

Understanding Human Nature from Quranic Perspective

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Abstrak

Pemahaman tentang sifat manusia sangat penting untuk pengembangan sumber daya manusia, karena pemahaman itu akan menjadi titik awal dalam menetapkan tujuan pembangunan, strategi pengembangan, pemilihan metode, dan jenis media yang digunakan. Masalah pokok yang muncul selama ini adalah pemahaman tentang hakikat manusia hanya berdasarkan hasil penelitian kuantitatif, tanpa mempertimbangkan keterangan dari Dzat Yang Maha Esa (wahyu) manusia, dan akibatnya ada unsur-unsur yang hilang yang membatasi pengembangan sumber daya manusia. Kajian kuantitatif hanya membahas hal-hal yang berkaitan dengan aspek fisik, psikologis, dan sosial; sedangkan hal-hal penting seperti proses penciptaan manusia dan tujuannya, status manusia di hadapan Tuhan, potensi dan perkembangannya belum mendapat perhatian yang cukup. Untuk menemukan jawaban atas kekurangan di atas, penelitian kualitatif dengan memanfaatkan teknik analisis dokumen ayat-ayat utama Al-Qur'an yang berkaitan dengan kemanusiaan ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode tafsir maudhu'i, yaitu dengan mempelajari ayat-ayat yang berhubungan dengan kemanusiaan melalui pemahaman para penafsir Al-Qur'an. Untuk tujuan triangulasi, referensi juga dibuat untuk Hadis – kata-kata Nabi Muhammad – serta buku-buku Tafsir, versi terjemahan Al-Qur'an dalam bahasa lokal. Aspek penciptaan manusia, tujuan penciptaan, serta potensi dan kelemahan manusia dibahas secara rinci oleh para peneliti.

Kata kunci: Manusia, Studi Kualitatif, Tampilan Alquran

Abstract

The understanding of human nature is very important for human resource development, because that understanding will be a starting point in establishing development objectives, development strategies, method selection, and the types of media used. The main problem that has arisen so far is that the understanding of human nature is only based on the results of quantitative research, without considering the information from the Essence of the Supreme Creator of human (revelation), and consequently there are missing elements which limit the development of human resources. The quantitative studies only discuss things relating to physical, psychological, and social aspects; while important things such as the human creation process and its purpose, humanity's status before God, its potential and its development have not received enough attention. To find answers to the above shortcomings, this qualitative research utilizing document analysis technique of the Quran main verses relating to humanity was conducted using *maudhu'i* interpretation method, namely by studying verses which are related to humanity through the understanding of the interpreters of the Quran. For the triangulation purposes, references were also made to the Hadiths – the words of Prophet Muhammad – as well as books of Tafsir, the translated versions of the Quran in local language. The aspects of human creation, the purpose of creation, and potentials and weaknesses of mankind were discussed in details by the researchers.

Keywords: Human, Qualitative Study, Quranic View

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1. INTRODUCTION

Various discussions about humanity have been conducted by many people. However, the discussion from the "Quran" perspective as a holy book which is a collection of the revelations from God is still needed very much, because the written revelation in scripture contains complete and accurate information about various things which are related to humanity, including prosperity, the consequences of actions, and the hereafter (Abdussalam et al., 2019; Ikhsan, 2017; Kosim et al., 2019). In the effort to understand the essence of themselves, humans are able to know only a little (Affandi, 2018; Hidayah, 2016; Mukhtarom et al., 2019). They are not able to fully know the nature of themselves, because

they are the only creatures whose creation includes the "divine spirit". Therefore, it is suggested that the only way to know humans well is by referring to the divine revelation (Habiburrohman, 2020; Kerwanto, 2022; Sukrillah, 2015). M. Quraish Shihab shows the three words used in the Quran for "human", i.e (1) *basyar* (بشر), (2) the words are composed of letter *alif*, *nun* and *sin*, a kind of *insan* (انسن), *ins* (انس), *nas*(ناس), or *unas* and (3) *bani Adam* and *Zuriyah Adam* (زري آدم ه) (Abshor, 2019; Mujahidin & Khoiriyah, 2018; Wartini, 2014). The three terms are explained below: first, the use of the term "basyar" (بشر) is used in (a) things relating to the physical aspects of the visible (such as skin, hair, general physical shape) that are not different between one man with another, (b) in some cases it is used to described the psychologibal aspects such as requirement, the limits of the ability ot see thing unseen), learning activities(receiving only science taught by Allah), and the stages of human development toward reaching maturity (Alwi et al., 2020; Ghoni, 2016). In other words *basyar* terms describe similarities that exist in all humans beings, both in physical and psychological aspects.

Second, The word "*insan*" (انسن) derives from the word "*insiyan*". It means man (small), whereas according to M. Quraish Shihab the term *insan* is drawn from the word "*uns*" which means *moderate, harmonious, and visible*. The word *insan* is used in the Quran to (a) refer to a human *with all its totality*, i.e. *its body and soul* (Mawangir, 2018; Mujahidin & Khoiriyah, 2018). The difference between one human and another is due to physical differences and intelligent levels, and (b) describes the differences in the aspects of *spirituality faith, and character*. In other words, the word *insan* is also used to refer to human beings as a whole but also describes the difference between men with others (Prakoso, 2020; Sahri, 2018; Wartini, 2014). Third, the word "*dzuriyyah*" (ذريه) relates to descent. *Dzuriyyah* also relates to something that is derived from parents (Ahadi & Djazimah, 2020; Ali, 2017). When the word *dzuriyyah* is related to Adam it means that humans are *descendants of Adam*, and carry traits of their grandparent Adam. From this information it also appears that all humans in this universe come from the same parents that are the Prophets Adam and Eve. From here it also appears that there are *innate traits* inherited which are more or less the same as those inherited from generation to generation through the *process of marriage* since the period of Prophet Adam until now. The human dimension in the perspective of Quran analyzed in this paper includes not only the physical and spiritual aspect, but also the creation of humans, the raw material of human creation, the purpose of creation, the existing potentials in humans, and the calamity which befalls humans (Nurdin, 2013; Suhendri, 2018; Zein, 2015). All views are based on the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad's words of explanation, known as the Hadiths of the Prophet.

This research aims to discover the human dimension in the perspective of Quran. The findings are expected to be the true and solid foundation for the development of human resources which are suitable to the will of the Creator, so that humans can develop well and safe in the world and in the hereafter. In this paper, the human dimension in the Quran is meant to be the *description or understanding of humans from Qur'an point of view* i.e. The point of view of the Holy Scripture of Muslims which is believed to be an original scripture from The Supreme Creator of Humans from the first day to the last day. The Book originated from The Supreme Life and Death Giver of Humans, The Supreme Bounty Giver, The Supreme Determinant of Succes and the Perfection of Human Reproduction. He is the One who creates the heavens and earth which become humans'dwelling and source of sustenance.

2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach utilizing the documents analysis technique. It is in accordance with the purpose of this research to study human nature in the perspective

of the Quran. The document which becomes the main object of study in this research is the Quran. Quran was chosen as the primary source with the considerations (a) Quran is a Holy Book which contains a collection of revelations from Allah as a way of life for humans, (b) as the Holy Book, Allah warrants the truth, not only here and now, but until the end of the day, and (c) humans are Allah's creation, Allah surely knows more about human characteristics, excesses and shortages, as well as the ways to develop and to maintain them so that they are safe. Considering the Holy Book of Quran is in Arabic, to understand it we need Arabic language skills. Yet, to understand the Quran is not that simple. (a) although the Quran is a book that is clear, easily remembered and understood; the Quran was revealed in Arabic. The Arabic contains many possible meanings – from *sharih* (clear, bright) and *kinayah*, nature, *figure of speech*, *typical* and *'alam*, *mutlak* and *muqayyad*, *manthuq*, and *mafhum*. There is something that needs to be understood as a cue and something as a metaphor, (b) the ability of humans to understand the Quran is different. There is a person who is only able to understand the meaning of *zahir*. There is person who is able to understand the deep meaning. And there is person who is not able to understand the true meaning, and (c) some verses of Quran were revealed with regard to any reasons and events. If it is properly understood, it will improve the understanding, and it will help to understand the Quran correctly.

The interpretation method which is used in this research is the *Maudhu'i* method. All relating verses are compiled and then studied in depth from the various aspects associated with it, such as *asbab nuzul*, vocabulary, and so on. To check the validity of data understanding about the natural tendency of human development (according to the Quran), *triangulation* technique is used, namely triangulation on data source. *Triangulation* is a data validity checking technique which utilizes other sources outside of the data as a comparison against the original data. In this case, in addition to the translation of the Quran Manuscripts of Department of Religious Affairs team also interpreted these books: (1) *Nazhm ad-durar Fi Tanasub al-ayat Was suwar*, by Ibrahim bin Umar (2) *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, by M. Quraish Shihab, (3) *Tafsir Fi Zhilalil Quran*, by al-Ustadz asy-Syahid Sayyid Quthb rahimahullah, (4) *Al-Asas tfi Tafsir*, by Sa'id Hawwa, (5) *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, by Hamka, (6) book *Al'Mu jam Almufahras Al-Qur'anil Karim*, by Muhammad Fu'ad Abd Al-Baqi, (7) book *al –Mu'jam al-Mufahras li-alfadz al-Hadits an-Nabawi*, by A.J Winsk find the hadiths of the Prophet contained in the Book *Kutubus Sittah*, and (8) book *Lisanul 'Arab* by Imam Al' alalamat Jamaluddin Abi Alfadhl Muhammad bin Mukarram bin Mandzur (Ibnu Mandzur) to analyze the certain words and terms of the Quran verses.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

From the search for meaning contained within the verses that talk about humans being created from the "soil" (*thiin*) (Quran, 38: 71-74, 17: 61, 3: 59, 7: 12) it can be understood that the human referred to in the verse is Adam. Adam was directly created with raw materials from the soil and not through the mother-father process. Logically it seems impossible a human's child is born without the mother and father process, but what is impossible if Allah will? Eve was created without a *mother*, Maryam as is created without any father. Allah said "Let there be" a human, then so there be. In Quran (23: 12-13, 32: 7-8) it is also found that humans were created from the "extract soil" (*sulalatin min thiin*) and of the essence of the land then becomes "semen". Ibn Kathir (III: 411) explains the term "*min sulalatin min tiin*" as one of the characteristics of water in which there is quintessence. Al Qurtubi explains the term "*sulalatin min tin*" as having the characteristics of water that contains something which is produced from something. Hamka (2001, XVIII: 17-18, and

XXI: 163) interprets the term "*sulalatin min tin*" as a water filter of soil which contains iron, egg white substance, a variety of vitamins and calories absorbed by plants that eventually enter the human body through food or drink.

In terms of medicine, explains that an extract of semen is sperm (Yahya, 2003). This sperm has the ability to fertilize, though many people suspected that semen as a whole fertilize the egg. Further it is explained that a man is capable of emitting 200-300 million sperm cells, but only 1,000 can reach the egg cell. From these numbers only one lucky cell can fertilize it. This means that humans originated from a small part of semen. Based on the opinions of commentators and the experts in the field of medicine as presented above, it can be understood that the inclusion of an extract of the soil into the human body until it becomes *semen* can be summarized below: first, *Soil extract* is absorbed by all plants that grow on the earth, Second, The plants produce leaves, flowers, and fruits that eventually are eaten by humans in the form of *rice, vegetables, fruits, beverages and so on*. These form the the *quintessence of the soil* in the human body. The plants are also eaten by animals that eventually enter the human body when people eat animal meat. And in the end, the *quintessence of soil* which is eaten by animals also enters the human body. Third, Most of the *quintessence of soil* that enters the human body becomes the *quintessence of semen* (sperm) which is called "sperm". This sperm has the ability to fertilize, not the semen overall.

In addition to the "soil", "soil extract", it is also found in the Quran (Quran, 75: 36-40, 16: 4-5, 36: 77-78, 53: 45-47, 78: 2-3, 70: 38-39) that humans are also created from the "seminal" (*germ*). Ibn Kathir interprets the phrase "*mimma ya lamun*" is "*seminal*" refers to the word of Allah "*min maa-in mahin*" and "*min maa-in dafiq*" which means water seminal (CD Holy Koran). While the word "*nutfatin amsyaj*" (mingled seminal) in the Quran surah Al - Insan (76), verse 2 as above by Harun (2003) is interpreted as a mixture of a variety of different essences including: *fructose, fosibrilkolin, ergotionin, ascorbic acid, dinucleotide, prostaglandins, citric acid, cholesterol, phospholipids, fibrinolysin, kisdin phosphoric acid, hyaluronidase and sperm cells*. While Ibn Kathir (2000, IV: 875) interprets it as a mixture of *water* from both men and women during a sexual intercourse. From the above explanation it can be understood that (a) the first man Adam was created from the soil without going through the process of fertilization from father and mother, and is equipped with the other element "spirit created by Allah", (b) the human *descendants of Adam and Eve* were created by Allah with the raw material of starch weak water ("*sulalatin min ma-in mahin*") (Quran, 32 : 7-6) that is an extract of semen (sperm cells) from a man who mixed with the *egg cell* (from a woman) and was also equipped with "spirit created by Him". (c) There are things made of raw materials involved in human creation that is not (yet) found as definite statements in the Quran and are not easily explained by human reason. These are the raw materials of creation of Eve (Adam's wife) and `Isa son of Maryam (Prophet `Isa a.s.). Eve was created from a man named Adam (QS, 4: 1) without going through the womb of a woman, while the opposite Isa was born by a woman without male fertilization. Most commentators explain that with this incident Allah intends to show His power.

Humans are creatures of Allah who are most perfect. The question that arises is the extent to which the perfection of the creation is because of man? M. Quraish Shihab (2002, VII : 123) in interpreting the stn-ah al-Hijr (15) verses 28-29 about the word "*Sawwaituhu*" explains that the term *Sawwaituhu* is taken from the word *Sawaa* which means that each part can function as it is planned. Al-Qurtubi (CD Holy Koran) interprets the word "*Sawwahu*" as meaning "He perfected it" and this explains the intention contained in the expression *a perfect creation and shape (Sawwatu khalgahu wa shuratahu)*. Departing from the verses of Quran and the understanding of the commentators above, it is understood the term *perfected* the creation – before Allah breathed His spirit – in the process of the creation of man was perfect in the creation of *physical potential* and *the potential of the nafs* that it includes

potential heart (galb), reasoning (al'aql), and the potential of the soul (nafs). While the potential of faith has been given by Allah since man is still in the form of "candidates" (sperm or egg cells) (QS: 172). A further question that arises is the extent to which physical aspects are perfect before Allah breathed His spirit into the creature (man) of His creation? Harun (2003) describes the *perfection* of the creation of man from aspects of the biology in the two sides, namely (1) the process of creation, and (2) the quality of the creation.

Humans came out of the womb to get in the tomb not only for fun, but there is *purpose* to their creation. There is also purpose behind the creation of each human organ. There is command to be executed, there are prohibitions that must be shunned, and there are rules that must be obeyed by humans, and in turn their responsibilities will be requested. Behind the commands and prohibitions there is wisdom or benefit from an action and the secret behind something established by Allah, which is not always quickly known by humans (Quran, 3: 185, 4: 78, 21: 35). The purpose of Allah in creating humans on surah al-Baqarah (2) verse 30 is to make the human being as "caliph of Allah on earth". The question that arises is what is meant by the word "caliph of Allah on earth"? M. Quraish Shihab, (2000, 1: 140) in interpreting the word caliph in the above verse explains that the word "caliph" originally meant *that which replaces or that which comes after anyone who came before*. On this basis, there is man who understood the word caliph here as meaning one who replaces Allah in enforcing His will and applying His provisions. But this does not mean Allah is not capable, or man has the position of God. No! Allah intends with the appointment to examine man and give him respect. So the essence of the purpose of the creation of man is Allah wants to give the task to the man as a *caliph of Allah on earth*, which is carrying out the mandate suitable with the guidance of Allah and His prophets in the *expertise* field and/or *authority* suitable with what Allah gave him.

It was also found that the purpose of God creating man was so that man could worship Him (Quran, 51: 56-58). M. Quraish Shihab, (2003, 13: 356-57) in interpreting the word "*liya'buduun*" in the verse above explains that does not mean that they may worship, or that God is worshipped. Explanation is seen as impossible because God does not need anything. From this it can be understood that the purpose of man's creation was not for God, but for the man himself. So when the verse said that humans worship, then worship benefits humans who do not do it for God, but for man himself. In relation to the purpose of the creation of man as "*caliph*" as informed in the surah al-Baqarah, verse 30, there are a number of rules in the forms of "command" and "prohibitions" that must be obeyed when the human is executing his duties as the caliph. Execution of duties (mandate) in accordance with the rules of Allah was considered as worship. From these two verses it can be understood that the purpose of man's creation is so that man can execute the mandate as a caliph of Allah on earth and simultaneously worship (dedicate) to Him.

In addition, it is also found in the Quran ten human weaknesses and their solutions. However, it is strongly suspected that people have weak trait "potential", meaning that negative potential is there but it could be more prominent in some people, but not in others, or prominent in one at some time but not prominent at other times. The difference was enabled by several factors, among others: the level of loyalty to the teachings of a religion, education, life experience, social environment, and it even could be due to the quality (allowed or forbidden) of food or beverages which are consumed every day. The ten negative characteristics of mankind are as follows. First, Often neglects the teachings of religion, and are more likely to indulge in lust (Quran, 7: 179). They have a heart but it is not utilized to understand Allah's guidance, he has eyes and ears, but they are not used to understand the verses of Allah, either verses *qauliyah* or *kauniyah*. As a result he becomes blind of religion. To overcome this, every child should be introduced and accustomed to execute religious

teachings since they are young, and parents should be a role model for their children in executing religious teachings.

Second, Humans are weak creatures (Quran, 4: 28), especially in holding *his lust*, and also weak *against his desires* (Hamka, 1983, V: 23). As a result, humans often become insulted because they distribute their lust without religious guidance. To overcome this problem Allah has arranged the distribution of his lust through marriage, and against lust by the worship to Allah. Third, *Tends to be "naughty" to Allah*, if he is sad he tends to get closer to Allah, but if he is happy he goes away from Allah (Quran, 10: 12). As a result he hits a vicious trap. Islam teaches that a person prays in condition of sadness and freedom, and always dhikr to Allah (Quran, 20: 155), as well as in doing *mu'amalah* suitable with guidance of Allah (Quran, 2: 282). Fourth, *Tends to act hastily* (Quran, 10:11, 17: 11, 21: 37) so that he cannot distinguish between good and bad, as well as not being patient in facing exams and being angry when in trouble. In order to act calmly he should have confidence that what happened to him must be permission of Allah, and in what is permitted by Allah there must exist goodness (Quran, 2: 216).

Fifth, *Despair quickly and ungratefully* (Quran, 11: 9-11). If he fails at something, he quickly falls into despair, but he should be patient in facing adversity and humble when facing enjoyment. Islam teaches its people not to be easily frustrated and to always persist (Quran, 12: 87), patience and tawakal to Allah. Allah examines humans with strengths and weaknesses, with pain, and with a different position (Quran, 21: 35). Sixth, *Tends to like to argue and make excuses*, although in terms unnecessary to debate (Quran, 7: 172-73). Islam teaches that to what the Quran teaches should be greeted with "I hear and I obey" (Quran, 4: 46), people who like to debate the Quran without good reason will surely regret it in the Judgment Day (Quran, 2: 174). Seventh, *In money affairs humans tend to be greedy*. He is described in the Quran as monkeys or dogs (Quran, 2: 65, 7: 176), he wanted to get as much as possible, even if could be this world is his own world (Hadits. Muslim, Kitab Zakat number 117). Greedy attitude towards money is described in the Quran as the behavior of "monkey" and "dog" which are always greedy. To control this nature, Islam teaches humans to be humble in financial affairs. Islam also teaches human to realize that in every livelihood he obtains he should share with others (Quran, 2: 177). Eighth, *Tends to be a miser*, except for the human that is graced by Allah (Quran, 9: 75-76, 4: 128). Besides intrinsically stingy, humans are stingy against themselves. It means that the essence of human who are reluctant to spend his wealth to the way of Allah, is actually reluctant to supply him when later it is time to return to Allah. To control these traits, Islam teaches its flock to issue infaq, zakat, or charity to those who have rights every time he acquires wealth (Yusuf, 1993).

Ninth, *Tends to be cavalier (ghurur)* (Quran, 31: 33), when humans have benefits, whether it is *beauty, handsomeness, wealth, position, children, or popularity; he tends to be cavalier and arrogant* (M. Quraish Shihab, 2007: 238). They forget that all of them come from Allah, who can disappear at any time. In controlling this trait, Islam teaches humans to realize that kindness is a gift from Allah. The kindness can disappear at any time, and it can be a source of destruction for him. Tenth, *Tends to be envious and jealous* (Quran, 2: 57). If there are other people he does not like who receive benefits or successes he will wants those benefits for himself. Therefore he often seeks to harm people whom he envies or begrudges. Prophet of Allah SAW reminds us that envy is like a fire scorching wood, and could harm others as well as ourselves (Hadits Abu Daud).

Discussions

Any efforts to develop human resources should not only rely on the basic concept of human nature which is built on the basis of the results of human thought and empirical facts only (Arifin, 2018; Islam, 2018; Salistina, 2015). This is because the human mind is only able

to know the nature of itself from several sides or dimensions only (Anwar et al., 2018; Hardianto, 2019; Utaminingsih et al., 2017). There are other dimensions that are not able to be known for sure. The secrets of everything are in the hands of the God Almighty who created man, namely in the Holy Book which is brought by His Prophet. In other words, any effort to develop human resources should not only be based on science, but needs to be perfected by the knowledge that comes from revelation (Ahadi & Djazimah, 2020; Ali, 2017). Perfecting science with revelation is considered very important, because philosophically the revelation has absolute and universal truth. The revelation truth is valid wherever and whenever, while the science truth is relative and tentative, as science truths are temporary and limited in scope. What is true at a particular time and place may not be true at another time and place. That is why human resource development which is only based on science produces incomplete or momentary results.

Humans do not exist automatically, but are created. This is in contrast to the current understanding of most scientists who almost never associate the human question with its creator, Allah SWT (Abshor, 2019; Mujahidin & Khoiriyah, 2018; Purwowidodo, 2017; Wartini, 2014). As a result, deadlocks are often experienced in the implementation of human resources. Allah SWT is the creator of humans since the first human to breed other humans at this time and into the future. He is the creator of the human body and spirit, as well as all aspects in it, which provides all the things needed by humans, although humans do not ask for it. Humans are equipped with eyes, ears, heart, hands, and feet, therefore it is appropriate if the human thanks Allah SWT by worshipping and obeying His rules. Allah SWT created humans as the most perfect creature of His creations and the most harmonious (Abshor, 2019; Mujahidin & Khoiriyah, 2018; Wartini, 2014). There is nothing that happened incidentally before Allah, because all is planned properly and with certainty. Humans are equipped with various abilities to proceed and to exploit the earth so it can be used to meet their needs. From here came humans with various fields of expertise who carry out the mandate of Allah SWT on earth suitable to each field of expertise.

4. CONCLUSION

Compared to other creatures humans are created far more perfectly. He is equipped with physical and spiritual abilities. His spiritual abilities allow humans to be able to recognize Allah and worship Him, while the physical abilities are the spiritual container, so there is a place for the spirit to settle. Human since the creation process is equipped with a "faith" that allows him to easily understand Allah's command and to obey it. Human is given a mind which allows him to be capable of distinguishing between right and wrong. Human is given a conscience that allows him to recognize what is outside the senses.

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