



## ISLAMIC WORK BEHAVIOUR AND MENTAL HEALTH GOODNESS

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### ABSTRACT

This work examined Islamic work behaviour and mental health goodness in Malaysia. The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) was used in this study with the integration of perceived piety and mental health goodness. A total of 404 respondents from two public universities were analysed. The findings reported favourable outcomes in which all observed factors were statistically important. Besides, Islamic work behaviour was significantly related to mental health goodness. The results obtained were confined to public universities and the theory selected. Furthermore, the results obtained serve as a useful reference guide for top management to consider Islamic work behaviour for employees' training and productivity. In fact, the framework developed in this study reflects the specific topic of Islamic work behaviour and mental health goodness, sourced from the context of Malaysia.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Transparency International (2023), Denmark topped the index, followed by Finland and New Zealand. Denmark scored 90/100 on the 2023 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) drawn from well-crafted integrity in politics. The country's improved standing is mostly owing to its high degree of media liberty, availability of facts about communal spending, more solid standards of honesty for civil officers, and

autonomous jurisdictional organisms. In Malaysia, the government implemented Malaysia Madani (Civil Malaysia), a policy framework designed to gear up and bring back Malaysia's pride and exaltation in the world. Malaysia Madani considers six essential values: sustainability, prosperity, innovation, respect, trust, and compassion. These ideals can save Malaysia from being tainted by scandals, difficulties, and disputes.

Though Malaysia Madani outlines the core values for compliance, certain unintended cases like poor performance among public officials are still occurring in Malaysia is associated with piety and complacency. There exists a mental health issue here when they separate their work from religious duties due to money temptations. Works and religious duties must go together (Al-Qaradawi, 2013). The goal is to produce not only an excellent organisation but also to breed employees who excel from all angles and even in line with claims of excellence of religion itself. Indeed, past studies have documented the importance of Islamic work behaviour for improving sustainability (Al-Qaradawi, 2013). Islamic work behaviour enables a person to work according to Islamic values like monotheism, sincerity, piety, justice and good character, which in turn breed good, high quality and excellent work for mental health goodness.

The Islamic faith emphasises the integration of faith and daily life, recognising that religious concepts may guide and affect all parts of a Muslim's life. Islam provides standards for work behaviour that promote organisational development and mental health excellence. The aim is not simply to create a good company, but also to cultivate individuals who are exceptional in all aspects, aligning with religious ideals. Without Islamic work behaviours, issues like embezzlement, bribery, fraud, extortion and favouritism can influence a person's mental health to engage in such doings, leading to low productivity at workplaces. Therefore, this study is focused on Islamic work behaviour to allow its enrichment among public officials for the behaviours and for that, the contributing factors are examined accordingly.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Theory of planned behaviour**

Ajzen (1991) proposed the development of the theory, covering three variables namely attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control, which is hypothesised to breed effects on the development of intention and later the definite actions. Many studies have considered the usefulness of this theory due to its parsimonious and dynamic features, enabling researchers' adoption for their research framework (Alam & Mohamed-Sayuti, 2011; Kashif et al., 2017). However, its application to Islamic work behaviour is still unexplored further (Aminuddin, 2019; Samad et al., 2022). These studies are used as starting points to expand the findings to incorporate Islamic work behaviour in Malaysia.

### **2.2 Hypotheses development**

Attitude is viewed as an individual having an encouraging or adverse perception of a specific conduct (Ajzen, 1991). Ferdous and Polonsky (2013) reported that previous actions and attitudes are objectively proven to impact moral decisions among salespeople in Bangladesh. When managers have a favourable attitude toward making effective decisions in the workplace, it sparks ethical intent (Kashif et al., 2017). Additionally, it was discovered that in large public organisations, employees'

intentions to share knowledge were significantly impacted by their attitudes toward doing so (Akhavan et al., 2015). Aside from job satisfaction, organisational dedication, and job involvement, employee attitudes toward their work also appear to be influenced by the perception of politics and support (Cropanzano et al., 1997). Furthermore, Mohammad et al.'s (2018) study supports the idea that workers who perform well on Islamic work ethics are more likely to show positive attitudes and behaviours that can support the success and sustainability of their organisation. Hence, H<sub>1</sub> was postulated as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: Attitude and Islamic work behaviour are significantly related.

Reading Ajzen and Driver's (1980) work, subjective norms are the observed pressures exerted by social circles. This includes family members, best friends and teachers, inter alia, which can affect the decision of a person towards a particular use of a system through persuasion, which can have an impact on acceptance. Besides, the influence of subjective norms on virtuous intentions is weak in terms of its significance, stimulating novel hypothetical deliberation (Samad et al., 2021). According to Schepers and Wetzels (2007), persons who believe in subjective norms are inclined to act in agreement with what their peers believe. Even if their values or beliefs are different, the greater the subjective standard, the more probable it is that an individual will feel compelled to engage in the behaviour (Aminnuddin, 2019). Similarly, the greater their control on a specific deed, the better the engagement to be made – the better the behaviour to depart (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). As a result, perceived behavioural control refers to a personality's ability to regulate a specific performance. Therefore, H<sub>2</sub> was suggested as follows:

H<sub>2</sub>: Social norms and Islamic work behaviour are significantly related.

Although some folks breed sound intentions, their normal settings may not help adopt and sustain certain behaviours (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). The link between perceived behavioural control and Islamic work behaviours is crucial because it will enhance Islamic work behaviour if the behavioural intention is positive. There was an empirical study to support the link between perceived behavioural control and Islamic work behaviour. According to prior studies, an employee's Islamic work ethic, or how much they adhere to Islamic work values at work, may give them the optimistic vigour and inspiration they need to put forth hard-working work effort, collaboration, and decently upright behaviour (Murtaza et al., 2016; Ali, 2005). Islamic values may therefore be a particularly significant inspiration for unrestricted undertakings that aid colleagues in organising their careers effectually since any situation that is perceived as hypothetically damaging members of companies is typically intolerable (Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008). Thus, H<sub>3</sub> was proposed as follows:

H<sub>3</sub>: Perceived behavioural control and Islamic work behaviour are significantly related.

Hamid (2003) defined piety as the measure of one's soul's strength concerning God, expressed through instinctive fears of committing acts displeasing to Him. According to Bhatti et al. (2015), one of the most important characteristics of a Muslim is piety

which encompasses both spiritual and social responsibilities, and the best characteristics of a person can be seen when they maintain their Islamic piety. Moreover, Sarif (2021) stated that piety is characterised by genuineness, veracity, astuteness, and constancy in engendering moral verdicts and actions, while any inadequacy in ethical decisions and actions reflects a deficiency in piety. According to Zahrah et al. (2016), work is a spiritual compulsion for Muslims, and Islam necessitates that Muslim teams effectively achieve their jobs to pursue the blessings of God. The idea of piety in Islamic psychology refers to a wide range of behaviours, social cohesion, personal development and self-improvement, to mention some (Nazam et al., 2022). Hence, practising and demonstrating the values of piety not only enhances employee performance but also contributes to a happier workforce (Maham & Bhatti, 2019). Hence, H<sub>4</sub> was hypothesised as follows:

H<sub>4</sub>: Piety and Islamic work behaviour are significantly related.

Furthermore, Galderisi et al. (2015) considered those in excellent mental health to have a solely constructive effect, characterised by emotions of enjoyment and a sense of power over the surroundings. Mental health is classified into three categories: emotional happiness, psychological comfort, and social good. In the current context, one who works better tends to have emotional well-being by expressing it through contentment, concentration in performing duties, and gratification, whereas spiritual happiness includes fondness greatest shares of one's character and being decent at handling the responsibility at the workplace. According to Keyes (2014), social well-being is associated with societal contributions. It is a state of comfort that helps personalities deal with the typical concerns of lifespan with wisdom and reasoning (Fusar-Poli et al., 2020). In our case, Islamic work behaviour can lead to social well-being due to one's dedication and commitment to jobs done. However, a particular topic of Islamic work behaviour and mental health goodness has acknowledged slight observed inquiry attention and interventions for improving public officials' etiquette are not well established. Consequently, H<sub>5</sub> was developed as follows:

H<sub>5</sub>: Islamic work behaviour and mental health goodness are significantly related.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Subjects**

404 public officials were the research participants drawn from two Malaysian public universities. We utilised judgmental sampling to select respondents gauged based on their knowledge of good work behaviour, working experiences (> 2 years) and their willingness to practice Islamic work behaviour profoundly in the future. A pilot test involving 30 subjects was conducted. It was found that the items asked had sufficient clarity and therefore only the layout of the form was refined before the actual investigation. The investigation was conducted from a period of 1 April 2023 – 31 August 2023 via Google Forms. Table 1 depicts the respondents' profiles.

**Table 1: Profile of respondents**

Variable	Frequency	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	252	62.4
Female	152	37.6
<i>Ethnic</i>		
Malay	84	20.8
Indigenous Sabah	276	68.3
Indigenous Sarawak	44	10.9
<i>Age</i>		
< 20	24	5.9
21-30	232	57.4
31-40	92	22.8
> 41	56	13.9

Source: Table by Authors

### 3.2 Instrument

A questionnaire was developed to reflect the context of this study. All items employed in this work were adapted from past investigators related. Each construct developed had five items each and was gauged using a 5-Liket scale, chosen due to its flexibility and convenience factors. The items were approved for face validity by three experts in management and ethics. Table 2 presents the assessed inventory items of this study along with percentages and numbers.

**Table 2: Experts' face validity**

Construct	Battery item	Your assessment			Retained
		Perfect match	Moderate match	Poor match	
AT1	Working Islamically is a good idea	100% (3)			Yes
AT2	Working Islamically is rewarding	100% (3)			Yes
AT3	Working Islamically is beneficial	100% (3)			Yes
AT4	Working Islamically is a wise idea	100% (3)			Yes
AT5	Working Islamically is a positive idea	100% (3)			Yes
SN1	My family members think working Islamically is important	33.33% (1)	66.67% (2)		Yes
SN2	My friends think working Islamically is important	33.33% (1)	66.67% (2)		Yes
SN3	My online friends think working Islamically is important	33.33% (1)	66.67% (2)		Yes
SN4	My best friends think working Islamically is important		100% (3)		Yes
SN5	My parents think working Islamically is valuable	100% (3)			Yes
PBC1	I can work Islamically	33.33% (1)	66.67% (2)		Yes
PBC2	I can ask others what to do correctly		100% (3)		Yes
PBC3	I can control my work	100% (3)			Yes
PBC4	I have the knowledge to work Islamically	33.33% (1)	66.67% (2)		Yes
PBC5	I have the wisdom to work Islamically	33.33% (1)	66.67% (2)		Yes
PTY1	I believe God sees my work	100% (3)			Yes
PTY2	I believe in God in all of my doings	100% (3)			Yes
PTY3	I believe in remembering God before I start working	100% (3)			Yes
PTY4	I believe in thanking God when I complete my jobs	100% (3)			Yes

PTY5	I believe in asking God for help whenever I face difficulty in my work	100% (3)		Yes
IWB1	I work every day sincerely	100% (3)		Yes
IWB2	I work frequently for my God	100% (3)		Yes
IWB3	I often work with a good character	100% (3)		Yes
IWB4	I pray before I begin my work	100% (3)		Yes
IWB5	I have worked continuously in an Islamic manner	100% (3)		Yes
MHG1	I feel fulfilled if I choose to work ethically		100% (3)	Yes
MHG2	I feel the blessing of happiness every time I work Islamically		100% (3)	Yes
MHG3	I feel comfort whenever I do a good deed	66.67% (2)	33.33% (1)	Yes
MHG4	I feel peace of mind if I do things encouraged by religion	66.67% (2)	33.33% (1)	Yes
MHG5	Working Islamically makes me feel happy	100% (3)		Yes

Source: Table by Authors

### **3.3 Data analysis**

The current study analysed the data through the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 21. SPSS was chosen due to its flexibility and dynamic features of statistical analyses. The collected data were keyed to provide comprehensible and systematic analyses using the SPSS.

To analyse the data obtained, four (4) stages are considered as follows:

- a) First, factor analyses were conducted to identify measurement items that represent the constructs covering independent and dependent variables, under consideration;
- b) Second, reliability tests were conducted to define whether the scales demonstrating the constructs under observation have reliable internal consistency or not;
- c) Third, correlation tests were conducted to acknowledge the measurements' interaction to circumvent multicollinearity questions; and
- d) Fourth, multiple regression models were taken to answer the research objective.

## **4. RESULTS**

### **4.1 Factor and reliability tests**

Based on the research protocols, we first performed factor analysis to validate the constructs' items. The factor loadings obtained for all items involved were satisfactory. They represented the constructs that they were supposed to gauge. The standard recommended value used was 0.6 and all items met this threshold for significant validity of the items tested (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). There are three different factor analyses conducted for independent variables, Islamic work behaviour and mental health goodness, but combined in terms of their loadings in Table 2 for enhanced clarity and presentation. Table 3 also displays Cronbach's alpha of each construct. All values ranged from .955 to .987 (threshold value is  $> .6$ ) for approved internal consistency.

**Table 3: Validity and reliability**

Construct	Battery item	Loadings	Cronbach's $\alpha$
AT1	Working Islamically is a good idea	0.824	0.987
AT2	Working Islamically is rewarding	0.836	
AT3	Working Islamically is beneficial	0.837	
AT4	Working Islamically is a wise idea	0.820	
AT5	Working Islamically is a positive idea	0.830	
SN1	My family members think working Islamically is important	0.783	0.968
SN2	My friends think working Islamically is important	0.845	
SN3	My online friends think working Islamically is important	0.836	
SN4	My best friends think working Islamically is important	0.858	
SN5	My parents think working Islamically is valuable	0.839	
PBC1	I can work Islamically	0.792	0.984
PBC2	I can ask others what to do correctly	0.799	
PBC3	I can control my work	0.838	
PBC4	I have the knowledge to work Islamically	0.810	
PBC5	I have the wisdom to work Islamically	0.713	
PTY1	I believe God sees my work	0.852	0.979
PTY2	I believe in God in all of my doings	0.858	
PTY3	I believe in remembering God before I start working	0.853	
PTY4	I believe in thanking God when I complete my jobs	0.819	
PTY5	I believe in asking God for help whenever I face difficulty in my work	0.836	
IWB1	I work every day sincerely	0.953	0.981
IWB2	I work frequently for my God	0.974	
IWB3	I often work with a good character	0.972	
IWB4	I pray before I begin my work	0.963	
IWB5	I have worked continuously in an Islamic manner	0.962	
MHG1	I feel fulfilled if I choose to work ethically	0.890	0.955
MHG2	I feel the blessing of happiness every time I work Islamically	0.936	
MHG3	I feel comfort whenever I do a good deed	0.923	
MHG4	I feel peace of mind if I do things encouraged by religion	0.920	
MHG5	Working Islamically makes me feel happy	0.934	

Notes: ATT=Attitude, SN=Subjective norm, PTY=Piety, PBC=Perceived behavioural control, IWB=Islamic work behaviour and MHG=Mental health goodness.

Source: Table by Authors

#### 4.2 Correlation

Furthermore, Table 4 displays the results of the correlations between the variables evaluated. Correlations are not employed to address research questions but rather to highlight multicollinearity issues. The intercorrelation values between the constructs were reported as less than .8 (the recommended value), and therefore the chance of multicollinearity was minimal. Hence, all components were maintained for regression analysis.

**Table 4: Multicollinearity test**

Construct	ATT	SN	PTY	PBC	IWB	MHG
ATT	1					
SN	.674**	1				
PTY	.697**	.586**	1			
PBC	.704**	.711**	.711**	1		
IWB	.658**	.757**	.695**	.643**	1	
MHG	.555**	.499**	.543**	.618**	.773**	1
Mean	4.362	4.149	4.454	4.297	4.224	4.307

Std. Deviation	0.916	0.832	0.868	0.888	0.915	0.604
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\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
 Notes: ATT=Attitude, SN=Subjective norm, PTY=Piety, PBC=Perceived behavioural control, IWB=Islamic work behaviour and MHG=Mental health goodness.  
 Source: Table by Authors

### 4.3 Regression models and discussions

Two regression analyses were conducted as depicted in Table 5. The first model involved the influences of attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and piety on Islamic work behaviour. The second model involved the influence of Islamic work behaviour on mental health goodness. As for the first model, the attitude was significantly related to Islamic work behaviour ( $\beta=.247, p < .001$ ). This finding is aligned with past investigators namely Kashif et al. (2017) and Mohammad et al. (2018) who revealed that attitude is essential in shaping ethical behaviours, extending their results to include Islamic work behaviour and mental health goodness.

**Table 5: Regression models**

Construct	$\beta$	t-value	p-value	Tolerance	VIF	Hypothesis	Supported
<b>Model #1</b>							
ATT	.247	5.315	.000	.193	5.172	H <sub>1</sub>	Yes
SN	.176	5.259	.000	.372	2.690	H <sub>2</sub>	Yes
PBC	.254	7.289	.000	.344	2.905	H <sub>3</sub>	Yes
PTY	.338	9.327	.000	.317	3.150	H <sub>4</sub>	Yes
F-value				498.181** (.000)			
R <sup>2</sup>				.833			
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>				.832			
Durbin-Watson				2.156			
Construct	$\beta$	t-value	p-value	Tolerance	VIF	Hypothesis	Supported
<b>Model #2</b>							
MHG	.773	24.400	.000	1.000	1.000	H <sub>5</sub>	Yes
F-value				595.345** (.000)			
R <sup>2</sup>				.597			
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>				.596			
Durbin-Watson				1.937			

Notes: \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < .01, ns – not significant; ATT=Attitude, SN=Subjective norm, PTY=Piety, PBC=Perceived behavioural control, IWB=Islamic work behaviour and MHG=Mental health goodness.  
 Source: Table by Authors

Subjective norm was a contributing factor to explaining Islamic work behaviour ( $\beta=.176, p < .001$ ) and this outcome is supported by past studies by Aminnuddin (2019) and Samad et al. (2021), who reported earlier that subjective norm is essential in leading to the formation of behaviour. Additionally, perceived behavioural control was shaping Islamic work behaviour significantly ( $\beta=.254, p < .001$ ). The resource in performing this behaviour has been essential in previous investigations (Ali, 2005; Murtaza et al., 2016) and therefore confirms the current finding. As for piety, it was significantly related to Islamic work behaviour ( $\beta=.338, p < .001$ ). Past studies like Hamid (2003) and Bhatti et al. (2015) confirmed this outcome, which extends these works' suitability to the current context, where piety comes into play. All hypotheses were supported. As for the second model, Islamic work behaviour was considerably connected to mental health goodness ( $\beta=.773, p < .001$ ). The significance of mental health goodness is claimed by Keyes (2014) and Galderisi et al. (2015) and our findings proved their assertions.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This study examined factors determining Islamic work behaviour by applying the TPB. The results reported were favourable to indicate the framework developed for Islamic work behaviour and mental health goodness is valid and significant. This study demonstrated some key implications as follows

### **5.1 Theoretical contribution**

Worth mentioning, that the TPB has been limited when it comes to Islamic work behaviour. The current result suggests that the TPB is valid in explaining the behaviour and therefore lengthens its applicability through the inclusion of Islamic work behaviour and mental health goodness. What is more, this study reported new findings pertinent to the factors that explain Islamic work behaviour which in turn affects mental health goodness. All relationships were found to be significant and relevant, also suggesting the framework developed is valid to reflect the context. Likewise, the integration of theory is another contribution that this study can drive and adds a new dimension to the TPB for improved predictive power. We added piety and mental health goodness to the TPB to breed a modified TPB for Islamic work behaviour and mental health goodness.

### **5.2 Methodological contribution**

On another note, this study suggested five items each for the constructs examined in this study including piety, Islamic work behaviour and mental health goodness. The items were refined for face validity by three experts with doctoral degrees in management and ethics. The items were then refined further through a pilot test for clarity purposes before the actual survey. All of them were gauged using a 5-Likert scale, which is viewed as convenient and time-saving for respondents to provide their feedback. These dimensions, including attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and piety, were constructed from cognitive viewpoints. Besides, Islamic work behaviour items were established from conative perspectives and mental health goodness items were developed from the context of affect or feelings.

### **5.3 Practical contribution**

Attitude can be shaped if code of soul (COSO) is developed to provide a guide for improved pro-social at workplaces. COSO includes Islamic values like monotheism, sincerity, God-consciousness, justice and good character for improved flows of duties to all layers of employees at universities. Developing a champion among employees can accelerate the significant role that subjective norms play to stimulate harmonious relationships at workplace for improved mental health goodness. Besides, continued training about Islamic etiquette in performing jobs through the inclusion of team building can improve perceived behavioural control among staff. Besides, a mental health good culture can be developed by providing a link with Islamic work behaviour and piety through training and supportive policies (i.e. flexible working hours), among others. The culture should consider spiritual growth and connection with God for quality work done and leads to inner peace and contentment, at best.

### **5.4 Precincts and future studies**

This investigation like others has certain drawbacks in terms of the theory chosen, settings and country considered. Future studies can consider different theories,

settings and countries chosen to extend the findings for new perspectives and contributions to the knowledge base in this area. In spite of the precincts communicated here, this work navigates the prominence of Islamic work behaviour by explaining its patronage factors. The influence of Islamic work behaviour on mental health goodness is also fruitful. Importantly, this work shapes the behaviour and worldview of public officials from two universities involved, at best.

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