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Bandar Baru Nilai,

Negeri Sembilan.

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Theory of Knowledge: A Comparative Epistemological Study of Islamic and Western Thinkers in Developing Economic Theories

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Abstract—Knowledge is the most important and powerful tool for any civilization as people with knowledge can observe the world at a higher level than people without knowledge. Knowledge is generally defined as understanding something. In generating knowledge, intellect, which was given to almost all human beings, is needed especially in a highly developed civilization to get new information, ideas, or knowledge about nature, life as well as their way of life. Therefore, the theory of knowledge has always been in discussion as the process of human thinking is difficult to dissect. Many scholars had tried to give their idea on the theory of knowledge where some are still in use while some are lost. This paper reviews the contribution of both Muslim and western scholars in the theory of knowledge and offers a comparative epistemological study to explore the impact that led to developing theories of their time. Three Muslim scholars namely al-Ghazali and al-Shatibi and Ibn Khaldun, and three western scholars namely Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, and John Maynard Keynes and their opinions are analyzed to emphasize how their worldviews had given an impact on the field of economics and to what extent people in this contemporary world have applied these scholars' ideas in their personal and public life.

Keywords—Epistemology, Economics, Theory, Knowledge

I. INTRODUCTION

Intellect, according to Merriam-Webster, is “*the power of knowing as distinguished from the power to feel and to will which is the capacity for knowledge*.” It is also “*the capacity for rational or intelligent thought especially when highly developed*” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The existence of intellect is what differentiating human beings from an animal. God gave humans intellect so that they can always think and increase their knowledge. Thinking can help humans get new information, ideas, or knowledge about nature, life, and way of life. Evolution in humankind can happen for thousands of years; humans always kept on thinking about how to be better and more civilized by innovating new things or ways of life and creating new knowledge to help them achieve a new pinnacle of life. Knowledge had become the essential element of any civilization on earth as it helps the civilization develop further than others.

Knowledge is one of the most important ideas used in the studies of religion, science, philosophy, and many other studies. Knowledge was interpreted into much different meaning by scholars from a different area of study, and it can be interpreted differently between scholars in general and layman. However, there is still no clear definition of knowledge so far as the term knowledge can be defined from a comprehensive aspect to a very narrow aspect on life. Hence, there is a need for epistemology. This is because epistemology is the study or theory of knowledge subject to its limits and validity (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). As knowledge is very dominant in every aspect of studies, a study on how people defined knowledge needs to be done to understand their way of thinking and how they make observation can be achieved.

Firstly, the difference in interpreting knowledge can be seen between layperson and professional or scholars. Layperson clarifies knowledge as something new that they become aware of, learned, or understood, whether from experience or something that was purposely attained. Their interpretation of knowledge is wide and broader as it involves their daily lives and covers almost every aspect. The example is very near to everyone, such as parents asking their children what they had learned today in school or when a person makes a mistake, he or she will gain new knowledge on how to prevent making the same mistake next time.

Philosophers split knowledge into two different types first and foremost before they attempt to define it. The first type is theoretical knowledge where it was used mainly by western philosophers when they attempt to make logic from a phenomenon. They defined knowledge as an idea or belief that is true by using justification and reasoning. The second type of knowledge is direct knowledge, where eastern philosophers widely used it to discuss the mystical and spiritual parts of the world. Knowledge

for them is when we believe it can happen and faith in it; it is true. However, both Western and Eastern philosophers used both types of knowledge even without realizing that the Eastern wants to make a logic from the things that happened and the Western cannot explain some phenomena with logic but know that it exists.

In religion, the term knowledge refers to a broader meaning where it covers God's knowledge to knowledge of reality. All major religions valued the importance of knowledge, but Islam holds the concept of knowledge to the highest degree. In Islam, the term used for knowledge is *'ilm* (Akhtar, 1997). The term *'ilm* is the counterpart of knowledge in the Arabic language, but it covers many aspects, including theory, actions, or education which is more thorough than its English or other western language terms. As in western, the term knowledge only expresses the information of something but not the knowledge behind something or events.

The concept of *'ilm* holds the most important place in Muslim civilization as they had depended on and valued their scholars greatly. The scholars' advice, observations, words, or actions were taken seriously by almost everyone, and authorities would almost always go to the scholars to get advice on how to help their people. The Muslim scholars would always seek a way to share with others and expand their *'ilm* or knowledge for the better of Ummah. *'Ilm* also plays a major part in Muslims' everyday life as when they were reciting the Holy Qur'an, the term *'ilm* and its derivatives as mentioned in Holy Qur'an 704 times. The Islamic revelation was started with the word *Iqra'* to read or recite in Surah al-Alaq (96:1). This is because people need to know first before taking any other steps in life so that they act rationally.

"How do we know it is true? What are the reasons behind it? Why it happened the way it is?" In the journey in seeking knowledge, we would always want to find the source behind the events, phenomena, or actions of someone. Azram (2011) stated in Islam, Holy Qur'an and Sunnah, the revealed knowledge, is the first and most important source of knowledge in the world. It is also the best source, and Muslims must first seek the revealed knowledge if they come into trouble before any other sources. The second source of knowledge is the derived knowledge. This knowledge is what God gave to humans after they had done observations, researches, analyzing nature, gave much thought to the phenomena as well as from their experience. Both of these types of knowledge come from God, but it differs from the methodology on how human beings come into contact with it. The first source of knowledge came when God had revealed the knowledge to the Prophet Muhammad, and all Muslims must believe in it and follow its instructions. The second source can only be gained when and if human beings experienced it or seek knowledge by themselves with God's permission.

The dispute between Western and Eastern philosophers on whose idea of knowledge is better was answered in Islam as Imam and Majid (2000) stated that the nature of knowledge covers both the materialistic world, which we can see and the spiritual world, the unseen world. Man cannot gain entire *'ilm* exist as knowledge is limitless and knowledge belongs to the God. The human mind is limited to what they can sense only in the seen world, but they must believe in the knowledge of the unseen world such as the hereafter as God has said in the Holy Qur'an: *"So I swear by what you see and what you do not see..."* (69: 38-39).

II. MUSLIM SCHOLARS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

Epistemology, or theory of knowledge, had always been fascinating to study as it was the foundation of all studies or subjects that human beings had an understanding. Many Muslim and Western scholars tried to express their idea on epistemology. This paper will focus on three famous classical Muslim scholars, Ibn Khaldun, Imam al-Ghazali, and Imam al-Shatibi, theory of knowledge.

Ibn Khaldun real name is Abu Zayd Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Khaldun al-Hadrami (Irwin, 2019). He was born in Andalus, Tunisia, in the year 1332 into an upper-class aristocratic family. His family had an excellent reputation in involving with writing works, scholarship, and involvement in public services. At the age of 73, in 1402, he died. Ibn Khaldun was an Arab social scientist, a philosopher, and a historian. He was acknowledged as the father of modern disciplines of historiography, sociology, economics, and demography and was renowned by scholars from almost the entire world in economics and philosophy. Classical western scholars such as Niccolo Machiavelli of the renaissance recognized his contribution mainly in the 19th century, where he was considered one of the greatest philosophers in the 5th until 15th century, the Middle Ages (Deen, 2007). Ibn Khaldun's best and most famous work is the *Muqaddimah* (the introduction) that was written in his book the *"History of World"* after he was tired with the political world in 1375 (Weiss, 1995).

Ibn Khaldun shared his idea on the theory of knowledge in the *Muqaddimah*. He highlighted the importance of religious orthodoxy and philosophy in epistemology even though some may say that he was against philosophy (Ahmad, 2003). This is because he is more inclined towards orthodoxy in explaining his theories. The essential thing in Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* is

that the Law of God determined everything, and every single living creature must abide by His law. Ibn Khaldun wanted to convey the importance of believing in God in Islam as He is the only one who owns and rules over this universe (Hasyim, 2010).

In Ibn Khaldun's study of knowledge, he first stated that human beings possessed 'aq/ (Ahmad, 2003), which enable humans to think, making rational judgment and decision, obtain their livelihood, establish social organizations, produce science and craft as well as receive and accept divine revelation through the prophet. In living creatures, Ibn Khaldun believed that there are two parts, physical and spiritual. The physical part of living things consists of five senses which are sight, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching. The spiritual part is heavily connected with soul and intuition, which mainly involve instinct to survive. Both humans and animals have these parts, and the difference between these species is the presence of 'aq/ in humans.

The souls in humans were divided into two parts by Ibn Khaldun (Hasyim, 2010). Firstly, the soul related to senses helps humans think by applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating things. Ajmain and Muhammad (2020) stated that application is for humans to differentiate between the good and bad, and they apply it in their daily lives by doing the good and avoiding the bad. Analysis is how humans can relate and connect themselves with the nature surrounding them using their physical part. Evaluation is when humans can make assumptions and speculation on the phenomena to make new branches of knowledge. Lastly, creation is when humans can explain the causes and effects of things and create something new from them. The second part of the soul is when the soul is inter-related with intuition. This part is where the real knowledge comes from, and only God can give human knowledge through this part of the soul.

Hasyim (2010) stated that Ibn Khaldun categorized five soul levels, which consist of common senses, imagination, illusion, memorization, and thinking. Human can only obtain new knowledge through thinking, but it is limited for humans. Humans' limitation on thinking is only up to their senses in the physical part can reach (Ahmad, 2003). The other level of thinking is in line with humans' instinct to survive as well as the desire of the souls and intuitions. So, it can be said that knowledge is generated by the physical part of humans as the limitation prevent humans from obtaining true knowledge, and knowledge is limitless. Ibn Khaldun's epistemology is circling around the fact that humans have 'aq/ making them available to think and be civilized, how humans' body, mind, and soul works, and human experience in gaining knowledge.

Next, a classical Muslim scholar who contributed to the theory of knowledge is Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Tusi al-Ghazali, famously known as al-Ghazali (Watt, 2020). He was one of the most prominent and influential Muslim philosophers, theologian, jurist, and mystic. He was born in 1058 in Tus, Iran, and died in 1111 in his birthplace. Al-Ghazali was in a low-income family and was orphaned at a young age. Despite that, his father tried to send him to go into a madrasah. He was acclaimed as "*the greatest and the most important thinker at medieval Islam*" and most Muslims consider him as a Mujaddid, those who help restore the faith of the Ummah. He was awarded the title *Hujjat al-Islam*, (the Proof of Islam), because of his encyclopedic knowledge and saintly character. Al-Ghazali's most famous work is "*the Revival of the Religious Sciences*" explained the principles and practices of Islam, and he showed the importance of incorporating religion in the study of all types of sciences.

Al-Ghazali's book "The Jewel of the Quran" is where he presented his epistemology (Elshimi, 2017). Al-Ghazali epistemology focuses on all types of knowledge and the practice of the knowledge, for it to not be lost in a coherent and harmonious framework. He divided epistemology into three parts. The core is the knowledge of God, surrounding it is his own theory of knowledge and classifications of science as well as the practical aspect of the knowledge.

Al-Ghazali started his epistemology by defining the origin of inspiration. The word to inspire came from the Latin word *inspirare* that means to inhale, inflame, and blow into. In the Holy Qur'an, God stated that in Surah Sad "... *breathed into him of My (created) soul*" (38:72). This ayah brings the meaning that inspirations come from God, and it can be referred to as revelations. Humans need to use critical and creative thinking to interpret the Holy Qur'an and develop the theory of knowledge with the Holy Qur'an as a guide and use it in practice. Therefore, al-Ghazali initially believed that when the direct tafsir of the Holy Qur'an is not in agreement with the logic, only then will creativity be acceptable.

Al-Ghazali then realized that his initial method is not suitable for all knowledge that ever came into humans' realization (Ahmad, 1998). In order to attain certainty in knowledge, different types of knowledge need to be used. The types of knowledge will influence the thinking a person will need in their field of studies. For example, his logical method in obtaining knowledge is not suitable in the field of agriculture as they need to assume the unknown in order for them to research fertilizers. Therefore, both figurative interpretations and logical demonstration are needed to come up with good theories and make better observations and analyses.

Elshimi (2017), in her article, stated that al-Ghazali emphasized the need for constant growth in the area of knowledge and the seeker's knowledge in one of his masterpieces, "*the Jewels of the Quran*". There are three levels of certainty: '*ilm al-yaqeen*' (the knowledge of certainty), '*ain al-yaqeen*' (the vision of certainty) and '*haqq al-yaqeen*' (the reality of certainty). The first level is to know the existence of the knowledge and the second level is to see it to believe in it. The last level is the highest level, where humans can prove the knowledge that can be seen through many types of research and analysis. In his book "*The Revival of the Religious Sciences*" al-Ghazali explained that humans must achieve the highest level of certainty, which is '*haqq al-yaqeen*' (the reality of certainty), so that they can be more confident with the knowledge that they had founded and can continue to spread their works further. However, the highest level can only be achieved with the help of God, and humans must believe in the existence of knowledge beyond their limits that was stated in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah.

Knowledge can be developed further only after it can be put into practice to achieve a higher level of certainty and gain spiritual wisdom. The lower level of certainty must be achieved first before moving to the higher level as knowledge on the issues or phenomena must be obtained first before it can be practical (Muhaya, 2015). Al-Ghazali used the rolling of waves as his reference to explain the theory of practice (Elshimi, 2017). After achieving the highest certainty level by using practice, humans must return to the status or preservation. The practice of the gained knowledge will carve a path for the human to obtain new knowledge, and the same process of practice and worship must be done again to achieve a higher level of certainty. Elshimi (2017) explained the cycle of growth when she wrote:

The cycle of integral growth moves from practice to acquired knowledge (*kasb*), to divine gifts of knowledge (*wahb*), to a higher experiential state (*fana*), and back to worldly practice and worship (*baqa*). (Elshimi, 2017, p. 89)

Therefore, al-Ghazali used the image of pearl and oyster to explain his epistemology. The pearl is the heart of the oyster, a symbol of the knowledge of God and the path towards Him, while the upper part of the oyster is al-Ghazali's epistemology and the lower part of the oyster is the practical curriculum of the knowledge.

The last classical Muslim economist's idea on epistemology that will be studied is al-Shatibi. He was one of the foundational scholars in Usul al-Fiqh. His real name is Ibrahim bin Mosa bin Muhammad al-Shatibi al-Gharnati who grew up in Granada, Spain, and his date of birth was unknown, but his death year was 1388 (Kitaabun, 2016). Al-Shatibi was a jurist involving with the issues of politics, economics, and social changes. He was one of the prominent scholars in the Maliki school of Fiqh even though "*he shunned blind partisanship or sectarianism*" (Kitaabun, 2016). His most important work is the *Muwafawat fi Usul al-Shari'ah*, which contributes tremendously to Islamic Law, particularly to the study of *Maqasid Shariah* (objectives of Islamic law) and *maslahah* (benefit or public interest). His work was popularized by Rashid Rida and Muhammad Abduh in the 19th century as they cited and referred to his work in doing their studies.

Fadzli, Bangga and Hamat (2008), studied that al-Shatibi's theory of knowledge was shown in his book *al-Muwafaqat*. Even though the *al-Muwafaqat* was written to show al-Shatibi's idea and discuss Maqasid Shariah's issues, the book also portrayed al-Shatibi's epistemology. Al-Shatibi's idea on knowledge was observed on types of knowledge, the purpose of pursuing knowledge, the transmission of knowledge, the seeker of knowledge, the means of knowledge, and the role of reasons.

Al-Shatibi described the types of knowledge based on two perspectives: the originality of the knowledge and praiseworthy knowledge. To know the origin of knowledge, al-Shatibi divides knowledge into three categories: fundamental (*sulb*), sound (*mulah*), and knowledge that is neither fundamental nor sound. Fundamental knowledge is the highest level of knowledge, such as religious knowledge, and its originality and necessity cannot be argued. For knowledge to be fundamental, it must be general and always remain essential in humans' life, the knowledge also must remain stable without any changes, and lastly, the knowledge must be led into action or can be practiced. Sound in knowledge means that the knowledge unspecified and reasoning from different people can bring different results. This is because different people have different ways to perceive things and they bring in new additional information that may affect others' observations. Knowledge that has soundness is in lesser validity of its originality than fundamental knowledge. Knowledge that is neither fundamental nor sound is religiously invalid; thus, it must be ignored.

Praiseworthy knowledge, in al-Shatibi's view, is based on two bases. First, it must be practicable. The action on knowledge can either be in heart or physical body but it must be supported by the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. If the knowledge does not bring any action, it is less significant because it brings no benefit in both this world and the hereafter, causes severe diversity, and it brings tendencies for humans to have an unnecessary discussion. The second base of praiseworthy knowledge is it must bring humans to the path of God and lead them to worship God. In Islamic principles, any knowledge that does not lead to God has no benefit, and the aim in increasing one's '*aq*' is to increase one's obedience to God.

Kurniawan (2016), in his study, stated that the purpose in gaining knowledge, from al-Shatibi's perspective, is to generate actions. There are two purposes in pursuing knowledge, which are the original purpose and natural purpose. The original purpose is to incite actions as there are strengths in actions, and the natural purpose is to increase own fame and position. Natural purpose in pursuing knowledge can lead humans to either the original purpose or not. The transmission of knowledge relies heavily on the knowledge's methodology (Fadzil, Bungga & Hamat, 2008). The manner can be acceptable by most humans, or it is not suitable for the majority. If the knowledge is hard to comprehend, it is impracticable as the method used is hard to achieve.

There are three groups of knowledge seekers (Fadzil, Bungga & Hamat, 2008; Johnston, 2004). The first group is those who are only followers. Their actions are only enough to relieve them from the burden of their responsibilities. The second group is those that reach the level of proving and argumentation. The knowledge in this group is not deeply rooted, and they used reasons to justify their actions. The last group is those who are deeply rooted in knowledge. They had reached the highest level of certainty that they believed in their actions without any need for any other pieces of evidence.

The next focus on al-Shatibi's theory of knowledge is the means of obtaining knowledge. Fundamental knowledge is heavily rooted in humans that they did not need to know where and how they obtain it. Other types of knowledge must be "*obtained through learning, especially knowledge that depends on contemplation and reflection*" (Fadzil, Bungga & Hamat, 2008, p. 236). One can learn by studying from teachers or reading books on their own, but they must understand the context of the book and prioritize original books. In discussing the role of reasons, al-Shatibi stated that reasons are not absolute but necessary for humans to achieve certainty and understanding. The reasons for humans must be based on Holy Qur'an and Sunnah as a guideline in order for them to discover the truth. This is because humans' reasons alone are limited and incomplete that it cannot determine the righteousness and wickedness of their actions.

Therefore, al-Shatibi's epistemology was based on fundamental knowledge, which is Islamic knowledge, so that it can benefit others, and he relates some of them with his idea or classification on Maqasid Shariah.

III. WESTERN SCHOLARS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

The focus of western scholar's idea of knowledge will be on three famous classical western economists, John Maynard Keynes, Adam Smith, and John Stuart Mill. John Maynard Keynes was the founder of Keynesian economics, and Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill were two of the famous classical economics scholars where Adam Smith is the founder of it.

John Maynard Keynes was one of the renowned British economists that develop his school of economics. Keynes was an English economist, journalist, and financier. His idea on economics focuses mainly on the macroeconomic theories where he tried to rationalize how economic output can be influenced aggregate demand in the economy. Keynes was born in Cambridge, England, in 1883 and died in 1946 at 62 (Duignan, 2020). He graduated in the University of Cambridge, and he was initially trained in mathematics, but he shifted his academic interest to politics and economics as Alfred Marshall advised him. He became the most influential economist in the 20th century after contributing significantly to economic theories that focus on the causes of prolonged unemployment. His idea fundamentally changed the macroeconomics theories and practices as well as government's economic policies that a Keynesian school of economics was established. His most important works are "*The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*" where he provided a remedy on economic recession using government-based policy for increasing employment.

Keynes developed his theory of knowledge as others' epistemology is not suitable to be the foundation for his own school of economics (Fitzgibbons, 2003). Therefore, Keynes's epistemology will be more focused on what is better for the study of economics. According to Dow (1995), Keynes divided knowledge into direct and indirect knowledge. Direct knowledge is an idea where knowledge is directly derived from humans' own perceptions, experiences, and understanding of the phenomena. This type of knowledge is directly connected with human senses: sight, smell, hear, taste and touch. Humans' understanding is primarily used to perceive the rules of formal logic, primary propositions and senses are used to make reasoning in explaining the logic. Next, indirect knowledge is heavily related to secondary propositions where the results came from the debate and reanalyzing the primary propositions are made.

In order for Keynes to develop new economic theories, he will complete his new theories with pieces of evidence (Fitzgibbons, 2003). For Keynes, it is only logical to provide evidence when introducing new knowledge as it acts as the base of the knowledge, and evidence helps humans achieve a higher level of certainty. The evidence can be found from either direct knowledge or a combination of direct and indirect knowledge because both of this knowledge have already proven their logic.

People with a higher level of certainty will have a boost on their confidence of belief, and they can project their understanding of the knowledge better.

The importance of evidences gave more significant weight in making economic theories by Keynes in his idea on the theory of knowledge. This is because theories can help predict the future while evidence gives information on what had happened already, either in the near or far past. Evidence helps economists make a better prediction of the future to reduce uncertainties as they already knew how to prevent past problems. It can be concluded that in acquiring knowledge, Keynes stressed the usage of both logical reasoning and experience or evidence in making the best theories to predict the future.

The second western economist that will be studied is Adam Smith. He was one of the most famous classical western economists, and he was a Scottish political economist and philosopher. He was known as “*The Father of Capitalism*” because he was known to make the first book in modern economics discipline, and his ideas on economics mainly were focused on what we know now as the capitalist economic system. He was also known as “*The Father of Economics*” because he was the founder of classical economics, the first known school of economics. Adam Smith was baptized in 1732, and he died in 1790, but his actual born year was unknown (Muller, 2003). Smith got his education in one of Scotland’s top secondary schools during his period, and he graduated at the age of 14. He continued his education at the University of Glasgow, and his most favored teacher was Francis Hutcheson. Smith became recognized by the public when he started to become a professor of rhetoric and moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow at 28. Smith had written two notable books or works that distinguished him from philosophers before he talked about the then known as political economics. The first book is *the Theory of Moral Sentiments*, written in 1759 and his most famous works is *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, which was often called *Wealth of Nations*, which he wrote in 1776.

Adam Smith showed his theory of knowledge in almost all of his works (Cremaschi, 1989), but “*History of Astronomy*” or “*Essay on Astronomy*” was the essential source of Adam Smith’s epistemology (Manioudis, 2014). The book was published in 1795, as Adam Smith wrote it just before his death. Adam Smith’s epistemology was ideal for his theories of economics and business even though he, in the first place, was not an economist but was a philosopher (Buckley, 2014). Adam Smith’s idea of epistemology revolved around the three sentiments of human reactions: surprise, wonder, and admiration, as to be believed that feelings are essential so that science and philosophy can be developed. His epistemology was heavily used in the study of history. Harrison (1995) stated that his theory of knowledge was more emphasized on “*aesthetics and the faculty of imagination*” version of epistemology.

In Adam Smith’s theory of knowledge, he believed imagination is vital to developing humans’ beliefs about the world (Buckley, 2014). Therefore, the three sentiments are essential in determining the epistemological process in building up the imagination. Firstly, the sentiment of surprise came when a person’s mind suddenly produced an unexpected change. Therefore, our reaction to unexpected events was one way to build imagination and increase our knowledge. The second sentiment, the sentiment of wonder, is humans’ response to new things or phenomena. This sentiment started when humans became curious about any newly found knowledge. The last sentiment is the sentiment of admiration, where people will start to admire things that are great or beautiful. Human acquire admiration when they discover “*the real chains which Nature makes use to bind together several options*” (Smith, 1980, p. 105, as cited by Kim, 2012).

Surprise and wonder will change if there are any disruptions in thinking, and as it becomes frequent, human sentiment will change, and the worldview and science have to be revised. Therefore, to soothe the imagination, surprise and wonder that came from disruptions must be eliminated as they cause disequilibrium in a person’s thought system. A disruption causes people to think too complex that it will be hard for humans to observe the new phenomena so; a simpler thinking system must always be maintained so that any knowledge born from the novel phenomena is comprehensive. All in all, Adam Smith’s epistemology is on how human uses imagination based on the three sentiments to come up new knowledge.

The last classical western economist that his theory of knowledge will be studied is John Stuart Mill. He was an English philosopher, an economist – classical economist, a public servant, as well as an exponent of Utilitarianism (Anschutz, 2020). He was born on 20th May 1806 in London, England. His father was James Mill, a British historian, an economist, and a philosopher. John Stuart Mill also was the eldest son of his father, and he was educated strictly by his father (Heydt, n.d.). John Stuart Mill died on 8th May 1873 at Avignon, France. He was known as the most influential English-speaking philosopher of the 19th century, and the philosophers before and during his time were mostly from Europe and did not speak English. Adam Smith and David Ricardo highly influenced Mill’s economics studies, and during his time of studying political economy, both of these scholars’ works are the most influential in the discipline. John Stuart Mill was active in making his writings or works, and he had published a lot of his work in different publishers and different mediums (Anschutz, 2020). He had written letters in *The Examiner* in 1830 and many essays in different magazines such as the *Tait’s Magazine*, *The Jurist*, and *The Monthly*

Repository. His famous works are two-volume books called *A System of Logic* published in 1843, an essay *On Liberty* in 1859, and his *Utilitarianism* in the Fraser's Magazine in 1861 and was published as an article in 1863.

Mill's epistemology was shown in his work *A System of Logic* and his essay *On Liberty* (Jacobs, 1986). In *A System of Logic*, his epistemology revolves around the philosophy of science that features his idea on induction and hypothesis in developing knowledge. In his essay *On Liberty*, Mill's theory of knowledge is more towards his idea of justification of knowledge to achieve comprehensive knowledge. Mill's epistemology idea was mainly established to help him make his philosophies and contribute significantly to the science discipline. Mill also heavily believed that knowledge practitioners must have tremendous confidence in their idea to inspire people.

In *A System of Logic*, Mill stated that knowledge, particularly knowledge in science, must be justified from evidence and inferences (Robbins, 2011). Evidence is an essential element of knowledge, as with the presence of evidence, the reliability of the knowledge is high. The evidence did not bring any absolute meaning but only high certainty as there is no way for human beings to acquire or attain absolute knowledge (Jacobs, 1986). This is because, for the inferences of the knowledge to be acknowledged as the truth and a new knowledge, it must have solid reasons for rejecting its opponent with complete confidence. The knowledge earned the right to be put into practice as its evidence against any contradicting facts is strong and the knowledge brings forth the truth without any bias. Therefore, in science, no further testing is needed as the evidence and inferences had already brought forth the truth behind the facts.

Mill's theory of knowledge in *On Liberty* focused on other knowledge outside the science discipline (Jacobs, 1986). However, the discipline of science today is enormous, so Mill's idea of science during his time is on the pure science subjects such as astronomy, biology, chemistry, medic and others that people today regard as pure science subjects. In his work *On Liberty*, the idea of fallibility plays a significant role in Mill's epistemology. According to Jacobs (1986), Mill stated that "*all knowledge is fallible and in need of criticism*" (p. 765). This is because there is no absolute knowledge, and people with contradictions will always be present. People will make a judgment on what can be believed as valid and accepted it as knowledge. Therefore, whenever people construct or develop new knowledge, it must survive any harsh criticism by giving persuasive arguments against its rival, and it must be rational so that it is easy for people to believe.

To sum it up, in Mill's opinion, epistemology behind science stream and outside science stream has a different approach in order to come up with new and true knowledge. As there is no way for humans to prove that the knowledge is absolute, evidence and inferences must be strong in science, and in other disciplines, the knowledge must hold out against any criticism.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

Ibn Khaldun, al-Ghazali, al-Shatibi, Keynes, Smith, and Mill all have their own opinions and belief in epistemology development. Their epistemology is almost the same but at the same time very different from one another. The classical western economists' epistemology is more focused on the human side of the world, and they were more focused on developing epistemology for their own needs. In contrast, classical Muslim economists' epistemology is much broader and more profound as they incorporate the element of religion and spiritual part of the world. They had explained the different perspectives in thinking.

All of the classical Muslim scholars' theory of knowledge builds up from the knowledge of God. Ibn Khaldun stated that God determined everything that humans do and must abide by the rule of God even in pursuing knowledge. Al-Ghazali's idea place the knowledge of God as the core in gaining knowledge. Al-Shatibi said that all knowledge must lead humans to the path of God and to worship God in order for the knowledge to be beneficiary. The differences between these scholars can be seen when Ibn Khaldun circle his idea on the theory of knowledge around the fact that humans have '*aq*' to help them to think, al-Ghazali focuses more on the fact that the knowledge needs to be practical in order for humans to achieve the highest level of certainty. Furthermore, al-Shatibi focuses more on fundamental knowledge as his theory is more focused on developing Maqasid Shariah.

The classical western economists are more focused on how human nature and capabilities can come up with knowledge. This may happen because they were influenced by the notion that religion must be split from any worldly matters (Mohamedy, 2016). John Maynard Keynes believed that reasoning is the key to developing knowledge, but it must be backed with evidence and experience of the knowledge practitioner. For Adam Smith, his epistemology is more aesthetic where knowledge comes from human sentiments, particularly surprise, wonder, and admiration. These sentiments can either help humans develop or soothe imagination so that humans can establish rational knowledge. On the other hand, John Stuart Mill stated that evidence is the critical element of the truth in both science and non-science discipline. He also believed that there is no absolute knowledge, so humans must do any necessary things to keep their knowledge survive from extinction.

There are significant similarities between the Muslim scholars' and western scholars' epistemology. The importance of reasoning in increasing one's knowledge is the similarities between their theories, but how they explain the usage of reasoning in generating knowledge is different. Keynes use reasons when he wanted to predict the future in making economic theories. His perception of reasoning is focused more on humans' experience or evidence as reasoning alone is not strong enough to back up their economic theories. Mill's uses reasoning in his epistemology to support the evidence in coming up with scientific theories that can reveal the truth behind the universe.

Meanwhile, Ibn Khaldun applied humans' reasoning in determining how far and deep can their knowledge go. Humans' reasoning is limited as it can comprehend the full account of the spiritual part of the world. Al-Ghazali stated that logical reasoning needs to be used with figurative interpretation to achieve knowledge with a higher level of certainty. The attainment of a higher level of certainty helps humans be more confident with their knowledge, making it easier for them to help the civilization. Al-Shatibi, in his epistemology, emphasized that logical reasoning must be guided by Holy Qur'an and Sunnah so that the knowledge is comprehensive.

The most significant difference between the classical western scholars and the classical Muslim scholars in making their epistemology is that the western scholars did not come up with any religious element in their theory of knowledge. During their time, there was a significant movement in separating religion from sciences in the western world as they perceive that religious people would only gather knowledge for their usage (Mohamedy, 2016). The Muslim scholars' epistemology contradicts western scholars' idea as they integrate the element of Islam in obtaining knowledge and emphasize the importance of both the seen and unseen world in explaining their epistemology. The religion element helps the Muslim scholars come up with epistemology for all humankind, thus making their epistemology relevant for any discipline.

It can be summarized that incorporating the element of Islam in epistemology makes the theory more comprehensive and more logical in explaining the importance of knowledge. This can be seen during the most incredible time of Islamic civilization, where their focus was more on knowledge and not on power. Thus, they were more developed than any other civilization.

V. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The most significant difference between Muslim scholars and Western scholars lies in their worldview. Worldview will influence the way they describe epistemology, and it had a significant impact on their economic theories, ideas, and perspectives. All the scholars in both Muslim and western worlds had contributed many theories that somehow impacted the contemporary world. Ibn Khaldun had contributed many theories, such as the theory of labour and growth theory, and ideas such as little government intervention and the economy should be left to free market. Al-Ghazali also contributed to labor division theory, the economics of birth control, and government importance in maintaining the proper functioning economy. Al-Shatibi's ideas also had impacted the current economic theories even though his focus is mainly on the development of Maqasid Shariah. Keynes's contribution to the contemporary economic world is quite apparent where he established the Keynesian economic school of thought. Although Smith's epistemology may seem too aesthetic to be used in real life, his epistemology idea had helped him come up with the economics discipline and established classical economics. Mill's economics theories had developed classical economics further, and it had influenced the neoclassical economists today.

Keynes epistemology had impacted the world in perceiving the importance of government. When Keynes's idea started to come into fame, Western civilization had already in power of the world, making it easier for people to accept Keynes's theory of knowledge. As his theory of knowledge is solely for him to use as a foundation for his own school of economics, people can easily understand the logic behind his epistemology and develop their own field of study.

Smith and Mill's epistemology had heavily helped and influenced classical economists to develop their economics idea. They both believed that in order for the economics to flow, it must be left to the market freely without government intervention. This belief was then continued by the neoclassical economists today as the Keynesian economists heavily criticized the classical economists. Smith and Mill's epistemology was developed for their own importance in philosophy and economics' idea that their theory of knowledge was restricted to believe that humans or the seen world are the only tools to come up with new knowledge.

All the classical western scholars stressed the importance of materiality in their economic theories; whether the government plays a part in it or not, it had influenced people today to find ways to increase their own wealth and satisfy their materialistic needs. This happened maybe because their epistemology emphasized only the human side of nature to gain knowledge. Money had become the most important aspect of humans' life today as they believed that happiness can only be obtained if they have

more money and can afford to buy luxury items. The establishment of banks, where people lend and save money, shows that people had become greedier for money. This is because banks in the western world were established to pave the way for people to save money and increase their wealth.

The epistemology that classical Muslim scholars introduced had heavily influenced contemporary Muslim economists. As the contemporary world lacks economic theories or school that was purely Islamic, the main objectives of Muslim economists today are to develop Islamic economic. The development of Islamic economics provides a path for Muslims worldwide to escape from western economics. This is because Western economics, such as classical economic and monetary economics, completely ignore the existence of religion, and it consists of *haram* elements such as *riba*, *gharar* and *maysir*. For Muslims to live a faithful life in Islam, they must avoid the entire Haram element, but today, they must make do with the Western economics in order for them to keep on living without any unnecessary burden.

Muslim economists today must develop Islamic economics using Holy Qur'an and Sunnah as the guideline for them to make a comprehensive new economic school. The classical Muslim scholars had a path the way for them. They had shown how to incorporate Islam in every part of life. Islamic civilization can rise to be the greatest if more energy and resources are given to change the way of knowledge are taught and helped the Muslim economists realize Islamic economic in practice.

As the efforts of the contemporary Muslim economists are fruitless as they had received many criticisms, they had to start the development process on the drawing board once again. The criticisms they received include a lousy copy of socialism and capitalist economic, even though Islamic economics should be in the middle. They can start by dissecting the epistemology of classical Muslim scholars so that they can have an idea of how to assimilate Islamic principles in economics correctly. This is because they had focused more on the institution and not on thought. The theory of knowledge of classical Muslim economists explained the methodology they used to make economic theories without compromising the people. This shows that Islamic economic can be accepted by all humans, either Muslims or non-Muslims, as it had considered all aspects.

Epistemology of classical Muslim scholars had influenced the current education system where Muslim countries are starting to teach both religious and secular knowledge to students. This can help the new generation understand the balance between both fields of study and influence their perspective of life. This step is vital in developing Islamic economics and lifting the Islamic civilization as the new generation knows the importance of Islam in every aspect of life and being obedient to God as the final goal of life.

In conclusion, the difference in worldview had influenced the way Muslim scholars and Western scholars define their epistemology. Both sides of worldview talk about epistemology show that seeking knowledge is *wajib* for all human beings capable. However, the absence of religion in epistemology, especially in economics, had made people more materialistic and greedier that they had forgotten the true purpose of human beings on earth. Muslim economists must develop Islamic economics by searching for the balance between economics and Islam so that people can be saved from completely forget their true purpose. Contemporary Muslim economists must develop Islamic economics from scratch by using the revelation as a guideline and refer to the classical Muslim scholars to get an idea on how to start developing. They cannot use other types of economics and put Islam in it as nature deviate far from Islamic teaching, and it will be like trying to put Islam in an 'alien' system.

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