

iCSSP2024: International Conference on Social Science & Public Policy  
Virtual Conference, 23 & 24 October 2024

Organised by: Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kedah, Malaysia

## Conceptualizing Ibn Khaldun's Thought Strategy in Student Career Planning

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### Abstract

Career planning, which is essential for both worldly success and spiritual fulfillment, guides individuals in their journey toward becoming better Muslims. By aligning career choices with Islamic teachings, individuals can achieve both prosperity and ethical integrity. This study integrates Islamic principles into career planning, drawing insights from Ibn Khaldun's philosophy, particularly his renowned work, *Al-Muqaddimah*. Through document analysis, this study identifies Ibn Khaldun's four levels of human intellect: holistic understanding, evaluative intellect, analytical intellect, and discerning intellect. These intellectual levels serve as a framework for guiding students in developing comprehensive career plans that are meaningful in both this life and the Hereafter. Ultimately, this research aims to bridge temporal pursuits with eternal aspirations, enriching students' holistic development.

Keywords: Career Planning, Students, Ibn Khaldun's Thinking Skills, Human Skills, Career Application.

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### 1.0 Introduction

Islam views the world as a bridge to the Hereafter. Muslims are encouraged to seek happiness in the Hereafter without neglecting their worldly affairs (Ismail, 2019). As Allah says:

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا

"And seek, by means of what Allah has granted you, the Hereafter; but do not forget your share of the world." (QS. Al-Qashash: 77)

The process of thinking as a Muslim is not limited to the logical aspects of reason but also encompasses a spiritual dimension guided by religion. Syaubari Othman (2020) emphasized that the combination of 'aqli (intellect) and naqli (revelation) forms a strong foundation for developing a holistic way of thinking. The source of 'aqli refers to the human ability to think based on reason and sensory perception, while naqli refers to divine guidance conveyed through revelation and inspiration from Allah.

A thought process guided by these two sources not only strengthens intellectual knowledge but also directs individuals to understand the will of religion, making thinking skills more ethical and focused on the good of both this world and the Hereafter. Exposure to and awareness of the importance of career planning are crucial for individual development, especially for secondary school and higher education students. Early exposure to the career planning process is essential because, according to Zairoslawane (2014), career

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selection is a highly complex process. Although there are various types of jobs available, teenagers or school leavers often have limited information about the working world and greatly need guidance. They require adequate information, support, and motivation to help them make career choices that suit them (Li Lau et al., 2018).

For Muslim students, pursuing a halal career that aligns with Islamic teachings is essential to ensure their well-being in both this world and the Hereafter (Rosli et al., 2021). The hadith of Prophet SAW said:

كل لحم نبت من سحت فالنار أولى به

"Every flesh that grows from something haram, then the fire is more deserving of it." (HR. Thabrani).

Every Muslim aspires to obtain a job that aligns with Islamic teachings and requires Islamic guidance to achieve this goal. Those who prepared for their careers typically know what to do after receiving their exam results (Paad et al., 2022). However, many students still lack direction. Therefore, students need to begin their career planning early, especially in an era of globalization where career uncertainties may raise questions about what is halal (permissible) and haram (forbidden) (Rosli et al., 2021).

Career preparation involves several critical steps, including: (1) Clarifying interest in halal careers: Identifying fields of work that align with Islamic values, (2) Selecting academic fields based on career choices: Ensuring that educational paths support career goals, and (3) Enhancing cognitive skills: Developing creative, critical, analytical, and integrated thinking skills through a comprehensive approach focused on intellectual growth (Zainur, 2020). Furthermore, this research aims to bridge temporal pursuits with eternal aspirations, enriching students' holistic development. By integrating Ibn Khaldun's thought strategies into career planning, the study promotes a balanced approach that harmonizes worldly achievements with spiritual fulfillment. This approach ensures that students are prepared for both professional success and personal growth. Therefore, students need guidance to enhance their thinking skills, enabling them to solve problems and make wise decisions in daily life. Through the application of Ibn Khaldun's principles, this study aims to develop critical thinking and decision-making abilities, empowering students to navigate complex career landscapes and make choices that reflect both their immediate goals and long-term aspirations.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Biography

Ibn Khaldun is a highly renowned scholar and intellectual who is respected both in the Muslim world and in the West. His full name is Wali Ad-Din Abu Zaid Abdurrahman bin Muhammad Ibn Khaldun al-Hadrami al-Ishbili. He was born into an honorable family known for its scholarly tradition, and his wisdom and intellectual contributions are widely recognized (Mohamad Iqbal, 2022). Throughout history, scholars have bestowed upon him various honorary titles, including Abu Zayd, Qadi al-Qudah (Chief Judge), Waliyy al-Din (Guardian of Religion), al-Wazir (Minister), al-Ra'is (Leader), al-Hajib (Chamberlain), al-Sadr al-Kabir (Grand Authority), al-Faqih al-Jalil (Noble Jurist), 'Allamat al-Ummah (The Scholar of the Nation), and Imam al-Immah (Leader of Leaders). Ibn Khaldun was born in Tunisia in the early days of Ramadan in 732H, corresponding to May 1332 AD, and passed away in 808H (1406 AD) at the age of 73. He was laid to rest in the cemetery of Sufi saints at Bab al-Nashr in Cairo.

### 2.2 Works of Ibn Khaldun's Thought

Ibn Khaldun is a distinguished Muslim scholar who made significant contributions across various fields, including education, history, sociology, and philosophy. His extensive understanding of education and the development of Islamic society has left a lasting impact. His works remain relevant today and continue to be referenced in contemporary scholarship. One of his most notable works is *Kitab Al-Ibar wa Diwan Al-Mubtada wa Al-Khabar fi Ayyam Al-Arab wa Al-Ajjam wa Al-Barbar*. According to Iqbal and Naufal (2022), this monumental work is composed of seven volumes, with the first volume, *Muqaddimah* (The Introduction), being the most famous. *Muqaddimah* is considered a masterpiece that addresses various issues in human social science (Sujati, 2018). This book serves as the primary reference in this study, offering insights into the application of Ibn Khaldun's thoughts in career planning. The *Muqaddimah* is widely regarded as his magnum opus, studied by scholars and historians to this day. It is evident from his works that Ibn Khaldun was a master of multiple fields of knowledge, leaving behind an intellectual legacy that remains unforgettable (Khairunnisa & Suhaini, 2020).

### 2.3 Ibn Khaldun's Concept of Thinking Skills

Ibn Khaldun proposed that human thinking abilities can be categorized into four distinct levels, each representing a progressive stage in intellectual development:

#### 2.3.1 Akal Tamyizi (Discriminative Intellect)

This is the foundational stage of thinking, where individuals develop self-awareness and the ability to distinguish between beneficial and harmful things. It enables them to recognize what is good and avoid what is harmful.

#### 2.3.2 Akal Tajribi (Experiential Intellect)

At this stage, individuals develop thinking skills through direct experience and practical application. It is characterized by the ability to generate ideas and take action based on real-world experiences. This stage is also known as experimental or practical thinking, where theories or ideas are tested to ensure their validity.

### 2.3.3 Akal Nazari (Theoretical Intellect)

This level of thinking is characterized by intellectual exploration, where individuals acquire scientific knowledge, engage in critical thinking, and form hypotheses, assumptions, observations, and holistic views. It enables individuals to understand complex concepts, evaluate information, and draw logical conclusions.

### 2.3.4 Al-Hakikah Al-Insaniah (Human Truth or Higher Intellect)

This is the highest stage of thinking, where individuals achieve a deep and holistic understanding of the nature of things. They can think critically and comprehensively, viewing issues from multiple perspectives and recognizing broader implications. At this level, individuals can understand and assess the existence of concepts based on various perspectives and intellectual insights. They can also identify cause-and-effect relationships in complex contexts (Fahmi, Nabeel & Surtahman, 2023).

These four levels of thinking skills, as outlined by Ibn Khaldun, provide a comprehensive framework for intellectual development, making them applicable not only in educational contexts but also in career planning and personal growth.

## 3.0 Methodology

This study employs the document analysis method, which is an effective approach for obtaining information relevant to the issues and problems being studied. Document analysis is advantageous because documents are easily accessible sources for researchers, providing reliable information that is already available (Kamarul Azmi, 2012). In general, document analysis is a subset of content analysis, a research data collection method that involves an objective description of communication messages that have been printed, broadcast, or depicted. This method allows researchers to examine various forms of communication, including words, meanings, images, symbols, ideas, themes, or any type of communicated message (Marican, 2009; Babbie, 2010).

According to Fraenkel et al. (1993): "Document analysis is just what its name implies – the analysis of the written or visual contents of a document. Textbooks, essays, newspapers, novels, magazine articles, cookbooks, political speeches, advertisements, pictures – in fact, the content of virtually any type of written or visual communication can be analyzed in various ways. A person's or group's conscious beliefs, attitudes, values, and ideas are often revealed in the documents they produce."

Document analysis provides relevant information on the issues and problems being studied because documents are reliable and difficult to falsify (Kamarul, 2012). In this study, the documents analyzed include: (a) Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*: A foundational text that explores human thought, education, and social development, (b) Journal articles related to career planning and Ibn Khaldun's thinking skills, (c) Scholarly books on career concepts and Islamic educational philosophy, (d) The Quran, which provides Islamic guidance on thinking, decision-making, and career planning.

These selected documents are specifically chosen to make Ibn Khaldun's thinking skills applicable within the context of career planning. Ibn Khaldun's concept of thinking skills is considered suitable for this application because his approach offers effective solutions for addressing various issues and challenges (Ajmain & Marzuki, 2020).

## 4.0 Findings and Discussion

Application of Ibn Khaldun's Thinking in Student Career Planning base on:

### 4.1 Integrating Islamic Values in the Career Planning Process

Islamic values in the context of career planning can be applied by ensuring that the chosen career is sourced from halal (lawful) income and complies with Islamic law. Several aspects are essential in the career planning process for Muslims, particularly those related to spirituality:

4.1.1 Intention (Niyah): The most crucial aspect of any action is a sincere intention directed toward Allah SWT. A pure intention transforms an action into an act of worship, earning divine rewards.

4.1.2 Determination (Azam): Islam encourages every Muslim to have strong determination, including a sincere desire and earnest effort to achieve success in their endeavors.

4.1.3 Patience (Sabar): High levels of patience help ensure the continuity of efforts despite challenges or setbacks.

4.1.4 Consistency (Istiqamah): This refers to maintaining persistent action toward a goal. Without consistency, efforts may be hindered by the challenges encountered.

4.1.5 Prayer (Doa) and Reliance on Allah (Tawakkal): These are the final spiritual supports for a Muslim after making sincere efforts, reflecting trust in Allah's guidance (Mohd Nor, Fahmi, & Aizal, 2021).

### 4.2 Making Education the Foundation of Career Planning

Education is fundamental to the development of individuals and society. In the context of career planning, quality education equips students with the knowledge and skills necessary for career success. The outcomes of the educational process also guide students in making well-informed career planning decisions. According to Mannan & Atiqullah (2023), education is the most critical aspect of human life, aiming to improve future quality of life. Ibn Khaldun viewed education as more than a means to secure employment or develop thinking skills; he saw it as a pathway to enhancing human welfare and achieving intellectual maturity.

Furthermore, Ibn Khaldun believed that education actively develops human intellect. Through education, individuals can acquire knowledge, understand complex ideas, and benefit from the wisdom of predecessors. This view is supported by Lisnawati (2017), who stated that, according to Ibn Khaldun, the primary goal of education is to engage the mind actively and achieve individual maturity. Thus, making education the foundation of career planning is essential because it enables individuals to make sound decisions based on a well-developed intellectual foundation.

#### 4.3 Adopting Reality-Oriented Education

Combining theory with practical experience helps students understand and face real-world challenges in future employment. This approach aligns with several educational methods emphasized by Ibn Khaldun in his *Muqaddimah*:

4.3.1 Munakahah or Taklid Method (Reenactment): This method involves students acting based on information obtained or observed through their senses, allowing them to experience knowledge firsthand.

4.3.2 Tajribah (Experiential Learning): Knowledge is transferred through trial and experience, which are closely related to sensory perception. Students do not achieve their objectives through observation alone but by engaging in practical trials.

4.3.3 Learning Through Experience: Students gain direct experience, making the learning process more effective (Abidin et al., 2017). By adopting a reality-oriented educational approach, students become better prepared to face real-world challenges, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

#### 4.4 Developing Thinking Skills Based on Islamic Work Ethics

In career planning, Islamic work ethics—such as honesty, perseverance, and responsibility—are critical. These values help students succeed in their careers while fostering positive relationships with colleagues and society.

According to Hassan, Mat Zain, Abu Bakar, & Kamaruzaman (2020), 72.9% of students admitted to engaging in immoral or unethical behavior at least once during their studies. This statistic is concerning because moral and ethical issues among students can persist into their professional lives. Achieving a developed nation requires an educational system that cultivates values encompassing human behavior rather than focusing solely on material development. To develop a robust young generation for the post-modern era, spiritual-based thinking elements must be prioritized. Ibn Khaldun categorized human intellectual activities into four main types: (a) Discriminative Intellect (Akal Tamyizi): The ability to distinguish between right and wrong, helping individuals make ethical decisions., (b) Analytical Intellect (Akal Tajribi): The ability to gain knowledge through experience, discussion, and observation., (c) Evaluative Intellect (Akal Nazari): The ability to critically assess information, draw conclusions, and make reasoned judgments, (d) Human Truth (Al-Hakikah Al-Insaniah): The highest level of intellect, involving a deep understanding of complex concepts, recognizing multiple perspectives, and comprehending cause-and-effect relationships (Othman, Ahmad, & Kassim, 2017).

Ibn Khaldun's early research on society and civilization distinguished humans from animals. Unlike animals, only humans possess civilization because civilization depends entirely on human intellect and cannot develop independently. According to Ibn Khaldun, two main needs are essential for achieving civilization's goals: (a) Biological Needs: Basic human necessities for survival, (b) Social and Spiritual Needs (Soul): Intellectual, ethical, and spiritual development. Ibn Khaldun emphasized that the development of human civilization relies not only on physical needs but also on complex social and spiritual needs. Thus, his concept of thinking skills provides valuable guidance for career planning. Understanding the four levels of thinking skills helps individuals make wise career decisions: (a) Discriminative Intellect (Akal Tamyizi): Enables individuals to compare good and bad and make ethical choices, (b) Analytical Intellect (Akal Tajribi): Allows individuals to gain knowledge from discussions, experiences, and the perspectives of others, (c) Evaluative Intellect (Akal Nazari): Helps individuals assess information critically and make informed decisions, (d) Human Truth (Al-Hakikah Al-Insaniah): Empowers individuals to make accurate career choices by understanding the broader implications of their actions. A balanced approach that considers biological, social, and spiritual needs ensures that career planning is not only about worldly success but also about attaining Allah's approval and eternal happiness.

#### 4.5 Enhancing Soft Skills

Soft skills, also known as interpersonal skills, include social abilities, communication skills, teamwork, and leadership capabilities, which are essential for effective interaction with others. The importance of soft skills in graduate employability has been widely recognized in recent research. According to Ismail, Mohammad, & Ismail (2022), many employers in Malaysia are concerned about the lack of soft skills among graduates. Although graduates may possess technical knowledge in their fields, they often lack confidence and sufficient interpersonal skills. Students can develop these essential skills through participation in extracurricular activities. Such activities aim to:

4.5.1 Enhance life skills.

4.5.2 Encourage cooperation and teamwork.

4.5.3 Provide social interaction opportunities.

4.5.4 Develop leadership skills and social cohesion (Muizzuddin et al., 2018).

These soft skills complement academic knowledge, making students more competitive in the job market and better prepared for career success.

## 5. Conclusion & Recommendations

In conclusion, effective career planning requires a holistic and well-organized approach, particularly for secondary school and higher education students. By applying Ibn Khaldun's thinking skills, students can develop critical and analytical thinking abilities, enabling them

to plan their careers wisely based on Islamic values. A balanced education that combines theoretical knowledge with practical experience, along with character development and soft skills enhancement, will effectively prepare students for the professional world and enable them to compete in the future job market. It is hoped that students will apply Ibn Khaldun's thinking skills in their career planning, as this approach ensures happiness and well-being in this world while earning Allah's approval and eternal happiness. This is essential because the world is viewed in Islam as a bridge to success in the Hereafter. Therefore, comprehensive career planning based on Islamic values is key to producing a generation of successful, ethical, and integrity-driven individuals who are well-prepared to face future challenges.

## Acknowledgement

This study was funded by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) through Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS) (FRGS/1/2023/SS09/UITM/02/2).

## Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

Everyone needs a jobs but not everyone gets the job they desire due to various factors such as difficulty in obtaining employment, inadequate wages, family barriers, and so on. Therefore, this paper contributes to our children in providing career awareness from an early stage of schooling.

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