

The relevance of Ibn Khaldun's agricultural economic thoughts during the Covid-19 pandemic

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Abstract

As an agricultural country, the agricultural sector in Indonesia has an important role in national economic development. Among Muslim thinkers, Ibn Khaldun is a figure who pays attention to agriculture and sees it as a vital source of life. This study aims to identify and analyze Ibn Khaldun's concept of agricultural economics and its relevance during the Covid-19 pandemic, which has impacted the economic sector. This research is a type of library research using qualitative methods. While the data analysis technique used is descriptive qualitative. The primary data of this research are books, journals, essays, and news about the core issue, namely Ibn Khaldun's view on agriculture which is then related to conditions in the era of the Covid-19 outbreak. The results show that Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on the agricultural economy and the state's role in serving the community are still very relevant during the Covid-19 pandemic. Agriculture, according to Ibn Khaldun, is the source of life. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the agricultural sector has been unaffected. This research is done to learn material for the community, especially about Ibn Khaldun's thoughts in general, economics and agriculture in particular.

Keywords: agricultural economics; Ibnu Khaldun; Covid-19 pandemic.

Introduction

Indonesia is known as an agrarian country, with agriculture that employs most of the population. Indonesia is an agrarian country with large swaths of agricultural land and diverse natural resources. Agriculture has an important role in an agrarian country, not only in terms of providing basic needs, but also in improving the social sector, economic sector, and trade. The agricultural sector is a source of human life as well as a promising economic sector for Indonesia. Agriculture is one of the most important pillars of the nation. Farming is an extraordinary profession which is necessary not only for its own survival but also for the preservation of nature and other living things (Ariani, 2010).

The agricultural sector plays an important role in national economic development. The contribution of agriculture to economic development, according to Todaro (2020), is divided into six categories: (1) labour absorption, (2) income, (3) food supply, (4) agriculture as a provider of raw materials, (5) contribution to development economy, form of capital, and (6) agriculture as a source of foreign exchange (Ula, Sa'adah, & Amiin, 2015). From time to time, the agricultural industry remains the main source of employment. This means that working in the agricultural industry does not require a high level of education. As a result, employment in this industry is easy to adapt for workers who are less able to compete in other industries.

Agricultural development in Indonesia is still considered vital in general economic development, especially since this sector has emerged as the saviour of the national economy, with positive growth, while other sectors have negative growth. According to Budi Kolonjono, several factors have made an important contribution to agriculture in Indonesia: (1) wide and diverse resource potential, (2) a significant proportion of national income, and (3) the large number of people who depend on agriculture for their livelihood (Kusumaningrum, 2019). This sector, particularly lowland agriculture, offers significant multifunctional value in increasing food security, farmer welfare, and environmental conservation. If the multifunctional agricultural sector can contribute to Indonesia's economic progress, agriculture with a perennial agricultural land program can be realized.

Indonesian agricultural workers' role in absorbing national labour is undeniably the largest contribution, around 35.3% (Kementerian Pertanian, 2015). However, until now, there are still serious problems in agricultural employment. The fundamental problem is the shift in the demographic structure in favour of the sector, especially the increase in old farmers (over 55 years) and the decline in young workers (Susilowati, 2016).

Based on the current national farmer profile, around 17.29% or 6.61 million agricultural workers are under 30 years old, followed by 29.15 percent or 11.14 million people aged 30-44 years, 32.39 percent or 12.38 million people aged 45-59 years, and 21.7 percent or 8.09 million people aged over 60 years. Of the total workforce in the agricultural sector, around 65.23% have an education equivalent to elementary school and below. It is conceivable with a description of the condition of such data, how is it possible to rely on the main actors of the farming business to be able to support the heavy

burden entirely in realizing the targets of agricultural development, especially in maintaining national food security (Redaksi, 2021).

One of the problems that arise in the agricultural sector is this. It is common knowledge that in rural areas, farmers are generally villagers over the age of 50, who are currently confused about how to sustain their farming business, because almost none of their children want to continue the work they have inherited and have inherited, from generation to generation (Susilowati, 2016). If today's young generation hesitates to follow in the footsteps of previous farmers, the agricultural industry will no longer be able to contribute significantly to economic development.

The younger generation needs to continue the tradition of their parents working as farmers because, as explained earlier, the agricultural sector can make a very valuable contribution to human needs. If the number of farmers decreases in the future, agricultural productivity will certainly decrease. Even though the agricultural sector has become one of the most important sectors in economic growth, one of the leaders of Islamic economics in the past, namely Ibn Khaldun, has given about the concept of agricultural economics.

Ibn Khaldun identified that agriculture was a vital source of life. The will to survive in terms of trying to get it is characterized as "life". Agriculture is the process of obtaining life from livestock through value-added goods that humans use, such as milk from livestock, silk from silkworms, honey from bees, or plants that produce fruit. In addition, Ibn Khaldun recognized various crafts and occupations as a natural way of earning a living. In other words, agriculture, industry, and trade are economic resources that impact the quality of life of the community and nation (Apriliani, 2020).

Ibn Khaldun emphasized the importance of caring for agricultural products. In other words, increasing the value of agricultural products through the product monitoring process will improve the welfare of farmers. This is concerning because if the condition of farmers is poor, they will become victims of the unjust policies of the rulers (Apriliani, 2020). In describing the concept of agricultural economics, Ibn Khaldun, a scholar, scientist, sociologist and philosopher, is certainly not careless. Ibn Khaldun fully understood the situation and condition of the agricultural sector at that time.

In connection with this research, there have been previous studies that are still related to this research. However, nothing specifically discusses the thoughts of economists or Muslim figures

about agriculture. Most Muslim economists' thoughts about the economy, in general, are related to current economic conditions. As research conducted by Patoni (2021) explained, Ibn Khaldun's knowledge of economic principles is so deep and far-reaching that many theories are undoubtedly considered pioneers for formulating more modern and sophisticated theories. Many of his thoughts are still relevant and adopted by modern economic thinkers.

In addition, a study by Khuluq & Syamsuri (2020) tries to explain the history of agricultural development in Islamic civilization from the Prophet Muhammad (peace upon be him) to Ibn Awwam's agricultural theory, from preparing good land to growing crops. In addition, it also discusses agricultural development by looking at three stages; primitive agriculture, traditional agriculture, and modern agriculture. Furthermore, a study conducted by Rofiah (2022) indicates that the determination of the price of rice/grain agricultural products carried out by the collector is a fair price determination. According to Ibn Taimiyah, a fair price is when the price determination brings justice to the whole society and doesn't harm one party.

Based on a review of previous studies results, there are no similarities between previous studies in this research. Specifically, this research links Ibn Khaldun's agricultural economic thinking with conditions in the current era or during the Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, many previous studies about Ibn Khaldun's economic thought, in general, were not specific to agriculture. This study will explain two problems: (1) how is Ibn Khaldun's agricultural economic thought, (2) how is the relevance of Ibn Khaldun's economic thought in the Covid-19 pandemic era?

This study aims to determine the concept of agricultural economics in the style of Ibn Khaldun and find its relevance during the Covid-19 pandemic. As is known, countries worldwide, including Indonesia, have been hit by a disaster called the Covid-19 pandemic since 2020, which has caused extraordinary disruptions in various sectors of life.

Agriculture is one of the sectors most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The agricultural sector is a priority need in dealing with the spread of Covid-19 because it is directly related to the fulfilment of human needs, so the demand for food will always exist. Although the economy in some corporate sectors is paralyzed, the agricultural industry remains the sector of last resort, suggesting that it is the safest. Furthermore, the agricultural sector is the foundation for the

growth of other economic sectors such as industry and services. Even when other industries fail, the agricultural industry has proven to be a reliable food source, ensuring people don't go hungry (Khairad, 2020).

Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency, the export and production achievements of the agricultural sector have increased during the Covid 19 pandemic, from 2019 to early 2021. Agricultural exports grew 14.03 percent, with the food crop sub-sector as the highest contributor to the distribution and growth of the agricultural sub-sector economy in 2020. Based on the sub-sector, food crops grew by 3.54 percent, horticultural crops grew by 4.37 percent, and plantation crops grew by 1.33 percent. But on the other hand, there is the livestock sub-sector minus 0.33 percent (Kementrian Pertanian, 2021).

Literature review

Agriculture, as referred to in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia number 19 of 2013, is the activity of managing living natural resources through the application of technology, capital, labour, and management to produce agricultural commodities such as food crops, horticulture, plantations, and livestock in certain agroecosystems. Agriculture is a kind of production activity based on the growth of plants and animals. Small-scale farming refers to agriculture in a limited sense. In a broad sense, agriculture includes agriculture and forestry, animal husbandry, plantation agriculture, and fisheries. Agriculture, broadly, can be divided into four interrelated components. The four components, according to (Soetrisno, 2006), are as follows: (1) the manufacturing process, (2) farmers or agricultural entrepreneurs, (3) commercial land, and (4) agricultural businesses.

According to Kusmiadi (2020), agriculture is an effort to create an artificial ecosystem that can produce food for humans. Agriculture, in short, is "cultivating plants". Agriculture includes a wide range of activities, including crop farming, plantation agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandry, and forestry. The characteristics of agricultural activities are as follows: first, organic matter must be produced from inorganic materials with the help of plants or animals during the production process. Second, there are human efforts to update the "reproduction" and "processing" manufacturing processes.

In Islam, agriculture or farming gets important attention in the teachings of this religion. Islam has given its colour to the development of agriculture. It can be seen from several hadiths which encourage Muslims to cultivate land to make it a productive area (Yusuf, 2020), "It is not for a Muslim to plant a plant or a tree, and then the result is eaten by birds, humans or animals, but what he does is a charity for him." (Reported by al-Bukhari Muslim from Anas).

In addition, several verses of the Qur'an also discuss agriculture. One of them is in QS. Nūh [71]:19-20.

"And Allah made the earth for you a stretch. So that you may go to and fro in broad roads".

While Agricultural economics is an important social science in terms of its usefulness, its disciplinary area and its relationship with other disciplines. The scope of the discipline of agricultural economics is very broad, which can be broadly classified into activities of production, consumption, marketing and the factors that influence them (Anindita & Pudjiastuti, 2016). The main agricultural economic problems stem from unlimited human needs for agricultural products, while the agricultural resources (factors of production) used to produce these agricultural products are limited (rare).

Research methods

This research is a kind of library research. This study collects data from primary and secondary sources. The main materials of this research are books, journals, essays, and news about the core issue, namely Ibn Khaldun's view on agriculture in the era of the Covid-19 outbreak. The author also cites sources from the translated book *Muqadimah Ibn Khaldun*. This research uses a qualitative approach. However, this research aims to understand reality and its underlying meaning.

There are various more reasons why qualitative techniques were used in this study. First, research findings are not collected and finalized through statistical approaches and processes or by quantification. Second, a qualitative study of Ibn Khaldun's agricultural paradigm will be more applicable. Third, this research will pay more attention to an existing phenomenon's meaning or nonsensical aspects. This type of research cannot be done quantitatively. This research takes a phenomenological approach. This technique aims to develop new economic categories, theories,

and real ideas. The research technique is based on exploring economic truth that can interpret and explain economic activities by constructing structured results statements (Prawiroadiredjo, 2013).

The data technique in this study was carried out by means of a literature study conducted by researchers by collecting a number of books and magazines related to the problem and research objectives. The researcher cites books on agriculture and sources from journal articles and news articles on research topics. While the data analysis method used is the stages of data processing, then data analysis, and finally concluding.

Results and discussion

Biography of Ibn Khaldun

Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Khaldun al-Hadrawi, also known as Waliyuddin Abu Zaid, Qadi al-Qudat, is his full name. He was born in Tunis in the year 732 H. He is a follower of the Maliki school, a Muhadist al-Hafidz, an expert in ushul fiqh, a historian, a traveller, and a writer. As a child, he was often called Abdurrahman. Meanwhile, Ibn Zaid is the calling of his family. He has the title Waliyudin, and his popular name is Ibn Khaldun (Huda, 2013).

Ibn Khaldun was born into a rich and religious family. He learned Qiro'at from his father. While his teachers, Abu al-Abbas al-Qassar and Muhammad bin Jabir al-Rawi, taught him hadith, Arabic, and fiqh. Many prominent figures and intellectuals were his students: Ibn Marzuq al-Hafidz, al-Damamini, al-Busili, Ibn Ammar, and Ibn Hajar (Huda, 2013).

Ibn Khaldun mastered ancient Islamic sciences, including 'ulum aqliyah, at an early age (philosophy, Sufism and metaphysics). From a legal point of view, he adheres to the Maliki school of thought. In addition, he is interested in political science, history, economics, and geography. His mind is not satisfied with one or two scientific fields. His knowledge is wide and varied, comparable to an encyclopedia. However, historical sources indicate that he was not well informed about one field (Huda, 2013). This is the strength and weakness of Ibn Khaldun.

Ibn Khaldun talks about various economic subjects, including value systems, division of labour, price systems, supply and demand, consumption and production, money, capital creation, population growth, macroeconomics of taxes and public spending, trade cycles, agriculture, industry and trade, property rights and prosperity, and so on (Ulum & Mufarrohah, 2016).

Ibn Khaldun was a man of high religious knowledge. His father was his first teacher who educated him traditionally and taught the basics of Islam. The existence of Ibn Khaldun is increasingly known and popular thanks to his monumental work, *al-Muqaddimah*. *Al-Muqaddimah* means 'opening' or 'introduction' and is the opening volume on the seven books of historical writings (Saputra, 2021). In his *Muqaddimah*, he has built his theories on history, social science and culture (Mustinda, 2022).

The concept of agricultural economics from Ibn Khaldun's perspective

Ibn Khaldun highlighted agriculture as a vital source of life. The term "life" is defined as the will to survive and the work required to achieve this goal. Agriculture is the process of obtaining this life, from animals through value-added goods that humans consume, such as milk from cows, silk from silkworms, honey from bees, or fruit-producing plants. In addition, Ibn Khaldun listed various skills and trades as natural means of subsistence. In other words, agriculture, industry, and trade are economic resources that can improve the quality of life of a society and nation (Apriliani, 2020).

In the *Muqaddimah*, according to Ibn Khaldun, agriculture is the livelihood of the weak and the Bedouin who live on the move. This is because agriculture is something natural and easy to work with. Therefore, they usually do not find it in people whose lives are settled or civilized and nor in people who are abundant in wealth. People who pursue this profession are only people characterized by humility (Najamudin, 2020).

As the Prophet (peace upon be him) said when he saw a plough in the house of one of the Ansar's companions, "This tool does not enter the house of a people unless it is entered into humiliation." Imam al-Bukhārī took the meaning of hadith broader and included it in the chapter "*mā yukdzar min 'awaqib al-isythghāl bi ālah al-zar'l*" (matters that are feared because of the result of using agricultural tools or the occurrence of excessive use of what was ordered).

This is because -and Allah knows best- agricultural work is always accompanied by forced levies that require supervision and power. So that the person who is obliged to pay the levy becomes despised and suffers. Because the hands of a ruthless power rule him, Rasulullah (peace upon be him) said, "The Day of Judgment will not come until *zakāt* becomes a debt (a levy that must be paid)." This hadith is addressed to the rulers who are oppressive and

arbitrary towards their people by forgetting Allah's rights on the millionaires and assuming that those rights are for rulers and kingdoms. And remember that Allah (Glory to Him) has power over everything He wills, and He knows best about it, and it is only from Him that we ask for help (Khaldun, 2011).

According to Ibn Khaldun, agriculture was initially rather basic and quite natural. It does not require a complex knowledge base. Thus, it is characterized as a means of livelihood for the weak. Unlike the craft that appears after, there is farming. Crafting (making) demands a greater depth of expertise and more involved procedures. It is a source of intellectual and economic sustenance for more established demographic groupings (Beik & Arsyianti, 2010).

Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the importance of diversity in agricultural products. In other words, increasing the added value of agricultural products through a product diversification process will improve the welfare of farmers. It is feared that if the conditions of farmers are poor, they will become victims of the unjust policies of the rulers (Beik & Arsyianti, 2010). Ibn Khaldun also tries to relate agricultural prices to prices in other industries. He notes that if prices of agricultural products remained low, it would impact all agricultural activities. Farmers' profits will decrease or may cease to exist, causing their capital to stagnate or grow at a very low rate.

Farmers may fall into poverty if they mobilize some of their assets. This will reduce the number of activities associated with milling, burning, and other industries that turn agricultural products into food. Agricultural equipment manufacturers will also be affected as farmers' demand for their products falls.

The relevance of Ibn Khaldun's thoughts about agricultural economics during the Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic impacts public health and the Indonesian people's economic conditions, education, and social life. A group of economists, academics and policymakers worldwide are convinced that the pandemic of Covid-19 is a great opportunity to reform the economy, environment and lifestyle in the long run (Alameri & AL-Tkhayneh, 2021).

During the pandemic, the agricultural industry has turned out to be one of the safety valves for the Indonesian economy. Agriculture is growing at a positive rate while other industries are growing at a negative rate. This has helped slow Indonesia's economic downturn, which accelerated negatively in 2020. Other

agricultural contributions: to accommodate laid-off workers from other industries and attract new workers to agriculture. By 2020, agricultural labour will be absorbed by almost 5 million people (Redaksi, 2021). As a result, the agricultural industry helps reduce the country's high unemployment rate.

In line with that, Arif Satria, Chancellor of the Bogor Agricultural University (IPB), praised the achievements of the agricultural sector of the Advanced Indonesia Cabinet, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on facts and data, agriculture is one industry that significantly contributes to or supports the national economy (Okezone, 2021). "According to data released by BPS, the agricultural sector in the fourth quarter of 2020 also grew by 2.59% year on year (YoY), where the main supporting sub-sector is food crops by 10.47%. Hopefully, this increase will continue until 2021. "Because other technical sectors fell, the agricultural sector became the saviour of the worsening economic recession in the third quarter." Say Arif Satria.

According to research, the agricultural business still thrived during the Covid-19 outbreak, providing exports of USD 0.4 billion in 2021 or contributing 3% of Indonesia's total exports. Agricultural exports surged dramatically during the Covid-19 outbreak, 16.2 percent and 20.8 percent, year-over-year, respectively.

On 3/6/2021, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Airlangga Hartarto, spoke at an event at the IPB International Convention Center in Bogor about the government's commitment to improving food security and farmers' welfare for fishermen. He discussed various stimuli and incentives implemented to maintain good agricultural and fishery performance, including: (1) Agricultural Labor Intensive Program; (2) Fishery Labor Intensive Program; (3) Banpres for Productive MSMEs in the Agricultural Sector; (4) Micro Interest Subsidy/Credit; People and (5) Cooperative Financing Support with Revolving Fund Scheme (Riswan, 2021).

Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on agricultural economics are still very relevant in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, where the concept of agricultural economics initiated by Ibn Khaldun talks about food security. According to Ibn Khaldun, agriculture is a source of life, and it is true that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the agricultural sector, in general, was not too affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This means that activities or activities in the agricultural sector can still run, even though productivity has decreased. This is due to

reduced community activities, causing the demand for food also to decline.

The number of culinary industries that do not run their business makes the demand for agricultural commodities plummet. The decline in agricultural commodities inevitably harms the livelihoods of farmers. When agricultural production continues to increase while market demand falls, there will be an oversupply, resulting in lower commodity prices (Sucihatiningsih, n.d.).

This is by Ibn Khaldun's understanding of demand. He said that agriculture and handicrafts (manufacturing sector) would grow and develop along with increasing demand. People will go to great lengths to learn what skills are needed once the product becomes a source of demand, driving supply-side growth. Conversely, if a product is not in high demand, sales will drop, and no effort is made to learn more about it. An increase in supply or a decrease in demand results in a price increase, and conversely, an increase in demand or a decrease in supply causes a price decrease, according to Ibn Khaldun.

Agriculture is an important sector in a country. Moreover, the agricultural sector has also received special attention from the Islamic religion. In Islam, agriculture is an important job; even until the end of the world, this sector must still be considered, as the Prophet Muhammad said in his hadith: "If the end of the world comes and one of you has a date palm in hand, then let him not be careless. Again, to plant it."

In Islam, agriculture is one of the noble jobs and is highly encouraged by Allah (Glory to Him) and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Many verses of the Qur'an also mention the results of plants and fruits. Regarding faith, agriculture can bring a servant closer to Allah (Glory to Him). This is because the sign of Allah's greatness can be seen clearly in the occurrence of plants and plants (Zakaria, Noh, & Hasan, 2020).

The importance of this agricultural sector must be a serious concern for a country. The government in a country, especially an agricultural country, needs to consider keeping the agricultural sector as the number one source of income compared to other sectors.

Talking about the government's duties during the Covid-19 pandemic, Ibn Khaldun's opinion about the duty of the state or government to serve the community is still very relevant. Ibn Khaldun recognized the importance of the state in social, political

and economic life. The state's task must be to promote the welfare of the people by enacting laws and maintaining order to provide a favourable environment for economic activity. Furthermore, the state guarantees property rights, protection of trade routes, and security so that people can participate in trade and industry. According to Ibn Khaldun, the state must create road infrastructure, trade centres, and other activities that support production and trade as part of its economic stability program.

The intervention of the Indonesian government in tackling problems during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in the agricultural sector, can be seen in the policies. According to Rozaki 2020 as quoted by (Yuliana, 2021), Some of the strategies carried out by the Minister of Agriculture are; (1) Ensuring sufficient food, especially rice and corn, (2) Increasing export commodities such as coconut oil, wallet bird's nest, coffee, and cocoa to support the domestic economy, (3) Supporting and providing counseling for farmers to prevent the spread of Covid-19, (4) Optimizing local food, as well as infrastructure, logistics, and digital marketing and (5) developing the agricultural sector including cash subsidies by labour-intensive efforts. This policy is, of course, to minimize the negative impacts of the virus outbreak that originated in China.

Conclusion

According to Ibn Khaldun, agriculture is a vital source of life, as are crafts and other trades as a natural means of earning a living. To improve the welfare of farmers, it is very important to add value to agricultural products through product diversification. Ibn Khaldun also tried to relate agricultural prices to prices in other industries. He noted that if prices of agricultural products remained low, it would impact all agricultural activities. Although Ibn Khaldun's views on agricultural economics still hold during the Covid-19 pandemic, the agricultural industry has been unaffected. The number of culinary industries that do not run their business makes the demand for agricultural commodities plummet. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Ibn Khaldun's opinion about the duty of the state or government to serve the community is still very relevant. Ibn Khaldun recognized the importance of the state in social, political and economic life.

To develop the results of this study, further research is recommended to use different research methods. For example, research on Ibn Khaldun's agricultural economic thought is harmonized with agriculture in the modern era, but his research

uses field research, so that a real picture will be obtained of events in a place that is the object of research.

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