

## Work Behavior Constructs in Islamic Perspective: An Exploratory Research

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**Abstract:** Since the early twentieth century, management theories have brought forth work behavior constructs through numerous approaches such as the scientific approach, humanistic approach, system approach and many more. However, in the making of these work behavior constructs, religion has always been sidelined. Although Islamic management scholars have come up with Islamic theories according to the Quran and hadiths, there is hardly any empirical proof to support these theories. This paper is an exploratory research aiming to determine the construct of work behaviors from the Islamic perspective. The instrument that was developed is more practical to assess Muslims' behavior holistically in the work place due to the major role religion plays in a Muslim's life. The foundation of the constructs and items in the instrument are derived from the Quran and hadiths. A total of fifty-one items were successfully extracted from the essence of Quran and hadiths. Experts from the faculty of Islamic Studies, Psychology and Management were consulted to determine the content validity of the items, while factor analysis was used to analyse the reliability of the constructs. Data from 100 administration officers of a public university in Malaysia was analysed using principal component factor analysis. Six sub-constructs were successfully extracted from the two main constructs, *al-qawiy* (Ability) and *al-amin* (Trustworthiness). The two main constructs have an alpha coefficient of .95 and .94. *Al-qawiy* construct consists of three sub-constructs, namely *Professional*, *Competent* and *Sensitive* with an alpha coefficient value of .93, .90 and .85 respectively. As for the *al-amin* construct, it also consists of three sub-constructs namely *Integrity*, *Just* and *Principled* with an alpha coefficient value of .88, .89 and .85 respectively. The outcome of this exploratory research proves that Islam integrates human nature and practical needs in a working surrounding across time. The output contributed to the literature of related research field such as the psychology of religion, organizational psychology and management, thus providing an alternative to assess Muslims' work behaviors more realistically.

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Research on Islamic work behavior

This exploratory research was done to fill a gap that was left behind by researchers in the field of management and organizational psychology, which is the integration of religion in work behavioral constructs. This gap exist due to the fact that only a handful of scholars in this field recognized the role of religion in the public administration [1]. Although the role of religion is recognized in the society, management scholars especially, still neglect religion in their research [2].

The literature concerning human resource management based on Islamic virtue is very limited [3] and the constructs of work behavior in an Islamic perspective is rarely discussed and studied [4]. Why

does this area of research is considered important because previous research on work behavior that include Muslims sample does not assess their real potential. This is because the instruments that were used to assessed their work attitude and behavior did not take into account the fundamental concepts of work in Islamic perspective such as working as an ibadah (worship) and the ultimate goal of achieving God's blessing in the hereafter [5]. Furthermore, Muslim scholars have addressed their concern on the weakness of today's management theories that separate values from organization, whereas Islamic management stands on the pillars of human values [6].

In an Islamic perspective, thoughts on management are directly base on the Quran and hadiths of the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) [6]. Islam also focuses on the abilities and skills of a worker, beside noble virtues and attitudes [7]. Unfortunately, most instruments available that are meant to assess work attitude or behavior do not comply to the fundamentals of Islam. In this present study, we tried to develop an instrument from the Muslim work constructs based on the Quran dan hadiths.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Sample

The sample were taken by purposive to achieve criterion validity. A total of 100 mid-management administrators from a public university in Malaysia were taken as sample. Permission from the Head of Human Resource Division was granted and sets of questionnaires were given to all 183 administrator. 102 questionnaires were returned (55.7%) after a period of two weeks. Out of the 102 questionnaires that were returned, two of them were rejected because it was not completed accordingly.

### 2.2 Measures

Characteristics of the best worker are mentioned clearly in the 26<sup>th</sup> verse of surah *al-Qasas* in the Quran: "And said one of them (the two women): "O my father! Hire him! Verily, the best of men for you to hire is the strong (*al-qawiy*), the trustworthy (*al-amin*)".

The shaping of the Muslim Work Behavior Inventory started from the identification of sub-constructs to the two main constructs, *al-qawiy* and *al-amin*, that was obtained from the Quran, hadiths and Islamic scholars. *Al-qawiy* and *al-amin* were translated by Islamic scholar as strength and trustworthiness [8]. *Al-qawiy* is related to competency, capable to execute a job efficiently by having talent, knowledge and ability; while *al-amin* is having a sense of fear towards Allah in every action taken. In modern terms, *al-amin* can also be define as integrity [9, 10].

Sub-constructs were also strengthened by an interview session with a high profile administrator of a higher learning institute in Malaysia. She was chosen mainly because of her excellence throughout her career as a Registrar at the university and her achievements at the nasional level as a public university administrator.

A total of 24 sub-constructs have been identified. Nine sub-constructs were extracted from *al-amin* and 15 sub-constructs were extracted from *al-qawiy*. The sub-constructs for *al-qawiy* are *Commitment, Accountability, Responsibility, Wise, Motivated, Competitive, Skillful, Self-image, Effective, Efficient, Productive, Quality, Empathy, Responsive, and Innovative*. The nine sub-constructs for *al-amin* are *Honesty, Sincere, Grateful, Altruistic, Principled, Transparent, Just, Fear of God, and Integrity*.

The Quran and hadith were used as the main references in the extraction of items to ensure that the items truly reflect the sub-constructs. Items in the form of sentences were built based on two methods. First, it is based on the essence of the verses of Quran and hadiths. Second, it was based on the reality of behavior in the workplace. Both methods were done carefully so that it won't involve the cognitive and affective aspect. A total of 51 items were extracted.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Reliability and validity assessments

The items were referred to experts, each specialized in psychology, Islamic study and management to

get the face validity and content validity. The experts were given a set of documents that contains information on the constructs, sub-constructs and items. They were asked to give their assessment on the items in a scale of one to three, one is 'not accurate', two is 'less accurate', and three is 'accurate'. The min score of the three assessment is 2.7.

The five option Likert scale questionnaires were administrated to 183 respondents from a public university in Malaysia. The data obtained were used to clarified the inter-item correlation. Exploratory factor analysis with principal component and varimax rotation methods was run several times to the items from each construct to gain the best output in terms of the value of Cronbach alpha and exact sub-constructs.

Three factors were extracted with an alpha value of .93, .90 and .83 respectively. Three component with an eigen value of greater than 1.0 were extracted, which explained 59.97% of the total varians. All of the items were catagorised into three factors with loading values of more than .33. Factor one contains 15 items, factor two contains nine items and factor three contains five items. Two items were dismissed from al-qawiy construct because the cross-loading between sub-constructs are more than .50. Cronbach reliability test of the construct after the two items were remove showed a value of .96.

Table 1: Output of exploratory factor analysis for *al-qawiy* construct.

No. Item	1	2	3
ITEM12	.806		
ITEM11	.732		
ITEM1	.730		
ITEM9	.720		
ITEM7	.668		
ITEM2	.640		
ITEM5	.638		
ITEM10	.610		
ITEM37	.592		
ITEM6	.569		
ITEM4	.567		
ITEM15	.533		
ITEM38	.532		
ITEM8		.433	
ITEM27		.441	
ITEM32		.781	
ITEM29		.694	
ITEM30		.692	
ITEM33		.662	
ITEM35		.660	
ITEM31		.600	
ITEM26		.581	
ITEM25		.575	
ITEM34		.569	
ITEM14			.818
ITEM36			.787
ITEM13			.785
ITEM3			.586
ITEM28			.580

n = 100, p < 0.001

*Al-amin* construct produced three factors with an alpha value of .89, .88 and .85. Components with an eigen value more than 1.0 explained 61.71% of the total varians. All items in the construct is catagories into three factors with factor loading more than .33. Factor one consist of nine items, factor two consist of eight items, and factor three consist of five items. One item was dismissed from

*al-amin* construct because the cross-loading value is more than .5. Cronbach alpha reliability test after the item was dismissed shows a value of .94.

Table 2: Output of exploratory factor analysis for *al-amin* construct.

No. Item	1	2	3
ITEM24	.758		
ITEM46	.737		
ITEM23	.697		
ITEM19	.645		
ITEM18	.625		
ITEM40	.594		
ITEM47	.573		
ITEM41	.525		
ITEM16	.487		
ITEM42		.806	
ITEM39		.759	
ITEM22		.682	
ITEM50		.669	
ITEM45		.655	
ITEM48		.635	
ITEM49		.606	
ITEM43		.545	
ITEM21			.862
ITEM51			.721
ITEM17			.655
ITEM20			.576
ITEM44			.488

n = 100, p < 0.001

Overall, six sub-constructs were successfully extracted from the two main constructs, *al-qawiy* (Strength) and *al-amin* (Trustworthiness). The two main constructs have an alpha coefficient of .96 and .94. *Al-qawiy* construct consists of three sub-constructs, namely *Professional*, *Competent* and *Sensitive* with an alpha coefficient value of .93, .90 and .85 respectively. As for the *al-amin* construct, it also consists of three sub-constructs namely *Integrity*, *Just* and *Principled* with an alpha coefficient value of .88, .89 and .85 respectively.

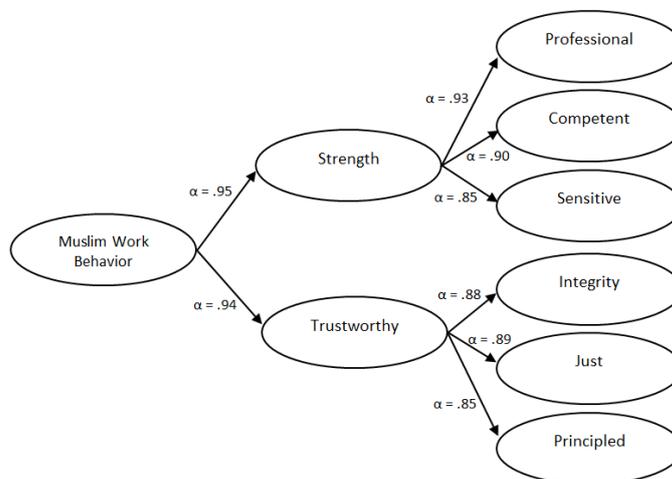


Fig.1. Constructs and sub-constructs of Muslim Work Behavior

### 3.2 Limitations

The Muslim Work Behavior Inventory uses sample from only one line of work, that is management and administration. Due to this niche, the inventory is more suitable for public administration sector and may not be suitable for use by other line of jobs such as entertainer or teacher. The inventory also concentrates solely on the behavior aspect of a worker and exclude the cognitive and affective aspects of a worker.

### 3.3 Directions for future research

While results are encouraging, further confirmatory analysis should be conduct on different work samples. In addition, multiple methods of research should be used to cross-validate these measures, including employee interview.

## 4. Summary

From this exploratory research, we conclude that there is two main constructs in a Muslim work behavior, which is *Strength (al-qawiy)* and *Trustworthiness (al-amin)*; and six sub-constructs which is *Professional, Competent, Sensitive, Integrity, Just* and *Principled*. The outcome of this exploratory research proves that Islam integrates human nature and practical needs in a working surrounding across time. The output contributed to the literature of related research field such as the psychology of religion, organizational psychology and management, thus providing an alternative to assess Muslims' work behaviors more realistically.

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