

## Muslim Self-Concept Measurement Model: Towards Filling the Research Gap of Self-Concept Among Muslims

Model Pengukuran Konsep Kendiri Muslim: Ke Arah Mengisi Kelompangan Penyelidikan Konsep Kendiri dalam Kalangan Muslim

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### ABSTRACT

*A person's understanding of self is significantly associated with the world view that he or she believes in. This self-understanding concept shall only be well established if it is viewed from the perspective that is connected to real epistemology. The importance of this understanding is due to its influence on human perception in all matters related to themselves. As a Muslim with an ultimate goal, which is the happiness of the world and the hereafter, then the real conceptualisation of oneself is essential. However, the influence of secularism and dualism that exist in the education stream is disconcerting in this regard. Therefore, the concept of self in Islam shall be examined and re-assessed. To evaluate the self-concept of a Muslim, the concept and instrument used must be based on the Islamic philosophy and realm. However, the variety of instruments used to evaluate the existing self-concept are in accordance with the Western epistemology, which contradicts the Islamic world view to describe the self-concept of a Muslim. Thus, this study aims to propose an ideal self-concept evaluation model for studies involving Muslims. In conclusion, there are limited studies carried out and leave a decent impact to researchers, especially in the field of Education and Psychology and Humanities.*

*Keywords: Muslims; Islam; Measurement; Self-concept; World View*

### ABSTRAK

*Kefahaman seseorang tentang diri adalah amat terkait dengan pandangan alam yang dipercayainya. Faham diri ini hanya akan terbentuk dengan baik jika dilihat menerusi cara pandang yang diikat kemas dengan epistemologi yang benar. Peri pentingnya kefahaman ini kerana ia akan mempengaruhi persepsi insan dalam segenap hal yang berkait dengan dirinya. Selaku Muslim yang mempunyai tujuan akhir iaitu kebahagiaan dunia dan akhirat maka mengkonsepsikan diri dengan benar amat penting. Walau bagaimanapun, pengaruh sekularisme dan dualisme yang wujud dalam arus pendidikan amat menggugat hal ini. Oleh yang demikian, konsep diri Muslim ini harus diteliti dan dinilai semula. Bagi mengukur konsep diri bagi seorang Muslim, konsep dan instrument yang digunakan perlulah berdasarkan kepada falsafah dan pandangan alam Islam. Namun, lambakan instrument yang digunakan untuk mengukur konsep diri ini adalah berdasarkan kepada epistemologi Barat yang jauh berbeza dengan pandangan alam Islam untuk menggambarkan konsep diri seorang Muslim. Justeru, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mencadangkan sebuah model penilaian konsep kendiri yang bersesuaian untuk kajian yang melibatkan Muslim. Kesimpulannya, kajian seumpamanya masih amat sedikit dijalankan dan memberikan impak yang baik kepada pengkaji khususnya dalam bidang Pendidikan dan Psikologi dan kemanusiaan.*

*Kata kunci: Muslim; Islam; Pengukuran konsep kendiri; Pandangan alam; paradigma tauhidik*

## INTRODUCTION

### SIGNIFICANCE OF ISLAMIC WORLD VIEW IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-CONCEPT INSTRUMENTS OF A MUSLIM

The world view of Islam is what has been perceived by mind of the universe based on the integral sources, such as revelation (Quran, Sunnah, and inspiration), mind, and senses according to the order. The universe referred here is all the things that contained herein, either physical or the other way around. Therefore, Islam has never been segregated from human life. Islam is a religion and this religion is used as a reference in every act and action, including in understanding the self. This is because, Islam according to its world view is a way of life instead of just a ritual practice.

The Islamic world view has its own features that distinguish it from other world views. The first feature is that the Islamic world view is authentic and this is validated from its source, which is attributed to *tanzil*, the source of revelation. Moreover, it is absolute and final because the Islamic world view is not tied to the culture, practices, or history of a civilisation or nation, that requires it to change and keep evolving. The Islamic world view acknowledges that everything are according to facts (reality) and truth based on revelation instead on its nature of existence in the real world. This is because, a particular fact and truth relies on a specified and perpetual source of *tanzil*. The actual facts are indeed true as opposed to falsehood. Thus the Islamic world view recognises what is true in the real world even if it does not physically exist as fact and this must be based on the source of revelation. The last feature of the Islamic world view is that it has permanent and eternal elements. This is because it is sourced from an absolute and perpetual source of revelation.

Human beings become the center of discussion of the Islamic world view. The relationship between Allah SWT and human beings, the relationship between humans and nature as well as the relationship between human beings are the key elements to be discussed. According to the Islamic world view, a real human being is a human who possess human qualities as set out in the Quran and Sunnah. Therefore, to understand and provide true meaning to human beings, then it shall be observed and evaluated through the Islamic world view framework, let alone when it comes to giving meaning to Muslims. Prior to this study, the models utilised to measure self-concept are guided by

the theories produced from the Western perspectives, which are different from Islam. Therefore, this study was conducted to propose a self-concept evaluation model according to the Islamic world view that is more suitable to measure Muslim self-concept.

### THE GAP IN PREVIOUS STUDIES ON SELF- CONCEPT THEORIES AND MODELS

The study of self-concept has come to the attention of Western researchers, who define it as the perception found in human mind of themselves (Rogers 2012, 1951; Jersild 1971). It occurs as a result of the individual's interaction with the surrounding. This concept of self is crucial in the development of an individual's personality, serves as a uniqueness that distinguishes an individual from other individuals, and play the major role in the formation of one's behaviour (Rogers 2012, 1951; Jersild 1971; Fitts 1971; Kaftanski W & Hanson J 2022).

The term self-concept was coined by Rene Descartes in 1644 (William James 1890). In fact, Descartes is the first philosopher to discover the non-physical inner self, which is known as self-perception. He assumes that the journey to attain a certain knowledge is initiated from the doubt, which triggers the thought process. This process provides some ideas about existence based on perceptions of life gained through experience and social interaction. Eventually, humans get an idea of existence based on the perceptions made. The ideas put forward by these philosophers have led to the discovery of the self-concept, which is an important issue in the field of education. This is supported by the next psychologists who keep on exploring in this field.

Starting from 1900, Freudian psychologists discovered the importance of self-concept in the development of human life. According to Lecky in Othman Johan (1995) and Nurul Ezzati (2008), self-concept is deemed as the key human inner thought process and can boost human motivation to carry out something. Next, in 1946, they began to focus on ego and self-interpretation as one of the discourses within the concept of self. The significance of this self-concept keeps being recognised by Freudian psychologists who state that psychological therapy should be conducted to improve individuals' perceptions of themselves (Mitchell 1995).

One of the renowned key figures in the theory of self-concept is Carl Rogers (1951). He defines self-concept as a perception, awareness, and a set of values that an individual believes in relation to

himself. These perception and awareness are the result of their experience and relationships with their surrounding and others. According to Rogers (1951), the self-concept is a crucial concept, especially in building the personality of an individual and to make personal adjustment. In line with this definition, Jersild (1971) states that self-concept is a set of ideas, values, attitudes and commitments that a person gives to himself. In fact, this self-concept forms a uniqueness of the individual self that distinguishes himself or herself from other individuals. From the 70's to the 80's, studies related to self-concept had been conducted extensively (William James 1890).

This is evidenced by the discovery of several definitions and areas that are under the auspices of self-concept. Staines (1954) defines self-concept as a concept performed cognitively by an individual in a conscious state. This concept is the person assessment and response to himself and his response to others people's responses and perceptions of himself. Concurring with the opinion of Staines, Purkey (1970) presents a more concise definition, that the self-concept is the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions constructed by individuals related to themselves.

Meanwhile, Fitts (1971) highlights that there are two key elements that underlie the self-concept, namely the individual's perception and evaluation of himself. Of these two elements, Fitts (1971) emphasises that self-esteem is a more important component of self-concept. He sees the self-concept in a multidimensional way and not just focused on only one field. Thus, he has presented eight areas of self-concept, namely physical, moral-ethical, personal, social relations, family, identity, self-satisfaction, and behaviour. Burns, (1982) who concurs with Fitts (1971), highlights that the self-concept consists of two key components, namely self-image and self-evaluation. This is because these beliefs and evaluations that drive the actions and behaviours of the individual.

In contrast to Fitts and Burns who state that self-esteem is one of the self-concept components, Coopersmith (1974) argues that those two are different and not the same. According to him, the self-concept is an individual's perception of himself, whether it is related to the illustration of his nature and behaviour which is understood by the individual (real self). Meanwhile, self-assessment is an assessment done by an individual, whether his self-concept has reached the level desired by him (ideal self) or not. If Fitts divides self-concept into eight areas, Shavelson (1982) provides a broader scope of self-concept,

namely academic self-concept and non-academic self-concept. The eight areas highlighted by Fitts are covered by the non-academic self-concept. This self-concept is developed through a person's interactions with people around him and experiences encountered throughout his life.

However, the rejection of humanistic psychology in 1987 has dampened the interest to get involved in studies related to self-concept among researchers during this era. Yet, realising its significance in the personal development of the individuals, the concept of self has begun to reclaim the hearts of researchers, especially in solving social problems that occurred at that time. This is proven by the studies conducted by Mc Adam (1986) and Ryan et al. (1986), where the findings of these two state that negative speech affects an individual's thinking towards himself and his environment. To date, exploration related to this concept is carried on although the quantity of research conducted in the field of education is more towards the development of self-concept among students than teachers.

In conclusion, self-concept is a set of ideas in the form of perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and evaluations of individuals in regard to themselves holistically. Aspects of individual observation that constitute the self-concept cover many areas such as academic, physical, emotion, family relationship, and many more. This self-concept is formed through individual experiences and interactions with people around them or the environment (Fuentes MC et.al 2022). However, this self-concept is oriented towards the Western world view, which only focuses on the root of knowledge on human mind and senses and rejects the more authoritative source in Islam, which is the revelation. Since the sources of knowledge that underlie the western and Islamic world views are different, then this certainly forms a different understanding of human beings. Therefore, in the study of the self-concept in Islam, the model used to measure it shall be examined according to the perspective of the Islamic world view.

#### TOWARDS FILLING THE GAP: MUSLIM SELF-CONCEPT MEASUREMENT MODEL

According to the Islamic world view, the concept of human self can be defined as human perception of himself and his environment based on true knowledge. The discussion on the self-concept in Islam encompasses the reality of

human self and factors in the development of the human self-concept.

#### THE REALITY OF THE HUMAN SELF

The essence of human self is Allah's creatures who are equipped with two elements, body and soul. The essence of the human body is a perfect creation compared to other beings. Once humans are created and given life, they can breathe, feel pain, experience heat and cold, bitter and sweet, hunger and thirst, sexual desire and so on. *Al-hayah* is different from the soul, there is life in animals and humans to enable them to move and live, whereas soul only exists in humans, only after the human body is in the womb for four months (HR Abdullah bin Mas'ud, book: Mu'jam As-Syuyukh, volume 2, p. 764, degree of hadith: Sahih). According to Al-Ghazali and Al-Farabi in Anuar Mamat (2017), the human body is a physical state that has certain potentials such as moving, having a specific shape, appearance, taste, as well as dark and rough character. The body cannot attain the *makrifah of Allah*. Also, human bodies shall disintegrate upon death. In general, human body is deemed as an element that is almost the same and some parts of it resemble animals. Humans are built with different body shapes, just like animal bodies with many kinds of shapes. The body has its own potential created by Allah as perfectly as possible to meet the needs and for convenience of human beings to live and worship Him.

Yet, between the two elements, the most significant element that represents the human self is his soul (Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud 2018; Waraq Hussin 2022), who has pledged to Allah SWT in a conscious state and is held accountable with great trust. Allah SWT says in a surah to every descendant of Bani Adam:

And (remember) when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the children of Adam their descendants and had them testify regarding themselves. Allah asked: "Am I not your Lord?" They replied: Yes (You are our God) We do testify." He cautioned, "Now you have no right to say on the Judgement Day; We were not aware of this (not given a reminder of the reality of the Oneness of Allah)" (Surah al-'Araf:172).

This sealed agreement manifests human relationship with Allah SWT as the servants of Him, and the responses given using the plural form demonstrate the relationship between the mankind, and their acknowledgement as the caliph Allah SWT on this earth (Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud 2018; Norafni @ Farlina Rahim et al. 2020).

Human is known from one side as *al-nafs al-haywaniyyah* that is when there is interaction with the body. On the other hand, it is known as *al-Nafs al-Natiqah*, when the interaction takes place with the soul. The human destiny in the Hereafter is based on the priority of his interaction in the world. This is described through the words of Allah SWT in the Quran (Ash-Shu'ara, 26: 88-89) which means:

The Day when neither wealth nor children will be of any benefit, but (wealth nor children) only those who come before Allah with a pure heart shall be saved.

The human soul has some other strengths, each of which has a dual meaning, namely *qalb* (heart), *nafs* (self), and *aqal* (mind). Each has their respective functions (Al-Attas 1990). Among all these components of the soul, the one that elevates humans to a greater level is how they use their mind, which is not granted to other creatures of Allah SWT. Mind is indeed the key human strength and plays a role in guiding humans to the path of reality (Mohd Zaidi 2018).

The mind processes information and attains knowledge. Insightful knowledge is the knowledge that is oriented towards the Quran and Sunnah, regulated by mind to hinder its owner from violating the limits and being misguided throughout life. A well-functioning mind can subdue lust and guide the *nafs* from *al-nafs al-Ammarah bi al-su'* to *al-nafs al-lawwamah* before eventually reaching the level of *al-nafs al-mutmainnah*. All this shall eventually reside in the *qalb* (the heart, core of human being) and affect human attitude and behaviour.

Al-Ghazali (1997) elaborates on the diversity of strengths in the human body, which consists of the combination of body-mind-soul-heart and *nafs* and emphasises that *qalb* is the best to represent the human self. This view is in accordance with the Hadith of the Prophet SAW which means:

"Verily, Allah SWT does not look at your faces and appearance, neither lineage nor wealth, but rather He looks at your hearts." So, whoever has a pure heart, surely Allah SWT truly loves that person. Beware! O Son of Adam the person who is most loved by Allah SWT is the one who is most pious of you (Hadith narrated by Muslim, Al-Qari 2002, hadith no.: 5314).

This hadith is supported by the following hadith, which explains the importance of the heart in human life in this world and the hereafter, and it is understood that the heart is the cause of every deed performed by human beings and it is the determinant of human destiny in the hereafter.



The Prophet s.a.w. says which means:

Beware, in the body there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound and if it is corrupt the whole body is corrupt, and hearken it is the heart. (Hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim, Al-Nawawi 1966, hadith no.: 40)

These hadiths show that whatever is in the human heart, it is a result of the process of attaining knowledge performed by the human mind, which determines the next act to be implemented. In this context, it is the heart that acts as the King who receives consultation from the senior ministers, namely the force of *syahwah* and *ghadab* are resulted from knowledge processed by the human mind. If the knowledge processed from the true source of knowledge, then the knowledge shall act to control *syahwah* and *ghadab* with wisdom and justice, thus guiding the direction of *nafs* (soul) towards *mutmainnah* and advise the heart to come with *syaja'ah* behaviour, *iffah* with justice and wisdom (Al-Ghazali 1997). This somehow shows the diversity of roles played by each element present in the human soul. Where each of them represents a spirit with a different role. Al-Ghazali (t.t) in his book *Ihya' Ulumuddin* vol 4, p. 2 said:

“For it is the heart that knows Allah. It works for Allah, strives towards Allah. The one draws near to Allah and reveals that which is in the presence of Allah. And verily all the other organs are merely followers, servants, and instruments that the heart uses and employs as if a master with his servants, a leader with his people and a worker with his tools”

This hadith also reflecting the ability of the heart to reach *Makrifatullah* (getting to know Allah). Also, heart is a form of strength of the human self that is difficult to maintain due to its volatile and unstable nature. This nature of the heart is described in the verse of Allah (Al-Hadid, 57:27) which means:

Then in the footsteps of these (prophets), We sent Our messengers, and (after them) We sent Isa, son of Maryam, and granted him the Gospel, and instilled compassion and mercy into the hearts of his followers. As for monasticism (Rahbaniyyah), they made it up. We never ordained it for them, only seeking to please Allah, yet they did not even adhere to and observe it strictly. So We rewarded those of them who were faithful, and the other way around to most of them who are rebellious.

According to al-Sobuni (2004), this verse describes the situation when the followers of the Prophet Isa AS claimed that they are those who are closest to Allah SWT yet at the same time they invent acts of worship that are not commanded by Allah SWT and do not comply with the syariah set by Allah

SWT accordingly. This suggests that the state of the human heart has the potential to change from one state to another.

In addition, the state of the heart that goes back and forth is reflected in the prayers that are practised by the Prophet SAW which means:

O Allah, the turner of the hearts, keep our hearts firm on Your religion. Said the companions, O Messenger of Allah we believe in you and all that you bring. So what do we have to be afraid of? The Prophet s.a.w replied: The hearts are between two of Allah's fingers which turn about as He wills (Hadith narrated by Anas, Ibn Abi Shaybah 1994, hadith no.: 29806)

The heart is also in a conscious state. This is stated in Surah Al-Ahzab (33: 5) which means:

Let your adopted children keep their family names. That is more just in the sight of Allah. But if you do not know their fathers, then they are your fellow believers and close associates. There is no blame on you for what you do by mistake, but (that is deemed sinful is the deed) for what you do intentionally. And (bear in mind Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

In regard to the verse (33: 5), Hamka (1981) asserts that Islam does not just revolve around issue disagreements between scholars as a result of the *ijtihad* by renowned scholars. In fact, Islam is a sense of awareness of our responsibility to Allah SWT in this life.

According to al-Ghazali (1997), human heart is influenced by three main forces namely desire, anger, and mind. Desire ivedis der from animal traits that drive humans to malicious behaviour, greed, arrogance, and disregard for others. Meanwhile, anger is derived from the violence nature that renders human beings to be angry, destructive, and hostile. Finally, mind force leads to the knowledgeable nature of an individual who believes in and fear of Allah (*taqwa*). He added, the best self is is the one driven by intellectual force. This state of meaningful heart is known as *Qalbun Salim*. But the heart will be in pain and eventually die when it is not illuminated with the light of knowledge (Ibnu Taymiyyah 2006).

*Qalbun Salim* is a state of peaceful heart. As revealed in the Quran (Ash-Shu'ara, 26: 88-89) which means:

The Day when neither wealth nor children will be of any benefit, only (wealth and children) those who come before Allah with a pure heart.

This state of peaceful heart according to al-Ghazali (1997) can be obtained through the chain of

knowledge that inculcates faith and piety in the heart of a servant. This shows that a peaceful heart is one of the attributes bestowed by Allah SWT on each of His pious servants.

According to al-Ghazali (1997), the behaviours derived from *Qalbun Salim* is the characteristic of a person with *taqwa*. *Taqwa* means fear of Allah (Rohi Baalbaki 2002). The verses related to the characteristics of a person with *tawqa* are mentioned many times in the Quran. This shows how important it is for us to be equipped with this characteristic. The characteristics of a person with *taqwa* according to the Quran are believe in the unseen (*ghayb*), perform prayers, spending wealth in the way of Allah (*infaq*), control anger, forgive others, fear Allah, always repent, aware of Allah's supervision, believe in the commandments and prohibitions, and do good deeds sincerely (al-Baqarah: 2-3; Ali Imran: 134; Qaff: 33 and al-Maidah: 93). Through these verses, there are 10 characteristics of a person with *taqwa*, whose heart that is illuminated with the light of knowledge (Al-Sobuni 2004; Al-Ghazali 1997). However, the human self is also influenced by desire and anger, which have an adverse effect on human actions and practices. The self that is influenced by desire leads to malicious behaviour, greed, arrogance, and disregard for others. Meanwhile, anger is brought about the nature of *haywaniyah*, which drives people to be angry and destructive with hostility (Al-Ghazali 1997).

Self-understanding according to al-Ghazali, is the self is derived from an individual heart, which is enriched with a great power. A good heart is one overwhelmed with light (*nur hidayah*), that is *ma'rifatullah* with the intellectual power which is knowledge with divine attributes to bring oneself to a more glorious level. The knowledge held by a person will produce confidence, that is, faith which in turn develops *taqwa* in the individual. Contrary to the self-concept discussed according to Western theories, the Western self-concept is based on knowledge about human beings sourced from mind before forming the perception, evaluation, attitude, and confidence of an individual whereas the self-concept in Islam is guided by knowledge about human beings sourced from the Quran and Sunnah, which in turn influences the heart, and reflected through the action. Indirectly, Islamic thinking is not only based on the well-being of the mind, but also the spiritual enlightenment of the heart (Al-Ghazali 1972). The self-concept in Islam is established to reveal the nature of Allah SWT as the key source that influences the development of a Muslim's self. Meanwhile, self-development from the Western perspective utilises the views and evaluation of the surrounding as the main sources in the development of one's self. To further illustrate self-understanding according to al-Ghazali, the next figure shall be used as a reference.

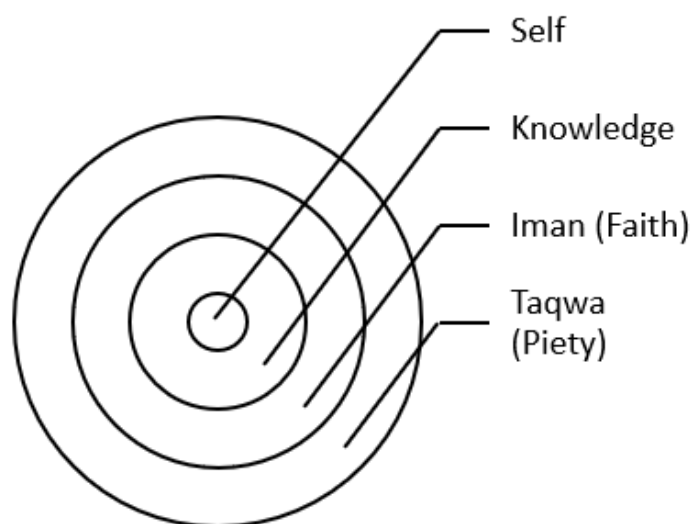


FIGURE 1. Al-Ghazali on Knowing Yourself (Al-Ghazali 1997)

## PHASES OF HUMAN LIFE

The reality of human creation also discusses the spiritual journey of human beings through three key phases, the first is the spiritual realm, which consists of the origin of human creation and its creation. The pledge of all the descendants of Adam is recorded, where the circumstances are the best, all are testifying the divinity and majesty of Allah SWT. This encompasses human nature that recognises the existence of Allah SWT and their responsibility.

In this regard, Allah SWT says in Surah al-Ahzab verse 72 about trust which means:

Indeed... We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains (to bear it), but they declined to bear it, being fearful of not being able to perfect it (because they had no provision to bear it) and (at that time) humans (with their provisions) assumed it. (Remember), most humans are truly wrongful (to themselves) and ignorant (of the consequences).

Through the testimony of "Alastu", the brotherhood that exists between human beings is understood. Our existence as Children of Adam also shows that humans come from a huge family across prestiges and ranks, genders, races, ideologies, and religions. The differences shall be embraced with *syafaqah* and compassion by doing *da'wah* and *islah*, neither enmity nor *asabiyah*. As human beings who exist and are created, we have responsibilities as servants of Allah and caliph (vicegerent), that are clarified in the second phase of human spiritual journey which is the world (Wan Shuhaimi 2019).

This second phase discusses the responsibilities of the caliph that shall be shouldered by humans as the vicegerent of Allah SWT on His earth. Surah al-Baqarah verse 30 highlights this which means:

And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: am going to place a khalifah (successive human authority) on earth. They asked (about the wisdom of God's decree by saying): Will You (O God) place in it someone who will spread corruption there and shed blood (killing each other) while we glorify Your praises and proclaim Your holiness? Allah responded: I know what you do not know."

Al-Ghazali (1997) also emphasises the main purpose and duties of human creation. According to al-Ghazali, human beings are created with a purpose and entrusted with duties (M. Ladzi Safroni 2013). There are two categories of human duties according to Al-Ghazali, namely duties in this world while the remaining in the hereafter. As expressed by him in his book *Kimiya' al-Saadah* (1997) p. 37:

"All human goals are incorporated in religion and the world. And religion is not structured other than the structures of the world. The world is a place of cultivation for the hereafter. The world is a tool to deliver to Allah, for those who want to make the hereafter a permanent place and an eternal homeland"

In other words, al-Ghazali (1997) highlights the first duty of humans as the servants of God, which is to reach the peak of happiness when they can see God in the hereafter, while the second duty is as *khalifatullah fil'Ard*, to make the earth a prosperous place as a platform to gain eternal happiness in the hereafter. Furthermore, al-Ghazali (t.t;1997) also explained that the duties and purpose of human beings can only be achieved with knowledge and good deeds, which he prioritises knowledge over deeds because according to him, human duties and purpose will not be realised if people do not know how to carry out good deeds except with knowledge. Therefore, it is crucial for human beings be imbued with knowledge to realise the purpose of life and happiness in this world and the hereafter.

The existence of human beings in this world is in the form of *aqali-jasadi* (mind-body) by retaining their nature of thinking and speaking (*natiq*) as well as *fitrah* and brotherhood as in the first phase. This is where the responsibilities as the servant of Allah and *khalifatullah* come into practice and are assessed. Humans experience many challenges from both spiritual and physical aspects. The physical and spiritual demands shall be fulfilled and to achieve the balance between these two, humans must strive spiritually and physically (Afandi Yusoff et.al 2020). To support this situation, knowledge becomes the key support and even the source of knowledge must be authentic, which are the Quran and Sunnah. Then, the syariah law, morals and Sunnah of the Prophet SAW serve as a guidance in the way of life to bring people closer to Allah SWT established on the utmost truth.

Based on this circumstance, human achievement in the world is viewed through the happiness, when humans always realise their position as the servants of Allah SWT and His caliphs besides getting *taufiq* and *guidance* from Him. Otherwise, their spiritual state can be miserable. The goal of the third phase of the human spiritual journey is very much related to their condition in the second realm. The human spirits are heading towards the eternal afterlife. Their utmost spiritual goal during this time is an encounter with Allah SWT. In fact, humans during this time only awaits their Rabb's decree, whether their ending is gratified or wretched.

Understanding the fact of human existence and creation from Islamic perspective leads us to keep being in the original state of nature (*fitrah*) that always acknowledges the existence of Allah SWT and acknowledges that the purpose of creation in this world is not for nothing but there are responsibilities that shall be fulfilled, especially as servants of Allah and *khalifatullah*. A true understanding of this matter will indeed lead to happiness in life in this world and the hereafter (Abur Hamdi Uthman & Muhd Najib Abdul Kadir 2022).

Therefore, to place the true meaning of the self to ourselves, our way of seeing things or train of thought shall be grounded. Confusion will only keep us entrapped and at a loss forever. As human beings who are entrusted with the responsibility to ensure that we are the righteous servants of God, we also have the responsibility to lead the mankind to remember their pledge while in the spiritual realm. As a caliph, our main agenda in life is to give as much as possible to benefit to the whole *ummah* (mankind) in this world,

especially in the context of spreading the truth to mankind. Our responsibility is to carry on the duty of Rasulullah SAW disseminating the messages, the guidance comes from Allah. This shall be embedded in our soul.

In conclusion, the concept of self through the Islamic world view is based on knowledge sourced from the Quran and Sunnah, of the fact of humans who have testified before Allah SWT about the oneness of Him and we as the caliphate of the humans (Al-A'raf: 172). This knowledge will place Allah as the only God to be worshipped, even in the perception of himself and others' perception of the surrounding. Then, human mind serves as a control of *syahwah* and *ghadabiyyah* among human beings, thus produce the qualities of *syaja'ah* and *iffah* in human beings and guide oneself (*nafs*) towards *nafsul mutmainnah* (calm soul) and eventually reside in the heart to influence human action. Actions that come from a pious (good) heart are resulted from a calm soul via guidance from a healthy mind equipped with qualities of wisdom and justice in accordance with the foundation of true knowledge are the sign of great morals and piety.

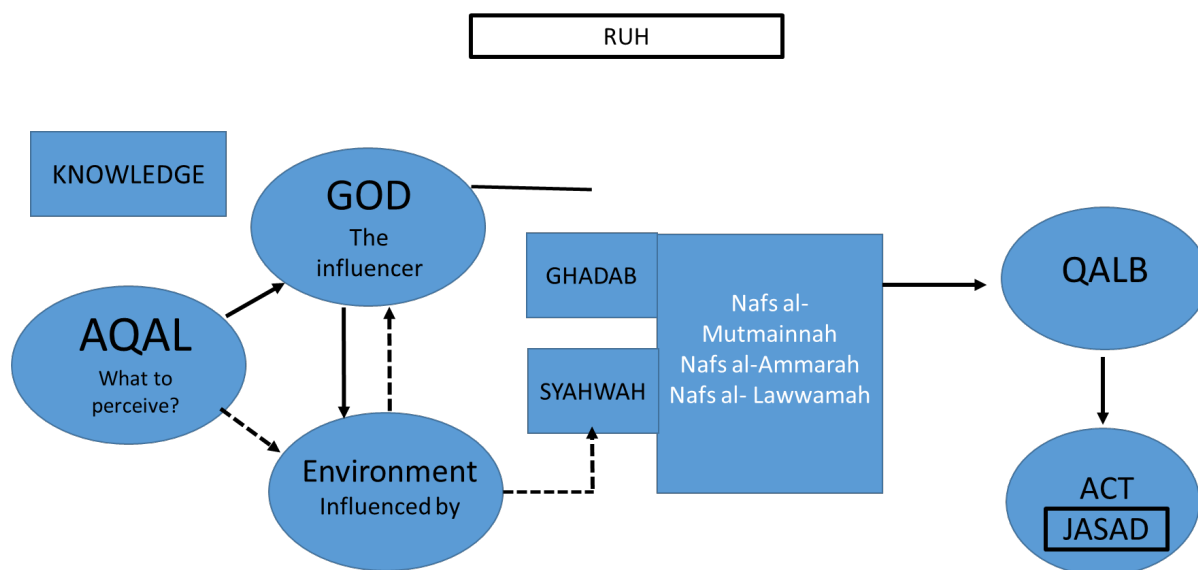


FIGURE 2. The Muslim Self-Concept Model

The realisation of of the human self (Al-A'raf: 172) describes human beings are created from nothing to something. Therefore, human beings are in a state of in debt to their own self, kindness, and power to the Creator, Allah SWT and are totallly dependent on the Creator (Al-Attas 2019). Therefore, there are human responsibilities as the servants of Allah and the caliph, who are to charge carry out the testament until the Day of Reckoning (Al-Ghazali 1997). The

state of the human self also proves that human beings have two elements, one is physical while another is the soul that form the human self, where the fact of the human self is its soul is described using the terms *aqal* (Al-Jurjani 1998) and *qalb* (Al-Ghazali 1997). It is this knowledge that influences the mind to give the true meaning of the nature of the human self. The next diagram provides a visual explanation of the concept of the human self:



## DISCUSSION

The world view held by an individual influences the way of thinking and evaluation of any humans, including the perceptions and evaluation about themselves. This is because the world view of is determined by the root of knowledge that underlies it (Md Asham Ahmad 2019). If the root of knowledge is different, then it will create a different frame of mind. Therefore, the human self-understanding according to the Islamic world view is different from the human self-understanding observed from the Western perspective.

Rene (1844) in his discovery of the self-concept stated that thought shall be initiated with doubt, until the person gets an idea of existence based on perceptions made through experiences and social interaction. The ideas put forward by this philosopher have led to the discovery of the self-concept (William James 1890). This contradicts the self-concept from the Islamic view, which is rooted in permanent revelation and does not rely on mind and doubts. The thinking path set in Islam is to start with the knowledge of *yaqin* that is, via the source (*tanzil*) before using mind and senses to reach towards *ainul yaqin* and *haqqul yaqin*.

Through this source as well, humans realise the fact that they have been created (Al-Mukminun: 12-14) from nothing and created with trust and responsibility to act as the servants of Allah and as the caliph of Allah (Al-Attas 2019). Therefore, humans realise that they must submit to Allah who has created them and fulfil their responsibility as the caliph to all beings on earth. With their limited abilities they are in debt to themselves, power, and grace to their Creator and only rely on their Creator absolutely (Al-Attas 2019). Not only that, through the root of knowledge, humans also realise that their life is not only in the world but they need to go through three phases of life, namely the spiritual realm, the world on this earth, and the hereafter. Humans also need to be aware that their being consists of two elements, namely the soul and body besides the fact that he is represented by the spirit (Al-A'raf: 172).

This knowledge is different from the Western self-concept, which places the root of knowledge on the mind and senses only. The emphasis on the human self is through the physical needs of the human being and its relationship with its environment (Burns 1982; Coopersmith 1974; Shavelson 1982; Fitts 1971). Thus, the proposed model of Muslim self-concept is able to fill the gaps left by the existing models which

are based on Western perspective and are less accurate to evaluate the self-concept in Islam.

## CONCLUSION

Instruments related to self-concept are actively adopted in line with the surge of research related to it. This illustrates the importance of the constructs used in the instruments to measure a person's self-concept leading to his or her life practices and behaviours. Therefore, this study is crucial to be carried out because the findings of this study can fill the gaps that exist by making it a platform in developing self-concept questionnaires that are relevant for studies related to Muslims. This is because the previous questionnaires are guided by an evaluation model that is based on the world view that is far different from Islam. In general, the proposed evaluation model provides positive implications to relevant researchers and Muslim individuals in placing the right self-meaning on self in accordance with the framework of the Islamic world view.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

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