

# **Towards The Development of Islamic-based Research Methodology**

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## **Abstract**

There are a variety of research related to Islam and Muslims. However, the use of research methods commonly perceived to have problems and shortcomings that could undermine the accuracy of the findings of research conducted. In addition, significant differences in Islamic philosophy and epistemology versus conventional philosophy and epistemology also brought negative impact on these research. Therefore, a special study should be conducted to develop a suitable and accurate research methodology for Islamic research. Construction of the research methodology based on Islam is hoped to resolve the deficiencies in conventional research methods. This study has two objectives. First, identify the research methodology based on Islam and its needs nowadays. Second, evaluate the latest research methods Islam until today. This article was analyzed using content analysis method based on the method of data collection related documents. The research findings, the research methodology based on Islam is an urgent need for flood-related investigations Islam and Muslims use templates do not coincide. The study also found that there had been a number of studies carried out either at the stage of basic concepts, or operational level. Although there has not been research methods Islamic extensive, but this development is viewed as a starting point for the construction of the research methodology based on Islam holistically.

**Keywords:** *Islamic Research Methodology, Fatwa, Research Design, Islamic Method*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Islamic-based research development has been a phenomenon these days. These researches examine various aspects of life in an Islamic perspective. These include economy, social, management and so on. According to some researchers, this is among the side effects of the Iranian revolution in 1979, the 2001 bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York and the advent of Arab Spring in 2010 (Salleh, 2015). Most research on Islam, including research in Islamic studies and Islamic-based research uses research methods dominant at present which is the conventional research methods (Ahmad, 2015). This research method is widely used by researchers in almost all research fields, including Islamic-based research. This study was likened by Salleh (2008) as studies by orientalist who studied Islam, but using a common framework. This was supported by Abdul Rahim (2002: 2), which states the need to provide some form of legal research methodology of Islamic law is quite urgent in these modern times.

The question is, is the conventional research method suitable for use in Islamic-based research or researches in Islamic studies field? Other than that, does the conventional research method have the epistemology, philosophy and instrument analysis that is sufficient in researching and presenting the solution in Islam? However, another issue that was raised is that if you want to use research methods based on Islam, does it already exist? If it has, what is the current standing of the Islamic research methodology?

Al-Buti (1990:59-60) explained that Muslims nowadays does not need to search for real scientific methods. These methods have been prepared by Muslim scholars in the golden age of Islam for centuries. However, it should be streamlined so that it can be applied again today. There would be at least two ways of streamlining the method to be more easy and in a style that is appropriate.

According to Safi (1998), al-Buti also support this by stating that there is already a complete system which has been around for centuries. These methods are referred to as classic Islamic sciences such as *Usul al-fiqh*. He said that these classical methods needs to be rearranged for application in research methodology, especially for Islamic-based studies of today. This is the remains of Islamic knowledge that is important to be polished and reintroduced.

Ibn Khaldun (1999:222) and Abu Zahrah (1978:188) claims that Imam al-Syafi'i was the pioneer in formulating the science of *Usul al-Fiqh*. The first book in *Usul al-Fiqh* sciences entitled *al-Risalah* was a testament to his writings. This book discusses many methods of analysis to determine the law through legislation such as the texts of al-Quran and al-Sunnah or even the current reality. This book is a pioneer in the development of Usul al-Fiqh sciences in the history of law.

According to Hanapi (2015), Muslim scholars have used many specialized methods in conducting researches in the fields of Islam such as faith, *fiqh*, *tasawuf*, *tafsir*, *hadith*, astronomy, philosophy and many more. These methods were constructed based in the tradition of their thinking. However, many of these research methodology has not yet been studied by researchers for application as an Islamic research method.

### **Importance of Islamic-Based Research Method**

The need to find alternatives to conventional research methods is because the common research method itself is weak or lacking. The weakness refers to the differences in epistemology and philosophy between social research method and Islamic research method. Epistemology and philosophy of the West, for example, are based on thoughts and facts that can be measured by the senses alone, which differs to the epistemology and philosophy of Islam based on Islamic sources such as the Quran, *al-Sunnah*, *Ijmak* and *Qiyas* (Salleh, 2008:135). This difference in epistemology will influence the perception and knowledge of the researcher. The question is, will the difference in epistemology and philosophy affect the outcome of an research?

According to Salleh (2008:138) too, the conventional research methods may bring harm to the researcher's faith by separating the religion or theology from the observation of social reality. This is one of the paradigms of positivism used in research today. Auguste Comte was the individual who introduced the positivist paradigm or positivism in social science studies. Positivist paradigm denies the existence of the metaphysical world or the supernatural based on the naqli postulation stated in Islam. This paradigm also prioritize empirical aspects in its principle (Howell, 2013:40). According to Marsuki (2008:278), it is worrying that this paradigm is the most dominant paradigm in researches today. This causes phenomenons, especially of the supernatural are denied of its existence as it cannot be measured by empirical and sensory aspects.

However, there are other paradigms that denies the positivist paradigm in research. According to Bustami, Nasruddin and Blaikie (2006:79-81 &140), this paradigm was founded by Roy Bhaskar who claimed that there are three fields of reality which are the empirical field, metaphysical field and the semantic field. At a glance, scientific realism can be applied and appears to correlate with the supernaturals in Islam. However, in actuality, the real philosophy of this paradigm is concerned with phenomenons that cannot be measured precisely but its effects can be seen (McNeill & Chapman, 2005:180)

Other paradigms that sees a little connection with phenomenons in Islam is the interpretivism paradigm. This paradigm argues that studies on humand cannot unlock the true reality if it is only observed in form (Blaikie, 2006:115). The approach used in this paradigm is to interpret human motives through hermeneutic analysis tools (Neuman, 2011:101). However, according to Ezzy (2002:24), hermeneutic analysis tool used in this paradigm originates from the method used by Christian theologists to interpret the Bible. This leads to the question, is the analysis tool based on Christian beliefs suitable in investigating Islam and its people? This was opposed by Salleh (2008:135) who stated that Islamic-Based research should be based on epistemology and philosophy of Islam.

Besides that, common research methods are also principled on the value-free approach in research (Salleh, 2008:138). This approach separates religion from social reality observations, when in fact, religion is a measure of a social reality. Max Weber is the person responsible in introducing the value-free approach (Babbie, 2013:46). Lincoln and Guba (1985:300) stated that this approach is based on the importance of scientific objectivity in research. This begs the question, will the objectivity of the facts obtained by the researcher be effected by valuen such as religious values, especially in Muslim researchers? This is the complete opposite of the Islamic approach on knowledge based on the Islamic revelation and monolithic character of the system with absolute value (Din, 2008).

Based on the issues previously mentioned, the need for an Islamic-based research methodology is of urgency especially for researches related to Islam and Muslims.

### Current Standing of Islamic-based Research Method

Awareness to the importance of the Islamic-based research method has begun since the 1950s specifically through articles published in *Islamic Research Circle Bulletin* in Aligarh, India (Salleh, 2008:139). Despite that, even to this day, studies related to the Islamic-based research method is still in its early construction stage. The awareness is built until it is seen and discussed seriously in theses, articles, papers and even special seminars on the Islamic-based research method. The construction of Islamic-based research method can be categorised into two aspects. The first one is from the aspect of basic concepts and the second one is from the operational aspect.

Studies that discuss the basic concepts in Islamic-based research methodology includes studies concerning scientific method concept by Ali (1994), Ahmad (1999) and Alias (2014); basic statistics concept by Alizi Alias (2005) and Nawi (2012); indicator data verification concept by Ismail (2014); observational techniques concept by Yahaya (2008); Islamic economy research concept by Ahmad (1995), Anwar (1999) and Muhamed and Omar (2009) and the concept of integration of social science research by Safi (1998).

Studies in the conceptual stage eventually led to the operational level. Until now, there are three Islamic-based research that have been implemented on the operational level. Operational means that the method is ready to be used in research. The operational-level studies is divided into three categories. First, study dedicated to research design by Wan Khairuldin (2014) and Hassan (2014). Second, the method of data collection by Hassan (2013) and Hamat and Hussin (2008). Third, the method of analyzing data by Miswan (2014), Hassan (2014) and Hanapi (2014).

In the first category, the research design, Wan Khairuldin (2014) have examined the fatwa determination process to be applied as a research design in Islamic-based research. He found that there are four stages in fatwa determination process in which certain techniques can be suitable for use in Islamic research. First is *al-taswir*, which determines the research problem. Second is *al-takyif* which examines past studies. Third is *al-hukm*, namely the collection and analysis of data. The fourth, *al-ifta'* which concludes the research. Meanwhile, Shahir Akram Hassan (2014) also examined the application of logical reasoning as a method of reasoning in Islamic research process. The findings of this research have found that there are three strategies that can be applied based on logic. First, the *istiqrar'* method strategy which resembles the inductive method. Second, the *qiyas* method strategy similar to the deductive method. Third, *tamthil* method strategy that is never used in conventional unconventional research methods.

For the second category, the data collection method, Hamat and Hussin (2008) and Hassan (2013) have all been researching the power of *hadith* to see its application as a data collection method. Hamat and Hassan (2008) reviewed the quality of respondents in the collection of primary data through questionnaires. In this study, the quality of respondents in *hadith*

narration is divided into three criteria. First, it connects the chain (chain of narrators). Second, be fair. Third, characteristic of strong memory of narrator. In addition to these three criteria, Hassan (2013: 96) added two more criteria in choosing the quality of the respondents. The additional criteria were the narrator is *thiqah* (free of conflict) and *illah* (free from defects). They found that high reliability level can be achieved if the *hadith* narration collection method is applied to the data collection method.

For the third category which is the data analyzing method, there are three studies that have reached the operational level in the construction of Islamic-based research method. Those studies include those by Miswan (2014), Hassan (2014) and Hanapi (2014). Miswan (2014) studied the *dilalah* (meaning direction) method to determine its suitability as a method of textual analysis. He found that the *dilalah* method has a broad scope of text analysis than conventional research methods through three elements. First, *mafhum muwafaqah* or understanding the data analysis of the text can be understood explicitly and implicitly. Second, *mafhum mukhalafah* or analyzing data parallelism between implicit and explicit context. Third, *mantuq* or analysing clear data.

Hanapi (2014) also examined the *tafsir al-mawdu'iy* (commentary) method in *al-Quran* tafsir method as a way of analyzing text thematically. He found that there are five steps in text analysis using *al-mawdu'iy* method. First, determining the theme. Second, text division by theme. Thirdly, organization of discourse according to sequence such as title, subtitle and so on. Fourth, the analysis based authority of the reference source. Fifth is conclusion of analysis. Hassan (2014) also touched a little bit on data analysis by suggesting application of *tasdiq* method in the research process to formulate an initial impression of a research. This is because, *tasdiq* method can form an analysis based on *qadiyyah* or proposition contained in the investigation.

Discussion on research method based on the latest operational stage of Islamic-based research method is depicted in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Islamic-based Research Methodology in Operational Stage.**

Bill	Category	Researcher	Research Topic
1.	Research Design	Wan Khairuldin (2014)	Aplikasi Proses Penfatwaan dalam Kaedah Penyelidikan Berteraskan Islam
		Hassan (2014)	Aplikasi Kaedah Penaakulan Mantik dalam Penyelidikan Berkaitan Islam
2.	Data Collection Method	Hassan (2013)	Penerapan Kaedah Pengumpulan Hadith dalam Penyelidikan
		Hamat dan Hussin (2008)	Kualiti Responden dalam Penyelidikan: Tinjauan Awal Kes Peristiwa Hadith
3.	Data Analysis Method	Mohd Miswan (2014)	<i>Dilalah</i> dalam Kaedah Penyelidikan Berteraskan Islam
		Hassan (2014)	Aplikasi Kaedah Penaakulan Mantik dalam Penyelidikan Berkaitan Islam
		Hanapi (2014)	Aplikasi Kaedah Mufassirin dalam Penganalisisan Data Penyelidikan Berkaitan Islam

### Conclusion

The building of Islamic-based research method is a necessity. This is because the existing conventional research method is not suitable to be the framework of research on Islam. Although studies on this research method have begun to improve in quantity, Salleh (2011:7), however, argued that it is still not enough to build a comprehensive Islamic-based research method. This is because most of the work produced only touches the surface and no further research is done in order to build a concrete and definitive method.

Therefore, the effort to build an Islamic-based research methodology is of great importance. This includes more in-depth studies and its application in the real research field. Hopefully in the future, a complete Islamic-based research method will be available and can be utilized in researches, particularly studies related to Islam and its people.

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