges, ensuring that they remain relevant and effective in guiding family life.

Suggestions:

1. Islamic centers and organizations should provide educational programs that reinforce the importance of family values and offer practical guidance on how to apply Islamic teachings in modern contexts.
2. Schools and educational institutions should incorporate Islamic family ethics into their curricula, helping young Muslims understand and value their religious responsibilities toward their families.

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GENDER DYSPHORIA FROM ISLAMIC PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

Gender dysphoria is commonly associated with transgender. People with transgender are usually having difficulty in accepting their gender at birth aligned with their gender identity. We also must bear in mind that gender dysphoria does not apply directly to people who is transgender. The term "gender dysphoria" is usually associated with feelings of discomfort with their assigned sex since birth and their gender identity that will lead to psychological distress. The onset of this phase usually happens during childhood, but some people will notice it after puberty. To fulfill their desire, they usually tend to use multiple domains of gender affirmation such as changing their name and pronouns, changing their gender, using gender affirming hormone or doing surgery like vaginoplasty and breast augmentation. Transgender identity reported for about up to 0.5 percent of adults and 2.7 percent in adolescents (Coleman et al., 2022). It is very important to know the onset of gender dysphoria as it can occur in childhood or adulthood.

The diversity of the gender is not identified as a mental health problem and transgender population is more likely experiencing mental illness or psychological issues. Social stigma among the population regarding their gender causes them to be unable to have a proper life as they have always been discriminated against by others. Due to that, transgender health advocates currently addressed this issue against them regarding stigmatization of identity, improving access to care and discrimination in school, workplaces and healthcare. Based on the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, there are a lot of negative causes that affect the lifespan of the transgender population such as rejection, discrimination, victimization and violence against them (Cohen et al., 2016). According to Coleman et al., 2012, there are a lot of assistance such as primary care, gynecological, urological care and mental health services like assessment, counseling and psychotherapy was provided by The Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People, version 7 (SOC-7) by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH). It is very important for us to identify the risk factor of the trans population to experience psychiatric problems thus we can prevent or reduce it from worsening.

Case definition

Gender dysphoria can be defined as discomfort arising due to incongruence between their sex during birth and their gender. It is also known as a diagnostic code that can be used as mental health code in World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases-10th Revision (ICD-10) for being transgender. According to Zucker et al., 2016, gender dysphoria firstly introduced by Fisk (1974) described this term as sufficient discomfort that occurs in some individuals with their biological sex and wish for sex reassignment. In the DSM-5, gender dysphoria is defined as "an individual's affective/cognitive discontent with the assigned gender of at least six months duration [usually at birth and referred to as natal gender]" (American Psychiatry Association. 2013, p. 451). As we know, transgender people can be used to describe people whose gender identities are not aligned with the sex to which they were assigned at birth.

Before gender dysphoria was introduced in DSM-5, this condition was previously known as gender identity disorder in DSM-4 that caused controversy and persists among those societies because gender variance itself is not a pathology.

Gender dysphoria and psychological perspective

Based on the baseline studies done by Olson et al., 2015, in transgender youth range 12-24 years old, 24% of participants had Beck Depression Inventory scores in the mild-to-moderate depression range and 11% had scores indicating severe to extreme depression. 51% percent of participants reported ever thinking about suicide, and 30% had attempted suicide at least once in their lives. Due to that, it is aligned with CDC 2014 that mentioned regarding suicidal ideation and attempts reported by this population are three and four times higher, respectively, than the prevalence for general youth reported in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey data in 2013 (54% vs. 17% thought about; 33% vs. 8% attempted). Social stressor such as misgendering can cause psychological distress in the transgender population (McLemore, 2018). According to Rood et al., 2017, misgendering can cause them to feel disappointment, sad and suicidal ideation. Suicidal ideation can be due to their negative feelings towards their body due to feeling mismatch between their gender identity and body. Body dysphoria can cause the feeling of hatred, unease and disgust toward their bodies. These feelings will lead them to limit the intake of food to minimize the appearance of breasts or any action that can help them to suppress their femininity and masculinity (Kate et al., 2020).

The most common anxiety disorder that was experienced by this population was social anxiety disorder (de Vries et al., 2011). It can be due to social discrimination that occurs throughout their daily life that gives a bad impact toward their mental health. Social anxiety can be characterized by feelings of intense and persistent fear of being judged by others. According to Bockting et al., 2013, children and adolescents of gender dysphoria will have higher rates of social anxiety disorder than the general population. They also tend to isolate themselves as they have lost friends and no social support toward their choice to be a transgender (Smith et al., 2018). Apart from that, they also feel unsafe due to fears of discrimination, violence or harassment. It will lead to them always looking out for any

signs of danger in public and cause them to feel anxious even when there is no threat (Kate et al., 2020).

Based on study by Mazaheri et al., 2014, it was reported that avoidant personality disorder (AVPD), histrionic personality disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder, and self-defeating personality disorder were common in gender dysphoria patients. Scandurra et al., 2019 claimed that the personality disorder can be due to psychological stresses imposed by family and society that lead them to face more rejection, judgment and discrimination. Parenting style also influenced them to get this problem as they often complained about their mothers' behavior, describing them as abusive, aggressive, untrustworthy, and controlling. The characteristics of borderline personality traits such as chronic feeling of emptiness and fear of rejection can be experienced by gender dysphoria. Most of them feel empty when rejected by people that are close to them such as friends or family. They only want to fit in and be accepted by people to gain validation from their choices (Kate et al., 2020).

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), people with gender dysphoria are 2.5 times more likely than their peers to use cocaine and methamphetamines in their lifetime, and twice as likely to report the abuse of prescription pain medication. Adolescents with gender dysphoria are more likely to abuse opioids and prescription drugs, and three times more likely to use inhalants than other people their age. As we know, substance abuse did not directly cause gender dysphoria, but they can intensify the symptoms. For example, if they want to overcome their social anxiety, they will tend to use alcohol and drugs as a coping mechanism to get involved in social events. Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) stated that about 13.5% of 317 transgender participants reported scores indicating hazardous or harmful drinking, an estimate three times greater than the general population (Staples et al., 2018). In a small sample of 32 transgender and 32 cisgender age-matched outpatients at an Indian hospital, illicit drug use was more common among transgender (59.4%) than cisgender (9.4%) participants (Hebbar et al., 2018).

Discussion

From what we understand, consequences of gender dysphoria can lead to a lot of mental health problem such as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, body dysphoria, personality disorder and substance abuse due to stressful event from being prejudiced, discrimination, and victimization. Bockting et al., 2013 claimed that prejudice and discrimination positively associated with general mental health symptoms. According to DeCuypere et al., 2011, the relationship between this disorder and psychiatric morbidity is a great clinical importance, as follow-up studies have demonstrated that psychiatric comorbidity is one of the major negative prognostic features for the outcome of gender reassignment surgery.

Stigma-sickness slope that is experienced by the transgender people is a process of stigma, prejudice, discrimination, harassment, abuse and violence, resulting in social, economic and legal marginalization, poor mental and physical health, and even death (Winter et al., 2016). This can be seen throughout their daily life as their right as a human was denied that can be directly impaired to their mental health. We can obviously see this situation especially in school and in their family as they tend to get discriminated against and rejected (International Commission of Jurists, 2017).

The prejudice and discrimination experienced by this population will likely cause depression, anxiety and other mental health problems (Robles et al., 2016). Apart from that, there is an increasing mental health problem statistically in mood and anxiety disorder, PTSD, schizophrenia, personality disorders and substance use disorder (Wanta et al., 2019). As mentioned by Olson et al., 2011, they tend to become more vulnerable to maladaptive coping and suicidality. A 2013 report of transgender youth presenting to the Gender Management Service at Boston Children's Hospital showed high prevalence of psychiatric morbidities including depression (58.1%), suicide attempts (9.3%), anxiety (16.3%), and self-mutilation (20.6%) (Spack et al., 2012).

As a doctor, it is very important for us to do careful evaluation for a history and psychological sequela of gender-related stigma and abuse since childhood as it is very crucial due to the high rates of violence and bullying experienced by this population, as well as the high rates of discrimination, unemployment, homelessness, sex work, and HIV infection. Assessment of the suicidality also need to be covered to identify suicide protective factor because up to 47% of transgender adults have considered or attempted suicide (Moody et al., 2013). Guidelines from the American Psychological Association needed us to do assessment regarding the coping mechanism and support system of gender dysphoria patients to ensure better prognosis for their mental health condition.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the impact of gender dysphoria toward their psychology cannot be ignored due to increased prevalence of mental health problems among this population. Due to that, this issue needs to be addressed by managing them properly according to their disorder such as depression, anxiety and other related problems. According to Forcier et al., 2016, dysphoric feelings are particularly strong during adolescence due to the onset of secondary sexual features. Usually, individuals who suppress feelings of gender nonconformity during childhood experience an increase in intensity of dysphoric feelings at the onset of puberty. Thus, this period is very important for us to protect them from having negative feelings when encountering prejudice and discrimination from people around them.

Gladly, as a medical student in International Islamic University Malaysia, I was able to experience volunteering with a university-affiliated, student-run camp serving the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. Throughout this program, we were able to engage and explore further their ups and downs as a LGBT community. Approaching the patient in an unbiased and objective manner is crucial to quality care as we can screen them for sexually transmitted diseases due to their high-risk behavior, diabetes and hypertension to maintain their quality of life. Regarding the stigma, it cannot be denied that all the discrimination, harassment and victimization really give a bad impact in their life and cause them to become afraid about what people think of them, especially in Malaysia where most of the citizens are Muslims. Thus, in this program we can give some knowledge regarding mental health issues, assisted them to be a better Muslim and slowly influenced them to accept their own gender.

Thus, it is very crucial for us to start exposing ourselves to this population as we will be able to help and guide them because changes can start with individual practitioners; then

together, the medical community can make a significant contribution to the lives of many underserved individuals living with the challenges of gender dysphoria (Cabe et al., 2017).

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