FORMULATING ISLAMIC INTEGRITY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (MY INTEG) MODEL FOR PROFESSIONAL MUSLIM WORKFORCES

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Abstract

Malaysia's corruption index has remained a persistent problem, with an escalating percentage. Despite governmental measures, the public sector is particularly vulnerable to corruption which possibly stemming from governance deficiencies. This will not only lead to financial losses but will also undermine public employees' integrity and national security as immoral practices will deter international investors. On the other hand, religious principles often play a significant role in shaping one's behaviour. This addresses that moral and ethical conduct in the workplace is crucial in fostering a more positive work environment. Ironically, Malaysia which is comprised of majority Muslim failed to prove this statement though Islam is known as a religion that emphasizes noble character. Thus, this study aims to explore the relationship between integrity and level of unethical behavior among professional Muslim workforces. This study will also investigate whether one's religious practice appreciation is affecting these two variables. Several previous studies have examined the religiosity effect on unethical conduct but without considering other determinants such as level of religious activities or devotion (*Ibadah*). This study will employ a sequential mixed model research starting with a qualitative design through focus group interview and later followed by a quantitative phase by using a questionnaire. Consequently, it is expected that the end product of this study is to produce a new model of Islamic integrity that would be a guideline for professional Muslim workforces to embark their venture and sustain in the long run.
Keywords: Ethics, Islamic, Integrity, Religiosity, Self-Assessment

Introduction

Unethical behaviour includes a wide range of illegal and non-ethical activities, including bribery, embezzlement, fraud and abuse of power for personal gain. Corruption is considered one of the most worrisome problems which rooted from unethical behaviour (Sajari et al., 2019). This phenomenon has become a problem in workplaces and is seen to threaten economic development, can erode public trust and will pose great challenges to good-governance as well as community well-being (Vivien et al., 2023). In various sectors and countries, cases of corruption have emerged as an urgent concern which requires in-depth research and analysis to understand its causes, consequences and potential solutions (Okon, 2022).

Corruption has become a global phenomenon which involves professional workers from different agencies, from public to private sectors. This may be due to poor governance in procurement, law enforcement agencies, as well as administration areas which has not only resulted in public fund loss but also causes the public employees' integrity in ensuring the country's security and

prosperity to be questioned. However, despite measures taken by the government, the public sectors appear to be the riskiest sector for corrupt activities. This corruption high-risk phenomenon in the public sector is shown by statistics from the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC). Hence, other solution is needed in order to combat this problem.

Immoral and unethical practices will erode international investor's trust and confidence towards the Malaysian public service's reliability and accountability. According to Husin (2018), this is due to non-adherence of individuals to ethical values and religious principles. Few studies have shown that religion plays a significant role in shaping one's behavior (Haji-Othman & Fisol, 2017). Therefore, prior emphasis should be given to govern the moral and ethical conduct of employees at the workplace because one's religious knowledge and his attitude to adhere to religious values and practices are an advantage to improve social and psychological work environment.

Islam, as a comprehensive way of life, encompasses various aspects of human behaviour and morality. In Islamic view, integrity and ethics play a crucial role in guiding individuals towards righteousness and goodness. Indeed, integrity and ethics are foundational principles in Islam, guiding Muslims in their pursuit of moral conduct. In today's rapidly-changing world, the significance of integrity and ethics cannot be ignored (Jasmi et al., 2022). Ironically, Malaysia which its majority are Muslims fails to prove this statement. This can be seen from the corruption cases that is still uprising and concerning. Thus, it is necessary to address the issue of unethical misconduct between workforces in Malaysia especially those who are Muslim. Henceforth, this study intends to fill the gaps by focusing on Islamic integrity and religiosity of Malaysia's Muslim professional workforces. This study aims to create a benchmark on Islamic integrity for professional Muslim workforces in order to become workforces with integrity.

Background of Study/ Problem Statement

Unethical behavior in workplaces continue to become a crucial problem in various organizations and sectors, whether it is public or private. Corruption is considered one of the most alarming problems faced by Malaysia, referring to its statistic which continue to arise from year to year. Despite the implementations of current measures taken, rate of corruptions is still failed to be handled, especially among the public sectors. This action includes the act of introducing policies that are believed to help in putting corruption to an end, which are, Twelfth Malaysia Plan 2021 (RMK 12), Shared Prosperity Vision 2030, National Anti-Corruption Plan 2019-2033 (NACP) and The Malaysian Institute of Integrity Anti-Corruption Plan 2021-2025. Hence, another form of initiative must be used to alleviate this problem and to eventually exterminate it.

A few research consistently suggests that religious values and moral principles can positively influence individual ethics. Voluminous studies have examined the impact of religiosity in many areas. According to studies conducted by Maisarah et al. (2009), Tiliouine *et al.* (2009) and Khraim (2010), religiosity plays an important role in influencing one's ethic and also one's life. While result from study by Anderson & Costello (2009) found that spirituality has a significant positive correlation with satisfaction of life. This study was supported by result by Tiliouine *et al.* (2009) which found that religiosity improved one's satisfaction towards life (Haji-Othman & Fisol, 2017). Generally, all teachings of religions urge into promoting good behavior and discourage bad

behavior to their followers. This is why religiosity in turn influences one's behavior in certain circumstances.

Focusing on the teachings of Islam, integrity and ethics have been known to be its foundational principles (Pratiwi, 2019). This can be seen from the hadith of prophet Muhammad saw. which explains the purpose of him being sent as the Messenger of Allah in the first place was to correct and improve the morals of the ignorant Arab society during the time. This shows how high Islam sees moral integrity is among its believers. Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah saw. said, "*I was sent to perfect good character*" (HR. Bukhari)

There are many other hadith and Quranic verses that highlight how Islam emphasizes ethics and morals for the Muslims to imply in daily lives. Islam is a comprehensive way of life which provides guidelines and teachings, derived from the holy book of Islam (al-Quran) and recorded sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad saw. (hadith), for Muslims to follow. Islamic religiosity involves a deep commitment to these teachings as well as a conscious effort in incorporating them in every aspect of one's life. In line with this, a large body from few literatures has found that Islamic work ethics play a significant role in shaping the moral identity of individuals (Abuznaid, 2009).

Muslim integrity enhancement is frequently associated with individual commitment in religious practice. Muslims, especially those in Malaysia, believe that Islam is not only a religion, but is also a guidance which promotes a guideline for one's whole life. In fact, Islam, through knowledge, skills, and spiritual combination, should be internalized in the soul while being practically expressed through religious practices, which ultimately provides a momentum on the inner strength development holistically. Religion is capable of forming and enhancing human beings' value in terms of mental, physical, emotional and spiritual elements (Mohd Zin et al., 2021). Yet, nowadays, the increasing evidence of Muslims who commit unethical behaviour in the workplace has become common, which indicates their religious belief has decreased.

The rise in ethical problem among workforces in Malaysia is seen to be an urge for an integrated transformation plan to be formulated as to exterminate this problem. An integrated plan is needed to enhance the integrity, awareness, commitment, and cooperation among workforces, especially those who are Muslim. According to Islamic teachings, it is emphasized that maintaining integrity is crucial for the well-being of society. Ignoring integrity will undermine the foundation of trust and honesty which is necessary for a harmonious and just community (Ikhsan et al., 2020). Besides, it also will have spiritual consequences in Islam where it can lead to distancing oneself from the teachings of Allah and deviating from the path of righteousness. This can result in a loss of blessings and spiritual growth, hindering one's journey towards salvation and the ultimate goal of attaining closeness to Allah and entering paradise (Hashim, 2012). Allah swt. said in QS. al-Baqarah (2) verse 188, "*Do not consume one another's wealth unjustly, nor deliberately bribe authorities in order to devour a portion of others' property, knowing that it is a sin.*"

To address this problem and foster ethical behavior, there is a need to develop self-assessment tool for the Muslim workforces. This tool will serve as a benchmark to encourage and measure one's integrity based on teachings of Islam which are the results from the drawing inspiration from the

potential moral impact of religious values. Although self-assessment tool for religiosity existed before, but previous researchers focus on Christianity and Judaism teachings. Majority of existing religiosity measurements have been developed from these worldviews. This implies not only that the items used to assess religiosity reflect the tenets and practices of Judaism and Christianity, but often that the items are based on specific assumption about each of the components highlighted by Funk (2001) in his model of worldview composition (Sulaiman et al., 2022). Therefore, differences in religious worldview also have important implications for understanding how measures for different populations have been developed and applied. Moreover, Islamic teachings is far different from other religions especially regarding the *Aqidah* of the Muslims.

Hence, the need of a specific self-assessment tool for Islamic integrity is crucial. This study aims to fill the gaps of study regarding integrity and unethical behaviour which focuses on the Muslims and based on Islamic teachings. The central problem to be researched in this proposed study is the absence of self-assessment tool that can act as an indicator whether a professional Muslim is a workforce with integrity in accordance with the teachings of Islam. This is related to the questions, whether the integrity and religious practice appreciation have a positive relationship? If they are interrelated, what is the intended practice? Thus, this study aims to formulate Islamic Integrity Self-Assessment Tool (My INTEG) Model for professional Muslim workforces which can be used to encourage professional Muslim workforces to become workforces with integrity.

Literature Review

Integrity Issues

Malaysia's Corruption Perception Index was the highest in 2019 with a score of 53 (Transparency International, 2021). 14th Global Fraud Survey 2016 conducted by Ernst Young found that 80% of Malaysian respondents willing to engage at least one form of unethical behaviour. This includes backdate of a contract, extend monthly reporting period, changes valuations and reserves assumptions and book revenues earlier than it should be to meet the company's financial target (Salin et al., 2020). Starting from 2019 to 2022, Malaysia continues to drop points in Transparency International's (TI) Corruption Index (CPI) (Hammim, 2023; Transparency International, 2021). In 2022, the CPI shows a score of 47, with the rank of 62nd out of 180 countries.

Although showing a decrease in level of corruption, Malaysia is still considered threatened by the problem of corruption since the statistic is showing a large number of cases. Thus, efforts to eliminate this problem need to be more intensified. The Malaysian government has spent a great deal of resources, time, and effort in seeking the best way to improve public sector performance. Since its independence in 1957, the Malaysian government has implemented numerous programs aimed to instil moral values and integrity in the public service. Since the 1980s, proactive steps have been taken to promote concepts such as, "Clean, Efficient, and Trustworthy" (Bersih, Cekap, dan Amanah), "Integration of Islamic Values" (Penerapan Nilai-nilai Islam), "Excellent Work Culture" (Budaya Kerja Cemerlang), "Code of Work Ethics" (Kod Etika Kerja), "Client's Charter" (Piagam Pelanggan), and "ISO 9000" (Husin, 2018). The government has also introduced the Government Transformation Program (GTP), in which the government intended to focus on improving public services in Malaysia.

Unfortunately, according to Tajuddin and Ahmad (2013) in Husin (2018), despite these extensive efforts, the public service is still receiving complaints due to its lack of performance and lack of responsiveness to the people's needs. Malaysia, especially its public service, has continuously experience problems pertaining to corruption, incompetency, complicated procedures or delays in providing services, as well as lack of professionalism in carrying out its tasks (Yahya et al., 2016). Failure to address these problems will lead to disparaging consequences to individual and organisation performances (Husin, 2018). In order to achieve a status of developed and inclusive country, government has implemented various initiatives to enhance economic growth for the country well-being. This include the implementation of the national integrity agenda which is an important idea towards elevating Malaysia as a country that is able to compete within international stage.

Integrity is the main prerequisite and act as a foundation for a country to achieve progress and enhance competitiveness. Therefore, the efforts to strengthen the virtue values, ethics and integrity become the country's priority. To ensure a succeeded development, Malaysia needs efforts to form a society with high integrity and resilience. The people's demand for governance with integrity management should be the main principle in creating an advanced country and to meet the people's aspirations.

Relationship between Integrity and Employees' Attitude Towards Working

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in examining the relationship between integrity and workforces' attitude towards working. This attention arises because there is mounting evidence that integrity affects workforces' behavior which leads to overall performance and profits of the company (Rayton, 2006). Research proves that alignment between vision, goals and values of workforces and organizations tends to result in positive attitudes and a firmer sense of commitment to their works (Erlyani & Suhariadi, 2021). Furthermore, a positive and responsible attitude displayed by the organization can lead to a positive workplace environment and contribute to the growth and satisfaction of employees (Rameshwar et al., 2020).

Integrity, particularly behavioral integrity displayed by leaders, plays a crucial role in shaping workforces' attitudes towards working (Davis & Rothstein, 2006). Workforces are more likely to have positive attitudes, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, leaders show themselves as to have high levels of integrity. This includes being honest, ethical, and consistent in their actions and decisions. Moreover, when leaders are trusted with integrity between the workforces, they are more likely to feel supported, valued, and motivated in their work. This, in turn, leads to higher levels of engagement, productivity, and overall job performance.

Additionally, research suggests that workforces' perception of their organization's social responsibility and ethical behavior also affects their attitudes towards working (Rameshwar et al., 2020). For example, when workforces perceive their organization to be irresponsible or unethical in its behavior towards society, they tend to have negative attitudes towards their work and will decrease in morale. On the other side, when workforces perceive their organization to be socially responsible and ethical, it cultivates a positive workplace environment and leads to increased

support, trust, commitment, and satisfaction among workforces. In short, there is a strong relationship between integrity and employees' attitudes towards working.

Islam is a way of life which gives broad and specific guidance to its followers including how one should behave. The worldview of Islam is not limited to the existence of this world nor the world of the hereafter alone, but encompasses both the sacred (*dunya*) and the profane (*al-akhirah*). These two worlds are seen as an inseparable entity. Thus, Islam encourages its followers to strive for success in both entities (Krauss et al., 2005). In Islam, definition of employment is regarding emphasizing values, such as preserving human respectability, prioritizing work commitment and diligence (Etherington, 2019). Integrity is defined as adhering to honesty and high moral practice, an intact personality, virtuous, transparent, honest, sincere, patient, brave, knowledgeable, sensible, faithful, charitable, prudent, diligent and responsible. Integrity is also defined as the harmony between deeds and speech, actions in line with moral principles, ethics, law and harmony with self and public interest (Ghani, 2021).

Islam taught that integrity is in tandem with three values from the organizational aspect, namely; (i) leadership values (such as fair, firm, courageous and wise), (ii) professionalism values (such as knowledge, creativity, innovation, integrity, neutrality, accountability) and (iii) togetherness values (such as cooperation, team spirit and unity). Implementation of these values is important to cultivate the integrity and positive attitude among organisation members. This will form a positive culture in workplace, promote positive competition, control malpractice and treachery in work. Thus, this will contribute towards the stability and increasing in productivity in an organisation (Nor Shaidayani & Abd Ghafar, 2020).

Rafiki (2019) asserted that workforces' commitment plays an important role that will influence innovation and organizational stability, if business operations are being carried out with honest (Usman & Mat, 2021). It is seen that workforces tend to have higher commitment by engaging in religiosity appreciation. This will lead to an improve of performance and enhance productivity in the workplace (Hameed et al., 2020). Ghias (2020) revealed that the culture of honesty, trust, generosity and truthfulness will improve the motivation. Indeed, through the principles of Islamic work ethics, a workforce perceive work as worship, effort, teamwork and cooperation (Ghias, 2020; Usman & Mat, 2021).

Islamic Integrity in Workforces

Referring to online Cambridge Dictionary, 'integrity' is defined as the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles that refuse to change. 'Ethics' is defined as the study of what is morally right and what is not, while 'morality' is defined as a set of personal or social standards for good or bad behaviour and character.

The theories of accountability, ethical decision-making and religiosity influence have so far being concentrated on the Judeo-Christianity traditions (Krauss et al., 2005). In fact, studies tried to sample general population without any specified religion. On the other hand, Islam bequeaths fundamental beliefs and practices to its adherents (Muslim) that is not similar to Judeo-Christianity tradition. The belief of one God (Allah) and Prophet Muhammad saw. as the messenger of God

overarches the principles in Islam. Further, the Islamic ethical system advocates justice and social responsibility (Sulaiman et al., 2022).

Almoharby (2011) stated that Islam is a framework that shapes the behaviour of one-fifth of the world's total population. This is in line with studies by Othman & Fisol (2017) and Sawai et al. (2017) which conclude that religion does affect one's behaviour. Muslims believe that Islam is a way of life that defines worship of God and is more than just rituals, but also include the practice of being ethical in everyday dealings especially of works. Studies on Muslim workforces reported that their management practices are strongly influenced by religious prescriptions and beliefs (Sulaiman et al., 2022).

According to Pew Research Centre (2015), based on growth projections from 2010 to 2050, the number of Muslims is increasing faster than other major religions. Thus, this investigation aimed to provide insight of Muslim's ethical factors. At the same time, this study plan to contribute to a significant aspect of an organization that is subjected to cultural influences.

The interest in religiosity at workplace is relatively a new area of inquiry (Mohd Zin et al., 2021). However, this issue starts to appeal to the research interests of numerous academics. Results show that religious person have their own ideas regarding work. Religion regulates a sense of duty, honour, loyalty and sentiment in life including how employee should behave at workplaces (Husin, 2018). Hence, religion may influence earnings and shared values, and harmonize it with the emphasis on education, virtue work, honesty and other personal characteristics that are rewarded in the labour market. This shows that religion is seen as a powerful source that acts as motivator and values shaper (Etherington, 2019).

Islam is a complete way of life which gives broad and specific guidance for behaviour. A quality of work must represent the religion one advocates. An Islamic work ethic teaches the social aspect of workplaces, which include emphasizing values such as preserving human respectability, prioritizing work commitment and diligence. It is against idleness, time squandering and unproductive work that shows lack of faith and belief manifestation. Moreover, Islam views commercial activities as not only divine, but also a necessary pragmatic aspect of human life which act as a source of social gratification and psychological pleasure (Etherington, 2019).

The Need for an Islamic Religiosity Model and Self-assessment Tool

Islamic principles have a profound influence not only on personal beliefs and behaviors but also on professional conduct (Rahmah & Prasetyo, 2022). Islamic integrity model for professional Muslim workforces is a framework that integrates Islamic principles and values into the workplace to promote ethical behavior, honesty, transparency, and accountability among workforces. This model emphasizes the importance of adhering to the principles laid down in the Holy Quran and Sunnah, which serve as a guide for Muslims in all aspects of their lives, including their professional endeavors. By implementing this model, organizations can ensure that their Muslim employees uphold the principles of Islam in their work and contribute positively to society. Moreover, research has shown that the integration of Islamic work ethics and values not only promotes ethical

behavior but also has a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior and overall organizational performance (Fayyaz & Azizinia, 2016).

Unfortunately, the importance of religion as an area of focus was not a universal effort. Attempts to study religion as a social scientific phenomenon have been primarily a Western, Judeo-Christian undertaking. Studies noted that most psychological research that has been conducted was within the Judeo-Christian framework and studies of English-speaking populations have dominated the literature. Even though other societies started to receive recent attention, Judeo-Christian commitments still remain the most common object of investigation (Krauss et al., 2005).

The majority of existing religiosity measurements have been developed from the Christian worldview. This implies not only that the items used to assess religiosity reflect the tenets and practices of Judaism and Christianity, but often that the items are based on specific assumption about each of the components highlighted by Funk (2001) in his model of worldview composition. Different from physical or material achievement, standards related to religion are often considered difficult to measure. One such difficulty relates to the different perspectives of religiosity of people, because each individual differs in ways of being religious (McNamara & McGuire, 1982). Therefore, differences in religious worldview also have important implications for understanding how measures for different populations have been developed and applied.

As a way of life and religion, Islam has its own distinct worldview that is different from others. The worldview of Islam is not limited to this world alone, but encompasses both the *dunya* and also the *al-akhirah*. In order to be able to realize and reveal the essence of one's being and of existence in general, Islam leads Muslims to the path for realizing the essence of life, which is, *tawhid,* which reveals the unity of God. (Crane & Matten, 2004). *Tawhid* keeps the balance among diverse multiplicities and contradictions. *Tawhid* gives Islam its spirituality by reminding Muslims of the ultimate goal as testification to and manifestation of the oneness of God (Al Zeera, 2001). Thus, it is clear that Islam needs a separate assessment-tool for religiosity measurement. In addition, even the Western scholars raise the need to empirically study other religious (other than Judeo-Christian) traditions. Success in meeting that need clearly rests upon the availability of the relevant psychological scales (Ghorbani et al., 2000).

Since the early days, religiosity has often been measured with a single-item only, such as church attendance or level of participation in various Christian-based religious activities. Thus, most researches done in attempt to examine religiosity has been done in a limited way, despite the obvious psychometric shortcomings of the single-item measurements (Emmons, 1999). Although single-item measures remain relevant within the literature, it is important to acknowledge that treating religion as multidimensional has been more of a methodologically desirable goal (Gorsuch & McFarland, 1972). Glock and Stark (1965) argue that in all religions of the world, in spite of their great variation in details, has general areas in which religiosity is manifested, as the core dimensions of religiosity, which are, the 'Ideological', the 'Ritualistic', the 'Experiential', the 'Intellectual' and the 'Consequential' dimensions.

It is therefore, highlighted by Shamsudin (1992) that Muslims, in particular, need a relatively different scale to measure religiosity because the Islamic concept of religion is fundamentally different from other religion's concept.

The development of a self-assessment tool for professional Muslim workforces regarding Islamic integrity addresses a specific need within the contemporary workplace. Such a tool would facilitate self-reflection, guide organizational assessment, and contribute to a culture of ethical conduct rooted in Islamic principles. By promoting Islamic integrity, organizations can cultivate an environment that respects the values of Muslim professionals, enhances organizational reputation, and fosters a sense of inclusivity and fairness.

Methodology

This study will include a sequential mixed model research design for its theory and instrument development and to test its hypotheses as suggested by Cresswell and Plano Clark (2018). It began with qualitative phase and will be concluded with analysis to obtain codes and conceptual themes. The result from qualitative analysis will be analysed using NVivo and will be implemented to quantitative survey phase. Based on semi-structured interviews to identify the elements, questionnaires set will be further developed. This quantitative research will be carried out by conducting data collection to gain broader perspective on the factors. Meanwhile, existing instrument that will be used as sample for the new instrument development is The Muslim Religiosity Personality Inventory (MRPI) developed by Steven Eric Krauss (Abdul Lateef Abdullah), Azimi Hj. Hamzah Turiman Suandi, Sidek Mohd. Noah, Khairul Anwar Mastor, Rumaya Juhariy, Hasnan Kassan, Azma Mahmoud and Jamiah Manap in year 2005 (Krauss et al., 2005).

Respondents for the interview in this research are professional Muslim workforces that include employees from Accountant General's Department of Malaysia which will represent the public sector, Sime Darby Plantation (Sarawak) Sdn. Bhd. representing the private sector and partial universities in Malaysia as to gain knowledge from the experts. The method for minimum sample size estimation in PLS-SEM would help researchers carry out data analysis as long as the percentages of samples provide significant effects (Kock & Hadaya, 2018). The stratified sampling method will be utilized that relies on data collection from population members who are screened to participate in the study. SPSS and PLS-SEM will be used to analyse quantitative data.

The outcomes of the data analysis will be further analysed to develop the Islamic Integrity Self-Assessment Tool (MY INTEG) Model for Professional Muslim Workforce. These findings would help to provide real insights into challenges and issues related to Professional Muslim Workforce in Malaysia.

Research Process

Phase I will involve inductive qualitative approach as the research phenomenon is still complex. It will employ multiple data collection techniques comprising face-to-face individual interviews to answer the questions of "What causes Muslim workforces to involve in unethical conduct?" and "Does religiosity affects one's intention or involvement in unethical conduct?". It requires in-depth

interview which involves direct, one-to-one engagement with individual participants. This is to ensure the data, information and details can be secured accurately (Sekaran, U., & Bougie, 2021). Phase II is to further verify the research conceptual themes. A qualitative approach of focus group semi-structured interviews and workplace observation will be carried out to obtain data from the participants experiences. This phase will focus on answering questions of "What is the level of religiosity among the Muslim workforces?" and "How do they face and adapt to challenges in the workplace while implementing ethics and integrity gained through their religiosity practice and appreciation?". These data collection techniques assist the researcher to explore, understand and gather comprehensive views on how professional Muslim workforces adapt to challenges in the workplace while implementing the integrity, accountability and ethics gained through the religiosity practice and appreciation.

A semi-structured interview will be conducted and recorded with consent from participants, before the data being analyzed. In addition, focus group interviews with three groups of stakeholders; experts in the study field, executive and employees in organizations, will be conducted. The focus group session is to further validate the outcomes from individual face-to-face in-depth interviews. The audio and video recordings from both interviews will be transcribed verbatim for the final transcripts. These interview transcripts will be coded, categorized and themed in accordance to thematic analysis as proposed by Nowell et al. (2017). Besides, on-site observation will also be carried out during this stage to gather relevant information where notes and photos will be taken to ensure that all important information is included. Then, the notes and photos will be converted into transcripts for data analysis using thematic analysis. From the data collected in Phase I and Phase II, a questionnaire regarding Islamic integrity will be developed and used to collect data in the quantitative phase to obtain the integrity level information.

In Phase III, the findings from both qualitative and quantitative approach will be emerged and will be used to develop a research framework. The next step is to formulate Islamic integrity self-assessment tool for professional Muslim Workforce empowerment, which can be used to validate and measure level of integrity of professional Muslim at their workplace. The instrument development process will start with an existing instrument review and comparison. Then, instruments to access professional Muslim workforce's integrity elements concerning Islamic integrity that was empowered from religiosity appreciation will be developed.

Validation

First validation of the instrument will be assessed through experts' opinions and will be revised if necessary. In this research, associations relating to workforce would be selected to participate in the pilot test to check on the instrument's reliability and will be improvised if necessary.

Stratified sampling will be utilized at Phase III where respondents will be approached face-to-face with permission from the authority or through an online survey which will be carried out by google form or google meet. Data collected from organization database will assist researcher to approach the respondents needed for this study.

Discussion

Conceptual Framework

The research is to explore whether Islamic work practices is a factor associated with the level of unethical conduct among professional Muslim workforces. According to study conducted by researchers results showed a positive correlation between religiosity and one's behavior which explains why religiosity plays an important role in influencing one's ethic and also one's life. besides, it is found that spirituality has a significant positive correlation with satisfaction of life (Haji-Othman & Fisol, 2017).

This study assumes that Islamic work practices plays an important factor in ones' Islamic integrity and one's Islamic integrity is an important predictor to the level of unethical conduct among professional Muslim workforce. The conceptual framework of this research states that Muslim professionals with better Islamic work practices are expected to have higher level of Islamic integrity and Muslim professionals with higher level of Islamic integrity are expected to have lower chance to be involved in unethical conduct among professional Muslim workforces.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Impact of Islamic work practices on Level of Unethical Conduct among professional Muslim workforces
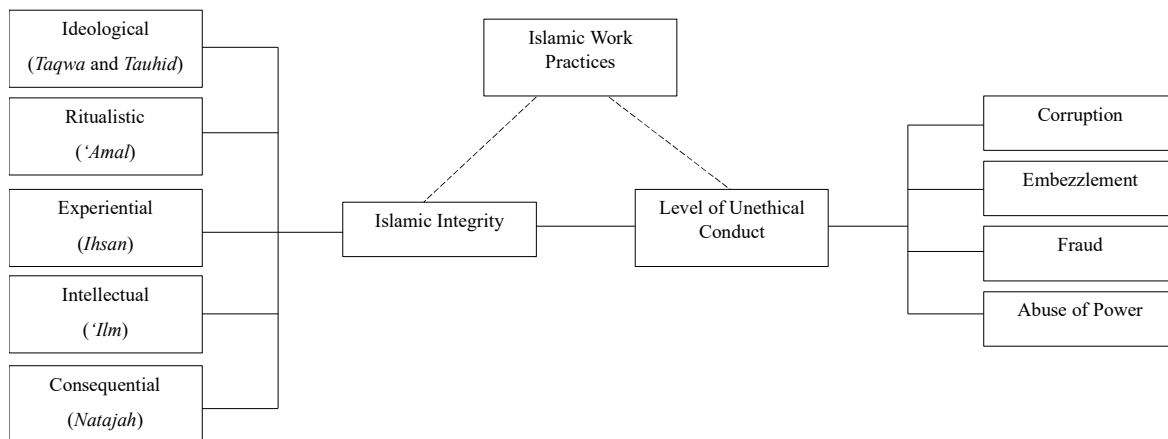
Summary

Unethical behavior among Malaysian workforces, especially in the public sector with corruption being the significant concern received attention by various sectors. Despite the implementations taken by the government for anti-corruption measures, the problem persists marking for another solution to be made. Thus, this research focus on the potential of positive influence of religious values, particularly in Islam, on individual ethics because umerous studies have shown that religiosity and moral principles can shape behavior and contribute to a sense of integrity.

Teachings of Islam is highlighted as its foundational principles comprised of integrity and ethics. Islam provides comprehensive guidelines for life and that Islamic work ethics play a significant role in shaping individuals' moral identity. However, it is also found that there is an increase in unethical behavior in the workplace which indicates a decline in religious belief among Muslims in Malaysia. Hence, the need for an integrated transformation plan to address this issue is

emphasized, with a focus on enhancing integrity, awareness, commitment, and cooperation among Muslim workforces.

The proposed solution involves developing a specific self-assessment tool, the Islamic Integrity Self-Assessment Tool (My INTEG) Model, tailored to the principles of Islam. The tool is aimed to serve as a benchmark for measuring and encouraging integrity among Muslim professionals in the workplace. This study seeks to address the gap in research regarding integrity and unethical behavior among Muslims, particularly focusing on Islamic teachings. The central research question is whether there is a positive relationship between integrity and religious practice appreciation among professional Muslim workforces and the ultimate goal is to formulate a tool that promotes integrity based on Islamic principles.

The distinct worldview of Islam emphasizes its encompassing nature that includes both the *dunya* and the *akhirah*. *Tawhid*, the unity of God, is highlighted as the essence and spirit of Islam, allowing Muslims to accept contradictions and maintain balance in diverse multiplicities. The multidimensional nature of religiosity is acknowledged, with core dimensions identified as ideological, ritualistic, experiential, intellectual, and consequential. This asserts the need for a different scale to measure Islamic religiosity, proposing a model based on the concept of God-consciousness or *taqwa* which is a unique concept compared to another religion.

The development of a self-assessment tool for Islamic integrity in professional Muslim workforces is seen as addressing a specific contemporary workplace need. Such a tool is expected to promote self-reflection, guide organizational assessment, and contribute to an ethical culture rooted in Islamic principles.

Acknowledgement

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