ASSESSING THE DIMENSIONS OF *SOLAT* FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE QURAN AND HADITH

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Abstract

Solat is the most important pillar in Islam. The objective of this paper is to assess the dimensions of solat from the two main sources of Islam which are the Qur'an and hadith of the Prophet (PBUH). These dimensions may assist in examining the implications of solat. This study employed content analysis, a qualitative descriptive design, to analyse the data. The findings show that the Qur'an and hadith of the Prophet reveal at least four dimensions of the solat, namely spiritual, social, physical, and cognitive dimensions. The present study recommends that the revealed dimensions of solat can be further examined and included in Islamic education syllabus for the purpose of enhancing the implication-based education in Islamic teaching.

Keywords: solat; Qur'an and hadith of the Prophet; Islamic education

1.0   INTRODUCTION

The root word of *solat* is derived from the *kalimah sad lam waw* (ص ل و) which appears 99 times in the Qur'an, and in four derived forms which are: (i) 12 times as the form II verb (makes an intransitive verb) *salla* (صلى) – to pray, to bless, (ii) 83 times as the noun *solat* (صلوة) - the

prayer, (iii) once as the noun *musollan* (مصلى) – a place for prayer, and (iv) three times as the form II active participle *musollin* (مصلين) – those who pray (Dukes, 2011). These have shown a significance of *solat* in the perspective of the Shariah, i.e., the Quran and Hadith.

It is asserted that *solat* has been derived from the word "connection" since it connects the prayer to his Creator, brings him near to His mercy, generosity, and heavenly paradise (Ibn Rusyd, 1996). The importance of *solat* has been elucidated by many Islamic scholars (Ibn Qayyim, 2004; Utz (2011); al- Ghazali (2007); al-Attas (1984). For instance, *solat* is perceived as a way to attain peace and tranquility (Ibn Qayyim, 2004), a mechanism to prepare the prayer to face challenges by way of giving the latter focused mind to cope with the challenges (Utz, 2011), and a way to strengthen the prayer's religious beliefs hence building religious actions (al-Ghazali, 2007). These claims highlight the implications of *solat* on the prayers.

2.0   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE DIMENSIONS OF *SOLAT*

The importance of studying the implications of *solat* is to enhance the understanding of the significance of *solat* for muslim's prayer. This is a surmounting issue since few studies have indicated the lack of understanding and practice of *solat* among muslims, particularly students (Bidin et al., 2015; Bidin, 2016; Hilmi, 2010).

The implications of the *solat* as elucidated in the past literature have not been adequately addressed. With numerous times of repetition of *solat* in both the Quran and hadith, there could have been other implications of *solat*. In fact, Ibn Qayyim (2004) has discussed the implications of *solat* in the spiritual dimension. For instance, those who perform *solat* may reach a certain level of peace and tranquility. Additionally, Doufesh et al. (2014) also examined the same dimension scientifically. They found that, during *salat*, parasympathetic activity increased, and sympathetic activity decreased. Therefore, regular *salat* practices may help promote relaxation, minimize anxiety, and reduce cardiovascular risk.

The above discussions indicate that the implications of *solat* can be examined through various dimensions of *solat*. Therefore, this study aims at examining the implications of *solat* based on the Quran and hadith. The examination on these implications will be structured to build dimensions of *solat* from the philosophical perspective.

3.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

Muslim scholars have discussed the details of the meaning and place of *solat* in Islam. As Ibn Rusyd (1996) explained, the word *solat* derives from the word "connection" (*solat*) in that it connects the servant with his creator, which also means that *solat* brings human beings near to His mercy and connects them to His generosity and His heavenly paradise. He further explains that the term *solat* is also used in the context of close relations (*silat ar-rahim*), in which the connections with an individual are due to blood ties and therefore imperishable in the eyes of the divine. In this sense, prayer is seen as the non-severable bond between the individual and his or her Lord.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (2004) stated clearly on the impact of *solat* as one will find himself/herself calm and peace by performing prayer with complete submission, humility and whole body and soul towards Allah SWT. He further explains:

> "Solat will amend misdeeds, but only for he who gives it its due, offering it with complete humility and standing before Allah SWT Most high with his heart fully turned in His direction. When such a person finishes praying, he finds a lightness in his soul and feels that some weights have been lifted from him. He finds such vigor, rest, and calm in the *solat* that he wishes he had not had to end it. *solat* has become his source of gladness, his soul's delight, his heart heaven and his place of rest from the world. Before beginning his *solat*, he feels as if he were in a prison, a constricted place, and then finds rest – in his *solat*, not from his *solat* (p: 27)".

Moreover, Utz (2011) defines *solat* as a tool that Allah SWT has given to human as a way to deal with numerous challenges. This shows that unlike other *'ibadah* (worship), *solat* is instinctive in its origin. *solat* certainly is beneficial especially in terms of spirituality which it gives full satisfaction to the mind that can help human beings to be rationale and lead them to the right path. Besides, Muslim scholar and philosopher, Al-Ghazali (2007) in his book *Ihya' ÑUlumuddin* states that *solat* is the pillar of religion and safeguard, a root of religious belief, and the chief of religious actions.

Previous research by Aziz et al. (2010) discovered the high value benefit of *solat* from the spiritual and physical aspects. They found that *solat* can reduce all causes of stress within human due to persistent movement changes that lead on an important physiology relaxation.

Additionally, Sayeed et al. (2013) found that the application of performing *solat* in psychotherapy demonstrates positive outcome in the individuals' revealing pathological symptoms such as tensions, anxiety, depression and anti-social tendencies. Furthermore, Islamic scholar and historian, Al-Dhahabi (1996) mentioned the benefits of *solat* which cover moving physical postures, spiritual, psychological, physical, and moral.

Based on the analysis on the previous works by various Muslim scholars, the present study holds that discussion on *solat* should not concentrate only on the practical aspect of act and recitation, instead its value should be considered in terms of other dimensions. In short, *solat* is the most significant deed for those who seek closeness to Allah SWT. The impact of *solat* is not limited to the spiritual enhancement and physical movements alone. Its value can be expanded to the different fields of the society, for example, maintaining economic, social, and political affairs.

4.0   RESEARCH DESIGN AND CONTEXT

The main purpose of this research is to examine the implications of *solat* from the perspectives of the Quran and hadith. This study employed qualitative research method to analyze the data. Qualitative research offers opportunities to examine issues in depth that may yield a clearer understanding of the issues. It offers enormous ways of gathering data using different types of sources (Litchman, 2013).

In this study, content analysis and thematic analysis which are categorized under qualitative descriptive design were employed to achieve the research objective. Content analysis is a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in order to identify patterns, themes, biases and meanings (Berg, 2009). In addition, Hashemnezhad (2015) states that "qualitative content analysis is mainly inductive, grounding the examination of topics and themes, as well as the inferences drawn from them…qualitative content analysis attempts to generate theory (as a basis for grounded theory)" (p. 59).

Summative content analysis has been employed in this study. In brief, summative content analysis involves the analysis of the raw data to the extends whereby the researcher explore the data to conclude with suitable themes (Berg, 2009). The researchers in this study employed this type of content analysis because the nature of this method is deemed the most appropriate with the research objective.

According to Vaismoradi et al. (2016), content analysis and thematic analysis has numerous similarities in qualitative study. Both are sets of techniques used to analyze textual data and elucidate theme. The process of content analysis and thematic analysis is arranged in order of sequence:

i. Data are collected and made into text and tabulated form.

ii. Codes are analytically developed or inductively identified in the data.

iii. Codes are transformed into categorical labels *vis-à-vis* dimensions.

iv. Materials are sorted by these dimensions, identifying similar contents directly or indirectly relationship in each phrase.

v. Sorted materials are examined to isolate meaningful and appropriate topics and subtopics.

4.1   Subject of the Study

The subject of this research is determined by its appropriateness with the objective and the method employed. The selected Qur'anic verses and hadith text were critically explored based on suitable implications *vis-à-vis* dimensions. All the Qur'anic verses stated were quoted from authentic translation sources of *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia* (JAKIM). The selected hadith texts were retrieved from Sunnah.com.

5.0   FINDINGS

This study discovered that there are fourty-two (42) Qur'anic verses that have been discussed on the matter of *solat*. These verses are from *Surah: al-Baqarah, al-Nisa', al-Maidah, al- AnÑam, al-A'raf, al-Anfal, at-Taubah, Yunus, Hud, al-Ra'd, Ibrahim, al-Isra', Maryam, Thaaha, al-Hajj, al-Mukminun, al-Ankabut, Luqman, al-Ahzab, Faathir, al-Jumua'h, al-Muzzammil,* and *al-Ma'uun.*

Apart from that, among thousands of authentic hadith, there are 19 Hadith which are derived from the collection of *Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abi Dawood, Sunan Ibn Majah, Sunan an-Nasa'I* and *Jami` at-Tirmidhi*. These hadith were found to be the most appropriate for application and formulating themes of integrated approach in teaching *solat*. As a result, the data gathered from these Qur'anic and hadith texts were analyzed critically, and inferences were made to formulate the themes that were relevant for present application.

Analysis of the selected Qur'anic verses and hadith of the Prophet (PBUH) has shown that *solat* influences and provides benefits as well as advantages for mankind in four dimensions: spiritual, social, physical and cognitive.

5.1   Spiritual Dimension

Syed (2003) defines spirituality as the experience of meaning and purpose in our lives-a-sense of connectedness with the people and things in the worlds around us. He further says that this connectedness encompasses a relationship with God or a higher power. At the same point, the term "religiousness" and "spirituality" often used interchangeably. Thus, spirituality provides a sense of coherence that offers meaning to ones' existence as a human being. According to al-Jawziyyah (2004), if a person is spiritually strong, *solat* will have a positive effect on that person psyche.

5.2   Social Dimension

The reforming effect of *solat* is indeed not confined to individual only. Islam is a way of life, which it covers comprehensive, wholeness and holiness aspect of Muslim life. Islam embraces a wide range of spiritual as well as social domains so that the life is well-organized. Thus, *solat* not only covers one's benefit, but it also enhances social cohesion.

5.3   Physical Dimension

Yucel (2010), from a scientific outlook, highlights that *solat* is supplementary with better health position and outcomes. Al-Jawziyah (2004) and Ad-Dhahabi (1996) agree with the stand that *solat* as an exercise for the body and consolation to the soul. Similarly, Al-Tarshi (1992) in his research on the impact of different movements in *solat* found that *solat* expands physical well-being through exercise as well as the movements are parallel to light exercises in sustaining the upkeep of the body. Furthermore, Utz (2011) discovered that *solat* benefits a person in several ways. People who perform *solat* tend to experience more serenity and acceptance in their lives, and less stress and depression. *solat* also reveals that it is the best practice to assist those who are suffering from physical illness, not only in coping with the illness but even in curing it.

Aziz et al. (2010) mentioned that the action of turning the head to each side during *solat* improves the range of motion of the neck by stretching muscles with gentle repeated movements. The action of raising hands in line with shoulder has its own meaning where it can restore

backbone on equilibrium and expand the chest. In conclusion, *solat* in its nature has proven its influences in both Islamic (Qur'anic and hadith) and scientific sense. Instead of looking at it as a form of *'ibadah*, *solat* can be regarded as a practice towards healthy lifestyle.

5.4   Cognitive Dimension

In terms of psychological advantage, Ad- Dhahabi (1996) states that *solat* diverts the mind from the pain and reduce its feeling. Similarly, Sayeed et al. (2013) highlights the efficacy of *solat* as a cure to mental distress when followed in the correct form and measure.

Previous research on how the religious belief affects the psyche found that *solat* may increase alpha waves in the brain. The findings revealed a profound connection between mind and body. To further elaborate, Electroencephalograms (EEG) has been used to study how the brain reacts to religious or spiritual practice. The researchers found significant rises in alpha activity in volunteers' parietal and occipital cortices (the regions near the top and rear of the brain) during the prostration (*sajdah*) phase of the *solat.* Alpha wave level did not differ much at all between resting state and prayer in the standing, bowing, or kneeling position (Connor Wood, 2012)

5.5   Dimensions on the Teaching of S*olat*

Based on the findings, the researchers discovered the appropriate dimensions based on the Qur'anic and hadith perspectives. *solat* can be classified into four dimensions namely (i) spiritual, (ii) social, (iii) physical, and (iv) cognitive. To sum up, the dimensions of *solat* could be illustrated in the Figure below:
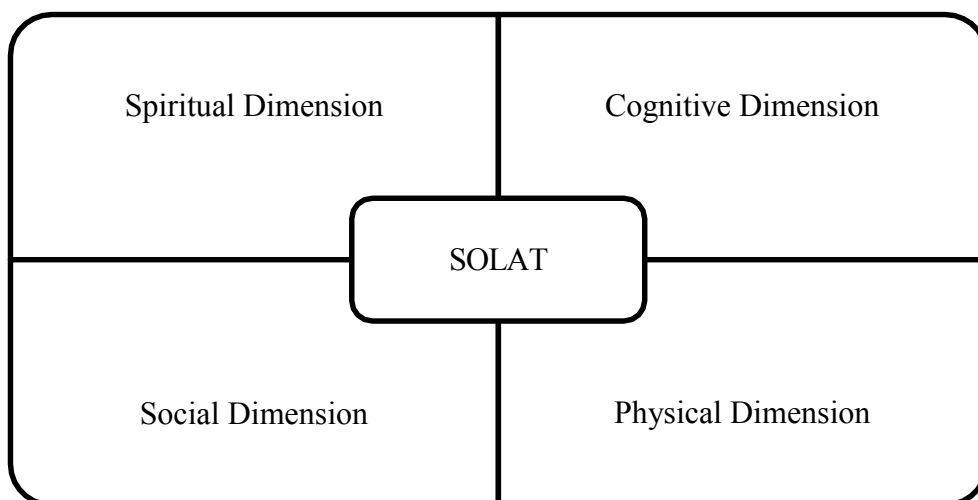

Figure 4.1 Dimensions of *solat* within integrated approach

As a result, these four dimensions will be a guidance to develop topics and subtopics for an integrated approach to syllabus design for teaching *solat*. To highlight, these four dimensions are grounded in the Qur'anic verses and hadith text as well as non-religious alike scientific evidence text to support the figured dimensions. Hence, these four dimensions works in-line within the sub-dimensions.

6.0   SUMMARY

This study analyzes the implications *vis-à-vis* the dimensions of *solat* from the perspective of the Quran and hadith of the Prophet (PBUH). It was discovered that there are four dimensions of *solat*. In view of this, there are additional emphases of the *solat*. The importance of these findings lies in the significant use of the dimensions in the teaching of *solat* or other relevant Islamic education purposes. For instance, these dimensions can be utilized to develop an integrated approach syllabus for Islamic education syllabus, which include (i) spiritual dimension, (ii) social dimension, (iii) physical dimension, and (iv) cognitive dimension in the teaching of *solat*. This is particularly important due to the lack of understanding and practices of *solat* among the students (Bidin et al.., 2015; Hilmi, 2010; Bidin, 2016).

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