WELLBEING OF THE SOCIETY: A MAQĀŠID AL-SHARĪ‘AH APPROACH

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Abstract

Wellbeing is generally seen as an example of the condition of households, society, and people. The issue of wellbeing in the modernized world has been reviewed and explained in various ways as it is a crucial issue for a household that acts as a reflection of the comfort status among humanity. From the Islamic perspective, wellbeing can be widely explained through inner and outer fulfilment, and guiding people through a peaceful life, named as ḥayāt al-tayyibah. The ultimate objective of the paper is to present a framework of wellbeing from the Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah principles. Each dimension of the principles were deliberated according to the views of scholars from the perspective of the Sharī‘ah. The paper highlights the operation of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah as a measurable multidimensional concept, a relatively new discipline in various fields of social sciences and economics. Studies have shown that wellbeing could be explained in a multidimensional perspective using these principles.

Keywords: Wellbeing; Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah; society; multidimension.
Khulasah


Kata kunci: Kesejahteraan; *Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah*; masyarakat; multidimensi.

Introduction

Wellbeing is a general illustration of the condition of households, society, and the people of a nation. Contemporarily, there are various ways of defining wellbeing. It is a crucial issue for household as it reflects humankind comfort status. Wellbeing includes the living condition of a family such as shelter, food, clothing, safety, and others. Through study, happiness could not be counted as a measurement of wellbeing per se. Currently, wellbeing is one of the main agenda for policymakers in enhancing sustainability and better living condition. It is generally

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known as the science of happiness\textsuperscript{3}. From an Islamic perspective, wellbeing is inevitably considered both inner and outer fulfilment, and it all goes towards living a peaceful life, named as ḥayāt al-ṭayyibah.

This paper attempts to explore the preliminary and broad manner of wellbeing that is associated with the \textit{Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah} axioms. Each dimension of the principles was deliberated according to the views of scholars from \textit{Sharī‘ah} perspectives. The introduction begins with the background of the study and precise discussion on wellbeing from the Islamic perspective. Subsequently, the paper explains a thorough review of the \textit{Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah}. Section four deals with evaluation of the concept of wellbeing using the \textit{Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah} principles. The final chapter concludes the study and offers suggestions for future research.

\textit{Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah} and its Principles
There are various definitions provided by prominent scholars on the objectives (\textit{maqāṣid}) of \textit{Sharī‘ah} and among them, Ibn ‘Ashūr define \textit{Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah} as the purpose and wisdom behind the enactment of most the \textit{Sharī‘ah} rulings.\textsuperscript{4}

The definition includes that the objective of \textit{Sharī‘ah} is to achieve the targeted end behind each \textit{Sharī‘ah} rulings and the secrets involved in such rulings. The targeted includes the development of the world, the preservation of a social system and maintaining the good on the earth through

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the betterment of the people. It is achieved by the obligation that each person must live their life justly and virtuously and to do and think for the good of the world and its occupants.

As introduced by al-Ghazālī and al-Shāṭibī, Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah clarifies the reasons behind decisions. For example, the reason for the encouragement of philanthropy is to improve social consistency and bring individuals to have a good relationship with each other.⁵ Hence for the maqāṣid of ‘safeguarding the minds and souls of individuals’, Islam strictly restrains people to conduct any wrongdoings such as abusing drugs or alcohol due to the maqāṣid of ‘safeguarding wealth and honour’.

Maqāṣid has traditionally classified three levels of necessity, which are, a) ḍarūriyyāt, also known as necessities; b) ḥājiyyāt, known as needs; and c) tahṣīniyyāt, known as luxuries. In terms of ḍarūriyyāt, it consists of five elements, which are faith, soul, wealth, mind and offspring⁵, whereas ḥājiyyāt is essential to compliment to human life such as getting married. Finally, tahṣīniyyāt is beautifying, such as perfume, clothing style, and home decoration⁵.

Religion is likely to be related to wellbeing based on most restraint that is frequently connected to religious commitment. However, this claim is untested since religious individual seems to have an improvement in self-discretion and self-direction⁶. Besides, it is conceivable that religious

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gatherings could vary in a specific manner. For example, in terms of prayers, Allah SWT in al-‘Ankabūt, verse 45, said: “Indeed, prayers can prevent from doing indecency and evil actions.”

The wisdom of al-Shari‘ah, is to help humankind in harvesting advantages in both the universes, here and hereafter. In a specific order of investigating the destinations of al-Shari‘ah, this study could be valuable for humanity in comprehending the establishments of the arrangements and knowledge behind the maxims.

Wellbeing from an Islamic Perspective
Development in Islam is to accomplish and maintain improvement in the material and non-material well-being of man. Therefore, Islam has laid Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah as an essential point in the Islamic teachings that highlight human welfare as the primary purpose. The fundamental aim of al-Shari‘ah is to ensure and promote the wellbeing of all humanity and to avoid harm. Referring to al-Rusayni, Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah is the target controlled by the Islamic principle, and it must accomplishes for the benefit of humankind. Therefore, Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah constitutes each component identified with human instincts. These components can be classified into five basic aspect. The

idea of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah can be obtained and examined by concentrating on the al-Sharī‘ah concern, protecting the five main ʿdarūriyyāt of human’s life, seen within the quotes by Islamic philosopher, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī as follows:

“The very objective of the Sharī‘ah is to promote the well-being of the people, which lies in safeguarding their faith (al-dīn), their lives (al-nafs), their intellect (al-ʿaql), their posterity (al-nasl) and their wealth (al-māl). Whatever ensures the safeguard of these five serves public interest and is desirable, and whatever hurts them is against public interest and its removal is desirable”.

Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah and Wellbeing

The science of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah is seen as an important but often neglected development in Islamic history until it was revived by al-Ghazālī and al-Shāṭibī. The revival was motivated out of similar concern that we are facing today – that Islamic thought must extend to the broader objectives of our religion, and not exclusively concerned on its prohibitive aspects or exclusively literal interpretations.

From an Islamic point of view, scholars attempt to harmonize the index in developing human advancement that

is related to the measurement that could be linked with wellbeing. *Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah* Multidimensional Poverty Index (MSMPI) was developed by Rahmatina Kasri and Habib Ahmed who utilized health, education, economic, religion, and social to represent the five *Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah* measurements.¹¹ The fundamental part of Islamic development is to ensure the wellbeing of all mankind, and it ought to be in accordance with the targets of *Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah*.¹²

The Qur’an reveals overriding interest in the general welfare of humankind and the need to balance between this world and Hereafter: “And of them, there are some who say; ‘Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good and save us from the torment of the Fire!’” (al-Baqarah: 201); “But seek, with that which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and not forget your portion of lawful enjoyment in this world; and be generous as Allah has been generous to you and seek not mischief in the land. Verily Allah likes not the mischief-makers” (al-Qasas: 77).


Maqlah could be accomplished by developing the three important elements, namely necessities (\(\text{dar\text{	extunderscore}riyy\text{	extunderscore}at}\)), complementaries (\(\text{h\text{	extunderscore}ajiyy\text{	extunderscore}at}\)), and luxuries (\(\text{tahs\text{	extunderscore}niyy\text{	extunderscore}at}\)).\(^{13}\) Necessities (\(\text{dar\text{	extunderscore}riyy\text{	extunderscore}at}\)) can be categorised into safeguarding faith/religiosity (\(\text{al\text{	extunderscore}d\text{	extunderscore}in}\)), life/health (\(\text{an\text{	extunderscore}nasl}\)), intellect/education (\(\text{al\text{	extunderscore}\text{\textquoteleft}aql}\)), posterity/social (\(\text{al\text{	extunderscore}nasl}\)), and wealth/economics (\(\text{al\text{	extunderscore}mal}\)).\(^{14}\) To address these elements, a comprehensive effort by various parties, as shown in Figure 2, should be undertaken. Government bodies with relevant policies, together with the non-government organizations should collaborate to address the wellbeing of the society through the five dimensions of \textit{Maqāṣid al-Shari	extquotesingle ah}. The elements of \textit{Maqāṣid} are summarized as in Table 1 below.

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\(^{13}\) R. Md Ramli et. al., “M-Dex among the Islamic Countries,” 9.


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Figure 2: Addressing the Wellbeing of the Society from an Islamic Perspective

Source: Rahmatina & Habib (2014)

Table 1: Example of the Elements based on the 5 Dimensions of Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Religious education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>iii. Contribute to charity</td>
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<td>iv. Seeking Knowledge</td>
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<td>v. Mosque activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>vi. Trust in Allah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intellect or Mind (al-‘Aql)</td>
<td>i. Education level</td>
<td>Rahmatina &amp; Habib, (2014); Rasool, (2016); Sen, (1976, 1977); Harun &amp; Abdullah, (2007); Alkire &amp; Foster, (2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Motivational programs</td>
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<td>iii. Skill</td>
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<td>iv. School attendance</td>
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<td>v. Knowledge</td>
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<td>vi. The literacy level of household</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Income</td>
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<td></td>
<td>iii. Purchasing power</td>
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<td>iv. Savings</td>
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| **Posterity (al-Nasl)** | i. Better future for family  
ii. Harmony  
iii. Anti-social activities  
iv. Participation in community activities  
v. Marriage  
vi. Children  
vii. Personal liberty and freedom |
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<td>Rahmatina &amp; Habib, (2014); Harun &amp; Abdullah (2007); Rasool (2016)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| **Life/Health (al-Nafs)** | i. Consumption of food and nutrition  
ii. Access to healthcare  
iii. Awareness of health  
iv. Frequency of sickness  
v. Nutrition  
vi. Body fluid weight |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Religiosity**

Ibn ‘Ashūr, defines *al-dīn* as every individual saving their faith of Islam by abstaining from anything that might weaken and confuse the faith that can turn them into the upside down behaviour. In addition, preserving *al-dīn* consists of three different meanings that are first; a revelation to Rasulullah (pbuh) Second, it is the law that involves the belief in Allah, His Messenger, and hereafter. Third, similar revealed law which governs the external

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aspect of human life \(^{16}\). For example, in term of fasting, Allah said that:

\[
ذََٰلِكََۖ وَمَن يُعَظ ِمۡ حُرُمََٰتِ ٱللَّهِ فَهُوَ خَيۡۡٞلَّهُۥ عِندَ رَب ِهِۦۗ
\]

\[
وَأُحْلَكَ لْسُعۡمُ أَلۡ١ۡأَنَّعَمَ إِلَّا مَا يُتۡلَََٰ عَلَيۡكُمَۡۖ فَٱجۡتَنِبُواْ

آلِّرِجُسَ مِنَ أَلۡ١ۡأَوَّلَنَٰ وَأُجِنِبُواْ قُوَّلَ آلِّرُور
\]

Meaning: “That [has been commanded], and whoever honours the sacred ordinances of Allah - it is best for him in the sight of his Lord. Moreover, permitted to you are the grazing livestock, except what is recited to you. So, avoid the uncleanness of idols and avoid false statement”.

Al-Hajj (22):30

For religiosity, there are numerous definitions coming from the different perspectives of researchers, and they usually lead towards the aspects of belief and behaviour\(^{17}\). Thus, it can be measured using two dimensions, which are through belief and the practice\(^{18}\). In terms of religious belief, there are five dimensions, which are a personal belief, internal belief, the meaning of the term belief, framings and lastly, an individual perspective towards their

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religion. As for religious practices, it is observed externally when an individual performs certain religious practice or rituals.

Religiosity is also measured through Islamic primary sources, which are al-Quran and Hadith. Meanwhile, more researchers have come out with a varied opinion on how religiosity is constructed. According to Maselko and Kubzansky, religiosity constructs are divided into two dimensions. These dimensions were created based on how an individual understands the term religiosity, and those who practiced religiosity in their daily life, whether individually or performed in a group.

Besides that, other studies focus on the measurement of religiosity in terms of the behaviour of the individual itself. For example, the frequency in attending religious programs, identity and adherence to religious rules such as prohibition to drink alcohol and eat pork and attitude of an individual towards religion. Based on Shakona’s opinion’s opinion,
religiosity is measured by using these terms: “Islam is the final and complete religion”, “women can wear perfume”, “men can shake hands with women”, “existence of Jinn”, “Qur’an as the final word”, “seeking knowledge as a Muslim religious duty”, “trust in Allah”, and lastly is “hajj”. It is shown that when two or more dimensions were used in measuring religiosity, ultimately, it would produce numerous and different elements.

Life
The objective of al-Nafs is to protect anything that ensures the survival of the family. It is a physical need that is important in daily life, for example, maintaining individual health by various methods such as taking care of their diet moderately. Different researchers used various elements in measuring health. The essential element is nutrition. This was used by Alkire and Foster (2010) and Che Mat (2012) for measurement. Besides, other elements under this category are access to healthcare, awareness of health, frequency of sickness, mortality rate, health condition, free

25 R. Md Ramli, et. al. M-Dex among the Islamic Countries, 11.
from disease and body fluid weight. Therefore, the *Maqāṣid al-Shariʿah* principles are suited to measure wellbeing, as it explains the requirements to improve life outcomes as the vision of Islam is to be a blessing for humanity, and to promote the wellbeing of all.

**Knowledge**

Education is an essential process for every individual activity that leads to knowledge. Knowledge is a fundamental element that helps in the development of scholars and skills of an individual where it includes the psychological factors such as education level, motivational programs, level of skills that have been acquired, distance to school and lastly, the frequency of individual involvement in school programs. Islam ordains that every individual Muslim should acquire knowledge ranging from the individual duty (*farḍ ʿayn*), which is the knowledge that focuses on the individual character, until the Muslim polity (*farḍ kifāyah*), which is more general and focuses on individual responsibility in a community.

There are different perceptions of the element in education by different researchers. Rahmatina & Habib viewed that education can be measured in terms of the ability to read and write, the primary education from

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29 M.S. Rasool, Monetary and Non-Monetary Poverty Measurement, 206.
schooling, achievement in school, school attendance, years of schooling and also children registration in school.\(^{30}\) Also, besides education and knowledge, the role of information is inevitable. Information is an essential part of people as it is important to give direction for the right mindset as indicated by lessons of Islam\(^{41}\). Chapra refers to al-Ghazālī, who said that the mind is the fountainhead, and it is the starting point and basis for science since Islam encourages education, knowledge, and information\(^{21}\).

**Posterity**

Islam has emphasised on posterity since it ensures the maintenance of physical and mental being. This starts with being a good person as it is beneficial to society to pose a friendly attitude, human affection, a sense of responsibility to help those in need, and others. Islam prohibits rude and unfriendly behaviour among others. Allah SWT says:

\[
	ext{كُتِبَ عَلَىٰ هُمْ} \\
	ext{مَا كُفِىَّ أَيْنَ} \\
	ext{رَبُّهُمْ} \\
	ext{يُزَيَّدُهُمُ} \\
	ext{وَيَفۡتَلُونَ} \\
	ext{بِغَيۡۡ حَقَّ} \\
	ext{مَا عَصَواَ} \\
	ext{وَكَانُواَ يَعۡتَدُونَ} \\
	ext{ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَواَ} \\
	ext{وَكَانُواَ يَعۡتَدُونَ} \]

Meaning: “They have been put under humiliation [by Allah] wherever they are overtaken, except for a covenant from Allah and a rope from the Muslims. And they have drawn upon themselves anger from Allah and have

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been put under destitution. That is because they disbelieved in the verses of Allah and killed the prophets without right. That is because they disobeyed and [habitually] transgressed”.

Ali-Imran (3):112

Therefore, this principle was made to protect the wellbeing of the household, such as the tenets of marriage relating to the husband and wife and children. Islam also forbids fornication, cohabitation, and promiscuity. Previous authors have expressed the opinion that several children in institutions can be used as a part of the measurement. However, they found that the standard of living, participation in social activities and number of children or size of the household have been adequately highlighted in terms of safeguarding of life and are sufficient to be used as the measurement.

**Wealth**

*Hifz al-Māl* is where protection included in the ownership of economics in terms of avoiding the property from being damaged, harmed, stolen, and other bad repercussion. Besides that, wealth accumulation is a part of economics, seen in the ownership of settled resources and durable merchandise, the capacity to generate salary or income from financial exercises, and consumption of food and services that fulfil the essential needs. The wealth is supposedly handled honestly and adequately, and it should help in reducing poverty, help those who are in need, and should help in distributing income and wealth equally for the development of wealth. In addition, the distribution is made through *zakat*, *waqf*, and *ṣadaqah*.

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In terms of measurement, economic wealth can be measured using various elements. It is because different researchers have different perceptions of measuring the economic terms. Economic wealth can be measured in terms of the skills, employability, income, purchasing power and savings. Other than that, measured economic wealth are in terms of work status, weeks of work, self-employment, political activism, employment industry, income and financial situation.

Harun & Abdullah measured economic wealth using productivity and land ownership\textsuperscript{32} while others measured it in terms of owned assets, owned property (land & housing), consultation in making decisions on basic needs purchases and expenditure on non-durable and food indicators,\textsuperscript{33} and lastly used assets, income, land, and food stock.\textsuperscript{36}

**Conclusion**

To recapitulate, this paper seems to be potent to highlight wellbeing using *Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah* principles. Scholars agree that operationalising *Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah* as a measurable concept has been a relatively new discipline in various fields of social sciences and economics. Studies have shown that wellbeing could be explained in the multidimensional perspectives using these principles. Thus, it is suggested that future research to be conducted in exploring further wellbeing from the Islamic perspective as mentioned above. Index or other appropriate measurement could be introduced to quantify wellbeing using *Maqāṣid*


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al-Shari’ah principles. In addition, demographic and socioeconomic factors that influence wellbeing could also be identified.

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