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# **A REVIEW ON LITERATURE OF ISLAMIC WORK ETHICS IN MALAYSIA BETWEEN 2010-2020**

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## **Abstract**

Islamic work ethics is the religion-based rules that are formed to generate workers that have high quality and productive. Hence, the objective of this article is to analyze and examine the related literatures on Islamic work ethics in Malaysia between 2010 until 2020. This study is through descriptive research based on the document analysis on previous studies and literatures on Islamic work ethics from free-of-charge and free-of-registration online journals under 'Islamic work ethics in Malaysia' keywords, gained from web based journals and articles which including books and conference paper. Therefore, only 33 articles that are published under journals publications comprises national and international journals were selected from several sources which are google scholar and Mendeley. Data from 33 articles had been analyzed using the Statistical Product & Service Solution (SPSS) software. This study analyzed the articles selected by looking at several variables which including number of articles published, year of publication, number of authors, research approach, subject and gender of the author. The general finding of this study shows that the Islamic work ethics issues in Malaysia discussed more on economic and finance sector compared to other sectors.

**Keyword:** Islamic work ethics, Malaysia, organizations

## **1. Introduction**

Islamic work ethics is a set of values with admiration to behaviour of individual at work place which comprises his or her exertion, responsibility dedication, social relations creativity and cooperation. It also based on hard work, diligence and perseverance (al-Douri et.al, 2020; Shukri Ahmad, 2016). More precisely, Islamic ethics refers to morality (Nurhidayah, 2017). Islam's work ethics are founded based on two types of resource, that are primary resource referred to as al-Quran and al-Sunnah; collectively referred to as Shariah and another type sourced from opinions put forth by Muslim clerics (fuqaha'). Islamic work ethics is one of the emerging areas in Islamic world compare to Protestant work ethics which is founded on the ideas in Christianity and rules. Islam and Christianity both are unlike in beliefs because Christianity is purely based on the adapted Bible (al-Douri et.al, 2020).

In Islam, work is perceived as religious duty. The concept of work as an ibadah ascertains that the involvement and participation in economic activities (work) is not merely a means to sustain a thriving and healthy society but also a divine call. The beauty of Islamic ethics is the interdependence between work and faith. Work without faith will have negative implication to life (Siti Khadijah, 2015) The application of noble morals is so tied to one's faith in Allah SWT. Through this powerful bond, it will form a noble personality that is displayed while

carrying out the task entrusted to it. Among the values and noble qualities that are emphasized in Islam is, to be honest when performing a job. They could be accepted as guidelines and determiner of work ethics as long as they do not challenge the basic source and the aim of the sharia which is to establish peace and harmony in a society (Wan Norhasniah, 2012). Furthermore, the importance of Islamic work ethics getting awareness among society in getting back to Islamic teaching in life especially in managing organizations.

Islamic work ethics principles must be pivoted on Islamic piety (taqwa) in Allah SWT as God. In Islam, work is not performed to achieve material gains only; more importantly, it is a form of worship to obtain Allah's blessing (Zahrah et.al, 2016). A strong belief will not only enhance the performance and productivity of an organization but will also form noble moral values among the members of an organization. Hence, to enhance an organization's development employees must be ready to adopt Islamic work ethics (Muhammad Mustakim Mohamed Noh et.al, 2014). On the other side, ethics based on Islamic teaching are formed by cleansing the heart from matters other than thinking about Allah SWT. Thus, always thinking about Allah SWT helps form attitudes that are truly sincere about implementing whatever job is given (Sharifah Hayaati Syed al-Qudsy, 2010). Fundamentally, when someone has a strong association with God, one's attitudes and behaviors would tend to be reliable with the rubrics and circumstances of the religion (toward financial and non-financial rewards, and the ambition for upward career mobility (al-Douri et.al, 2020).

## **2. Literature Review**

Ajmal & Irfan (2014) indicated that the word Islamic work ethics has been taken from Webber's theory Protestant work ethics and it is newly introduced by focusing Islamic ethical activities in businesses. Even though Protestant work ethics appeared capable of improving the productivity of the Western economy, and its implementation was focused on the Western society, hence the secular elements were shunned by Muslims to implement. In fact, its materialistic nature and low emphasized towards humanistic values had led to an increase in suicide attempts. Neighbourhood ties, which then led to the birth of an individualistic society. Therefore, the Islamic work ethics focus on a different angle as it reflects the Muslim traditions and way of life (Wan Norhasniah, 2012).

Furthermore, Islamic work ethics is the Islamic view of work and its ethical consideration. This orientation influences the involvement and participation of Muslims in the workplace (Ahmad, 2011). According to Mastura (2014), Islamic work ethics has been researched against various magnitudes and affected numbers of workplace outcomes such as organizational innovation, a firm's performance, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The practice of Islamic work ethics in the organization could improve employees morale and productivity, increase job satisfaction and reduce stress among the staffs. In Islam, for illustration, it is the ethic that dominates economics and not the other way around and whatever one does, Islamic ethics and values are judging it. So, Muslims have to have follow codes written in Shariah (Islamic Law and Jurisprudence). It is the duty of every Muslim to accept Allah's will (Ajmal & Irfan, 2014).

Muslim researchers identify the importance of Islamic work ethics in the modern era, as it became part of Islamic thoughts which is valuable to everyone in the society (Mastura, 2014; Ajmal & Irfan, 2014; Musa, Sukor, Ismail & Elias, 2020; Zahrah et al., 2016; Suib, F. H., & Said, M. F., 2017). According to al-Maududi (1967), among the work ethics is first, the need to educate both, employee or employer the obligation to perform their responsibilities decently.

Secondly, it is imperative to categorize between lawful or unlawful professions. The third guideline implies that the work ethics must be universal in nature so that it could be embraced by any society irrespective of religion, skin colour, race, or ethnic. Fourthly, as Islam is a religion that stresses upon peace and harmony, the work ethics must be well assimilated human nature. The fifth guideline stresses upon the importance of ensuring that each job is performed decently. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) clearly explain that to his followers that better work in society is that which give benefit to peoples. Besides, it would be sinful for Muslims if someone fail to perform their activities according to Shariah and Islamic code of conducts.

These studies have found strong support for Islamic work ethics with attitude, organization commitment, job satisfaction and loyalty. However, they have overlooked the role of performance management that can provide an input to training as well as compensation. As the work values can be reinforced through performance management, this study expects Islamic work ethics will have an association with performance management (Sarina, 2017). Moreover, according to Mohammad, J. (2015), Islamic work ethics prohibits unethical behaviors that can harm the organization’s reputation and ability to achieve its goals like laziness, injustice, lying, deception, vandalism, and theft. Consistent with this, the current study conceptualizes Islamic work ethics as a set of moral principles (hard work and dedication, creativity and innovativeness, justice and generosity, independence, responsibility and social relation, and avoidance of unethical methods of wealth accumulation) that organizes and directs employees’ attitudes and behaviors at the workplace to be consistent with the holy Quran and the saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

### 3. Methodology

This article adopts descriptive analysis based on several literatures on zakat issues for ten years between 2010 and 2020. Data were collected by using a Mendeley software and google scholar in order to identify those journal articles that describe on Islamic work ethics. The review focuses specifically on the articles written in the areas of Islamic work ethics in Malaysia and only 33 articles had been gathered. This study has adopted descriptive research approach will highlight the general trend of the journal reviewed and to extract information regarding Islamic work ethics in Malaysia.

### 4. Results

#### a. Number of Annual Journal Publications

<b>Year of Publication</b>	<b>Number of Articles</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
2010	1	3
2011	0	0
2012	1	3
2013	2	6.1
2014	3	9.1
2015	4	12.1
2016	9	27.3
2017	5	15.2
2018	2	6.1

2019	2	6.1
2020	4	12.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 1.** Number of Annual Journal Publications

There were 34 articles published which were related to Islamic work ethics in Malaysia from the observed 11 years period. Table 1 describes the distribution of articles by year. The highest number of articles produced is in 2016 with 9 articles. Whereas the least article was published during 2010 were 0 articles. In 2017, as many as 5 articles were published, and in 2015 and 2020, with a slight difference where 4 articles were produced. Also, in 2014, with a slight difference where 3 articles were published. In 2013, 2018 and 2019 with a slight difference where 2 articles were produced, followed by the year 2010 and 2012 with 1 article.

b. Research Types of Each Publication

Publication Year	Data Analysis				Total
	Analytical	Descriptive	Empirical	Exploratory	
2010	0	0	1	0	1
2011	0	0	0	0	0
2012	0	1	0	0	1
2013	0	1	1	0	2
2014	0	0	3	0	3
2015	2	1	1	0	4
2016	1	3	4	1	9
2017	1	1	2	1	5
2018	1	1	0	0	2
2019	0	0	1	1	2
2020	1	0	2	1	4
<b>Total</b>	6	8	15	4	33

**Table 2.** Types of Study by Each Publication

Table 2 shows types of study by each publication for every article published. Based on findings show that the majority of articles (15 articles) are empirical type in nature, followed by analytical with 6 articles, descriptive with 8 articles and exploratory types (4 articles). Most researchers use empirical approaches and lowest research approach is exploratory types.

c. Research Approaches of Each Publication

Publication Year	Research Approach			Total
	Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed	
2010	0	1	0	1
2011	0	0	0	0
2012	1	0	0	1
2013	0	1	1	2
2014	0	3	0	3
2015	1	2	1	4

2016	2	4	3	9
2017	2	3	0	5
2018	1	1	0	2
2019	0	1	1	2
2020	0	4	0	4
<b>Total</b>	7	20	6	33

**Table 3.** Research Approach of Each Publication

There are three types of research approaches that suggested by the previous scholar which are qualitative (subjective approach), quantitative (numerical approach) and mix method (combine from both approaches) (Nur Atikah Atan & Fuadah Johari, 2017). Table 3 shows the methods of research used for every article published within 2010-2020 in Malaysia. Based on the research data collected, the results from the crosstab analysis shows that quantitative method was the highest types of research method used by the researcher recorded 20 articles, secondly the qualitative design with 7 articles and lastly only 6 articles use mixed methods.

d. The Number of Authors that Contributes in the Publish Articles

<b>Gender of Author</b>	<b>Single Author</b>	<b>Two Authors</b>	<b>Three Authors</b>	<b>Four Authors</b>	<b>Five Authors</b>	<b>Six Authors</b>	<b>Total</b>
Single Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Single Female	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
More Than One (Male main author)	0	1	9	5	2	2	19
More Than One (Female main author)	2	2	6	3	0	0	13
Total	3	3	15	8	2	2	33

**Table 4.** The Number of Authors that Contributes in the Publish Articles

The articles have been categorized into four categories which consists of an article that produced by single male author, single female author, more than one (male main author) and more than one (Female main author). After reviewing 33 articles, there are 107 authors that produced papers and articles related to Islamic work ethics in Malaysia from 2010-2020. From total number, there are only 1 single female author and non-single male author. This was

followed by articles jointly authored by two individuals with 1 article is male main author and 2 articles are female main author. Nevertheless, 9 articles were published by three male co-authored while 6 articles were published by three female co-authored. There are only 5 articles for four male co-authored and 3 article for four female co-authored. Further, there are 2 articles for five male co-authors and 2 articles for six male co-authors. Overall, the writing of articles on Islamic work ethic in Malaysia was published by more than one author during 2010-2020.

e. Publications by Geographical Affiliation

<b>Country</b>	<b>Publication Area</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Malaysia	12	36.4
United Kingdom	6	18.2
Pakistan	4	12.1
USA	3	9.1
Turkey	2	6.1
UAE	2	6.1
Australia	1	3.0
France	1	3.0
Indonesia	1	3.0
Switzerland	1	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5.** List of Publications Area

Table 5 shows the ranked list of publications based on geographical affiliation. According to the publication above, as many as 12 countries have published articles from authors in Malaysia which consists of 36.4 percent from the overall research articles. Malaysia become the most preferable country to publish articles, followed by United Kingdom with 6 articles, Pakistan (4 articles), USA (3 articles), Turkey and UAE (2 articles) and the rest are 1 article.

f. The List of Issues/Subject Area of Articles

<b>Subject Area</b>	<b>Publication Area</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Management	14	42.4
Administration	7	21.2
Banking	7	21.2
Education	2	6.1
Finance	2	6.1
Entrepreneurship	1	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

Results from the analysis had shown that the subject area of the articles journals was categorized based on the major issue discuss by the researcher. 6 subject area was discussed by researchers and among the issues or subject that have the highest interest among the researcher for the current 11 years are related to Islamic work ethics in Management (14 articles) followed by Administration and Banking (7 articles), Education and Finance (2 articles) and Entrepreneurship (1 article).

## 5. Discussion

Analysis of the articles published related to Islamic work ethics in Malaysia for the year 2010 until 2020 have found that:

1. Within the 11 years there is little of numbers of the article based on Islamic work ethics issues had been published that discussed on various. The peak of publications was in 2016 with only 9 articles. This shows that the research-based on Islamic work ethics in Malaysia are still few and not many in-depth studies were conducted among the researcher and academician from various field backgrounds.
2. Most of the research in this field tended to use quantitative research to delve deeper into the Islamic work ethics practice rather than qualitative and mixed methods.
3. The highest number of articles covered management subject since most jobs are more focused on management.
4. Malaysia's journal becomes the most preferred publication for the authors to publish their journal on Islamic work ethics. In addition, there are journals outside Malaysia that publish studies on Islamic work ethic such as United Kingdom's journal with 6 articles.
5. Most researchers collaborate, both male and female, to produce writing articles have collaborated.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, work ethics, according to the Islamic perspective, can influence job satisfaction and the work performance level of an organization. Furthermore, based on the previous discussion, it can be summed that over the last 11 years analysis found that there are quite a few and few studies in Malaysia have been conducted in this area. Researchers need to continue their researches or studies in this field instead. Therefore, it is imminent that Islamic work ethics be instilled in organizational practices in Malaysia. However, various aspects and steps should be taken such as providing enough research grants to support promotions and promote or suggest authors to study and publish articles related to Islamic work ethics in Malaysia especially in public or private agencies. The aim of achieving quality work performance could be realized if every worker, employer, and national leader holds on fast to the virtues propagated by Islam.

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