SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: *BI'AH SALIHAH* INDEX IN AL-AMIN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Salwani Mohd Daud
Advanced Informatics School,
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia,
Jalan Semarak, 54100 Kuala Lumpur
Email: salwani@ic.utm.my
(O): +603-26154511

ABSTRAK

Kertas kerja ini menyampaikan komponen spritual yang merupakan sebahagian daripada pembangunan insan yang lestari dan kajian dilakukan dalam sistem pendidikan Al-Amin. Indeks bi'ah salihah dicadangkan untuk mengukur tahap spiritual yang diperolehi oleh pihak yang berkepentingan di sekolah Al-Amin. Kertas kerta ini mengambil inspirasi daripada beberapa ayat Quran untuk membentuk beberapa item bagi mengukur komponen spiritual dalam pembangunan kelestarian insan. Aspek sipritual mengandungi komponen iman (kepercayaan) dan amal. Indeks bi'ah salihah ditentukan dengan mengambil nilai purata daripada min iman dan amal pelajar, guru dan ibu bapa (hanya min amal sahaja).

ABSTRACT

This paper presents spriritual component of the sustainable human development and a study had been made in Al-Amin education system. The salihah environment or *bi'ah salihah* index is proposed to measure the level of spiritualilty attained by the main stakeholders in Al-Amin schools. This paper takes the inspiration from few verses in the Holy Quran to develop items that can be used to measure the spiritual component of human development sustainability. The spirituality constitute of the faith (belief) and practice (actions) components. The *bi'ah salihah* index is then computed by taking the average of the mean from faith and practice of the students, teachers and parents (mean of the practice only).

Keywords: sustainable, human development, bi'ah salihah, al-amin

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Much had been said about sustainability and attracts concern from various groups and individuals especially during current situation with climate and economic uncertainties. Most of them worried about the material resources and little had been thought on human development to ensure future sustainability of the universe. Indices are being used to measure the economic and social development of a country that relates to the human development. This paper begins with the Islamic perspectives of human development sustainability, the second section discusses on the *bi'ah salihah* index as practiced by Al-Amin education system, the third part on the measurement of *bi'ah salihah* index in Al-Amin schools, and finally discussions on the results are presented.

2.0   SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT FROM ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES

The human devlopment index as proposed by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is a measure of average achievements of three indicators of life expectancy (health), educational attainment and income or standard of living [1]. However, these indicators are not sufficient measurement to asses the human development. Thus there are moves to include other indices so that HDI will be more comprehensive.

A definition given by International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) [2] on sustainable development is:
"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:
- *the concept of **needs**, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and*
- *the idea of **limitations** imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs."*

Hassan [3] pointed out that the divergence in approach of development is due to the difference of worldview of Islamic and secular systems. He [3] also argued that Islamic principles can be used to solve the environmental issues since the sustainable development comprises of moral, ethics, social and political complexities whereby focusing on economics aspect alone is not possible to resolve the problem.

The model proposed by researchers [4] as shown in Figure 1 provides a holistic approach of sustainable development. This comprehensive model conformed to the objectives of Islamic juriprudence (maqasid al-Shariah). Unsustainable development shall lead to the destruction of human society, morality, and religious values, and characterized by a ruthless growth, rootless growth, futureless growth, and voiceless growth. The proposed model [4] as shown in Figure 1 consists of two main aspects of development, that is; the economics and the environmental. There are two types of environments, that is, the human environment and the physical environment. Finally the three aspects included in the human environments; the physical, mental, and spiritual environments. The *bi'ah salihah* (salihah environment) is closely linked to the spiritual environment and will be discussed in detail in this paper.
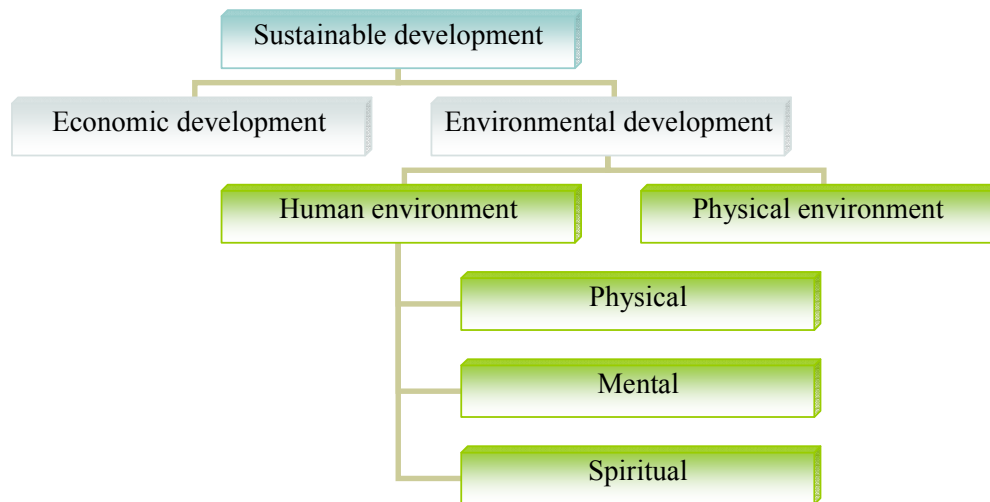
Figure 1: Sustainable development from Islamic Perspectives [4]

3.0 *BI'AH SALIHAH* (*SALIHAH* ENVIRONMENTAL) INDEX: AL-AMIN EXPERIENCE

The index is a measurement of a simple, effective and can help an organization to assess, control and improve the service delivery to customers in line with the mission and vision of an organisation. Usually the target is set and the measurements can be measured quantitatively. In the event the targets are not achievable, the management of the organization will find the root cause of the problem and provide appropriate solutions. Some common indices used in our country arebair pollution index (API), the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Water Quality Index (PKI).

Bi'ah salihah is a conducive environment that encourages individuals to always do righteousness to get the pleasure of and get closer to Allah as mentioned in the Quran (2: 277):

"Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds and establish prayer and give *zakah* will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve."

Developing human personality needs strong commitment from all parties, whether at home or at school. If the children are in the home environment with parents who are concerned about religious practices, then it will be easy for their own children to follow suit. Similarly, if they hang out with friends who are well-behaved, the situation will influence the child's potential. And if they are with friends who are having behaviour problems, eventually these children will follow this bad behavior. So it can be said that a person can be simply influenced by the environment and their friends/peers as mentioned in the following hadith:

"Man is influenced by the faith of his friends. Therefore, be careful of whom you associate with." [5]

Allah has also given us the responsibility to ensure that the environment is always *salihah* whereby every Muslim should remind the people to act according to the precepts of Islam and to abstain from improper behavior as mentioned in the Quran (22: 41):

"[And they are] those who, if We give them authority in the land, establish prayer and give *zakah* and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. And to Allah belongs the outcome of [all] matters."

A study has been made on the salihah environmental index in *Pusat Pendidikan Al-Amin* (Al-Amin Educational Centre) or PPAA. It comprises three primary schools and a secondary school with a total of almost 2000 students and 160 teachers. The Al-Amin (PPAA) schools are currrently amongst the leading private Islamic schools in Malaysia as recognised by the Ministry of Education with the award of the SKIPS (Private Educational Institution Quality Standard) Excellent Certification.

Sekolah Rendah Islam Al-Amin Kuala Lumpur (Al-Amin Islamic Primary School Kuala Lumpur, SRIAKL) started in 1986 and *Sekolah Menengah Islam Al Amin* (Al-Amin Islamic Secondary School, SMIAG) was established in 1991 while the *Sekolah Rendah Islam Al Amin Gombak* (Al-Amin Islamic Primary School Gombak, SRIAG) started in 1993. Recently in 2011, a new branch of Al-Amin school is established in Kuala Lumpur.

PPAA became a pioneer in introducing an integrated educational system in Malaysia, comprising the mainstream system and integrated with the Islamic system. The school aspire to produce professionals and technocrats who are qualified in their respective fields but also well versed in matters of Din al Islam and mutaqqin (God consciousness). Thus PPAA will be able to produce skilled and qualified citizens who are *salih wa muslih* (righteous and do righteous).

4.0   METHODOLOGY

PPAA is very concerned about the existence of a *salihah* environment that becomes a major asset towards achieving their vision of becoming an integrated Islamic educational institution of choice. *Bi'ah salihah* in schools can be measured by taking into account the components involved in a conducive environment such as teachers, students, administrators and infrastructure (physical). Measurement level of *Bi'ah salihah* among students, teachers and parents can be implemented by making a survey in the aspects of faith and practice (internalize) among them. The faith and practice aspects are important components of spirituality in Islam. The practice or actions must be llinked with the purpose of their life which relates to their faith. Thus the items developed in faith factors concerned with the purpose of life, relationship between man and Allah and acceptance of al-Quran and Sunnah as the main source for guiding man in this life. Every Muslim whom have faith must demonstrate their faith through good deeds such as praying, greetings when meet others, observe good relationship with others in accordance to Allah's commands. Then only a good life or *bi'ah salihah* will be achieved as promised by Allah in this verse (Holy Quran, 16:97):
> "Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

This study involved developing a questionnaire with Likert scale of 1-6 for high reliability. This questionnaire contained several items that were closely related to the perception, faith and practice in creating *bi'ah salihah* in school. The first part of the questionnaire contained items that require subjects to responsd based on their perception of the importance of eight factors to achieve *bi'ah salihah* in school. The second part consists of six items to measure the level of their faith as follows:

    i)   Faith to Allah and the Prophet has to prove by doing good deeds.
    ii) The aim in life is to seek the pleasure of Allah SWT.
    iii) Al-Quran and *Sunnah* should be a guide of life.
    iv) Islamic way of life must be applied in practice, worship and transactio
    v) All that happens whether good or bad is the will of Allah and is a test in life.
    vi) Doing right things and shun evil is a duty.

The items were related to faith, then in the third section, 34 items associated with the practice adopted by teachers and students were given. The items in the second part reflected the culture of PPAA that can assist to achieve *bi'ah salihah* in the school environment. Some of the items used to measure the teachers practice were:

    i)   I am always clear about the mission, vision and targets to be achieved in the Balanced Scorecard of Al-Amin Education Centre
    ii) I always do a congregational prayer in schools.
    iii) I am always do a congregational prayer on time.
    iv) I always greet and say *salam* when meet with friends and students.
    v) I always pray five times properly

Some of the items used to measure the students practice were:

    i)   I always do a congregational prayer in schools.
    ii) I am always do a congregational prayer on time.
    iii) I always pray five times properly.
    iv) I always ensure a perfect ablution is taken
    v) I always do *sunat* prayers either before or after the obligatory prayers

The questionnaire for parents only have two parts, the first part was the same as teachers and students. The objective of the second part was to obtain parents' perceptions about the level of practice in schools *bi'ah salihah*. This section had seven items to measure the level of practiced *bi'ah salihah.* They are as follows:

    i)   When you're in school, you are always greeted with a greeting and a smile by teachers and students.
    ii) Reminder of the *bi'ah salihah* features is widely written and posted at the school.
    iii) The way the service or school official letter content contains Islamic characteristics.
    iv) Response to comments or criticisms are answered by the school with wisdom such as the use of verses with Islamic characteristics.

5.0   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted for the period from April to June in 2008. Number of teachers in SRIAKL was 51, 44 in SRIAG and 45 in SMIAG. Number of students for SMIAG was over 548, while 618 students in SRIAG and 643 students in SRIAKL. There was about 300

parents in SMIAG, 350 in SRIAKL and 480 in SRIAG. For primary schools, the questionnaires were given to Standard 6 students (76 in SRIAKL and 87 in SRIAG) since they were considered mature and had completed the *Tarbiyah* system at the primary level. Thus, these students were expected to understand the items in the questionnaire. Data was analysed using SPSS software package.

The total respondents for each school are shown in Table 1 and Figure 2.

Table 1:   Respondents for each School

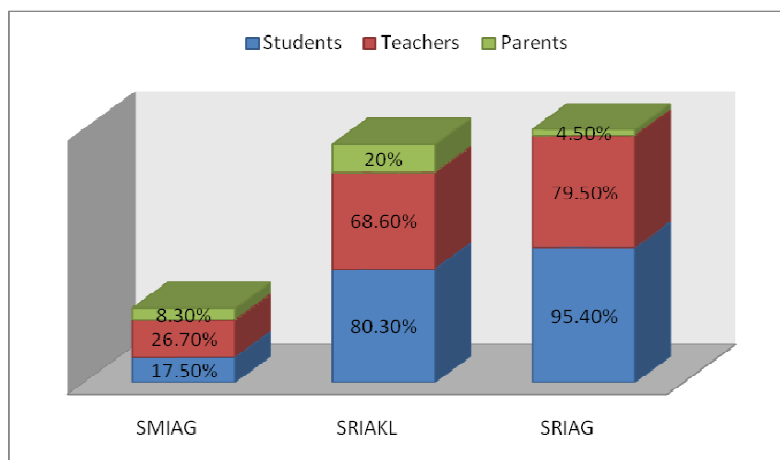| School	Students	Teachers	Parents
SMIAG	96 (17.5%)	12 (26.7%)	25 (8.3%)
SRIAKL	61 (80.3%)	35 (68.6%)	70 (20%)
SRIAG	83 (95.4%)	35 (79.5%)	22 (4.5%)
Total respondents	240	82	117

Figure 1   Total percentage of respondents for each school

In the first part of the questionnaire, respondents were required to give their views on the importance of factors that can positively affect *bi'ah salihah* practices in schools. Mean value were computed from the responses given on the choice of factors that affected the bi'ah salihah. Then these factors were ranked in accordance to the most important factors selected by these three groups, namely students, teachers and parents as shown in Table 2.

Table 2:   *Bi'ah Salihah* Factors Ranked According to the Importance

Factors	Students	Teachers	Parents
Teachers demonstrate good model (*uswah hasanah*) in appreciation of Islamic practice	**2**	**1**	**2**
Reminder of the *bi'ah salihah* features is widely written and posted at the school.	**8**	**6**	**6**

Appreciation of Islamic practices is reminded verbally with wisdom from teachers, peers and parents	3	3	4
Teachers warn with wisdom to students whom had committed an offense	5	4	2
Teachers provide an appropriate sentence or a fine for an offense as specified by the schools.	7	7	7
The parents support in motivating or inspiring to do good deeds.	1	2	1
Peers who are very commited to enjoin good and refrain from evil	6	5	5
School infrastructure led to the adoption of *bi'ah salihah* such as separate staircase.	4	8	8

In general, the parents and teachers factors (highlighted bold in Table 6) were perceived by these three groups (student, teachers and parents) to be the most important factors in developing *bi'ah salihah*. Then the student and teachers had selected giving verbal reminder with wisdom as the third most important factor.

Punishment and school infrastructure factors were perceived by parents and teachers as the least important factors in promoting the appreciation of Islamic practice. However, students felt the school infrastructure (ranked 4) can help them to practice the *bi'ah salihah* in school.

The *bi'ah salihah* index was computed as follows:

$$Overall\ Index_{bi'ah\_salihah} = Average\left[\left(mean_{faith} + mean_{practice}\right)_{students} + \left(mean_{faith} + mean_{practice}\right)_{teachers} + \left(mean_{practice}\right)_{parents}\right]$$

From this formula, the indices achieved by each schools were illustrated as in Table 3.

Table 3:   *Bi'ah Salihah* Index

School	Students	Teachers	Parents	Overall
SMIAG	4.92	5.21	4.23	4.79
SRIAKL	4.91	5.32	4.12	4.78
SRIAG	4.78	5.30	4.50	4.86

It can be concluded, there was not much difference about the levels of *bi'ah salihah* in these schools, however SRIAH had achieved better compared to the other two schools.

6.0   CONCLUSION

The *bi'ah salihah* index could be a tool to measure the spiritual component since it becomes one of important factor in contributing to environmental development that would give impact to the overall sustainable development.

REFERENCES

[1]   UNDP, Human Development Index. http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/hdi/
[2]   International Institute for Sustainable Development. http://www.iisd.org/sd/
[3]   Hasan, Z. 2006. Sustainable Development from an Islamic Perspective: Meaning, Implications, and Policy Concerns. J.KAU: Islamic Econ., Vol. 19, No. 1, pp: 3-18 (2006 A.D/1427 A.H).
[4]   Ngah, B.N. and W.S., Wan Yusoff. 2010. Sustainable Development in Muslim countries: Identifying development principles and policy directions in the light of Maqasid al-Shariah. Available online: http://esharianomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Sustainable-Development-In-Muslim-Countries.pdf
[5]   Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 74, p. 192