Ibn Khaldūn’s Method of Proving Scientific Hypotheses*

Abdullatif Ahmadi Ramchahi (first and corresponding author)
Post-Doctoral Researcher at Center of Quranic Research, University of Malaya; Editor of Quranica Journal-Malaysia; Editor of Al-Bayan Journal-Malaysia

M.Y. Zulkifli bin Haji Mohd Yusoff
Professor of Quranic Studies, Dean of Academy of Islamic Studies, Director of Center of Quranic Research, University of Malaya; Chief Editor of Quranica Journal-Malaysia

Abstract: Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) a fourteen centuries scholar attempted to study and understand human society by using scientific methods of enquiry. He provided a sociological anatomy of human society four centuries before sociology was originally born as an academic science by Comte in the 19th century. However, Ibn Khaldun’s impact and contributions to the methods of sociology are apparently missing from most Western sociological books. This paper attempts a systematic reading of Ibn Khaldun’s Muqaddimah (the introduction) in the context of his scientific hypotheses that form the essence of the inductive method. Ibn Khaldun’s Muqaddimah which is essentially a sociological work, is a preface or the first book of his larger historical work, “the Kitab al-Ibar.” The research focuses on Ibn Khaldun’s formulation of hypotheses and their impact on his mental and social theories. Special attention is given to his principles of adopting the correct hypotheses. The paper concludes by demonstrating Ibn Khaldun’s methodology of proving scientific hypotheses focusing on his two major methods: the comparative method and the method of conformity.


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