

## THE EFFECT OF SPIRITUALITY ON ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

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### Abstract

*Islamic studies have sparked a lot of interests among different cultural backgrounds and no longer foreign to the world community. Among issues that have gained attention among scholars was spirituality from the Islamic standpoint. Therefore, this study attempts to explore the connection between Islamic spirituality (belief, rituals and repentance) and its influence on Islamic leadership effectiveness. The study contributes to the new knowledge*

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*pertaining to Islamic leadership in management by integrating the Islamic tradition with contemporary literature whereby Islamic spirituality constructs were developed from the Islamic tradition sources that correspond to leadership studies from contemporary literature. Using a purposive sampling of non-probability technique, the survey data used for this empirical research was drawn from Muslim employees working in uniform bodies in Sarawak, Malaysia. Most of the respondents hailed from support group scheme of service and there are three uniform bodies involved in this research namely the Malaysia Royal Customs Department, Malaysia Royal Police and Malaysia Royal Navy. Employing multiple regression analysis and using SPSS and SmartPLS software, the study tests several hypotheses that the components of Islamic spirituality were exerted to have statistically mixed influences on Islamic leadership effectiveness. The study found four out of seven hypotheses were indeed supported. The findings did provide a better understanding of the roles of Islamic spirituality on Islamic leadership effectiveness amongst three uniform bodies in Malaysia.*

**Keywords:** *belief; repentance; ritual; Islamic; leadership effectiveness; Sarawak.*

**JEL Classification:** D83, Z12, M12

### Introduction

Presently, Islamic conception has turned out to be more noticeable in the growth of society and it is no longer become unfamiliar among the world community. In addition, the administration and management created based on the Islamic concept is also becoming more and more popular among civil service around the world. Al-Qardawi (2001) mentioned that among the signs of Islamic reawakening are the number of people who pray in the mosque rising, growing in sales of religious books and the spread of hijab among women. Al-Qardawi (2001) also believed that the reason for these reawakening is due to the publics' spiritual needs in their lives. This has directed to the enthusiasm to learn more about Islamic and in fact, it is shown that the society has the willingness to be governed by Islamic Rules such as the society in Turkey and Morocco (Zandi, Sulaiman, Naysary, & Rashed, The Relationship between Spirituality and Leader's Effectiveness: A Perspective from the Holy Qur'an, 2013a) where the Islamic ruling parties are often voted by the public. The concern of religiosity and spirituality also has been prolonged in the

business setting and workplace (Zandi et al., 2013a). Agreeing to Kouzes and Posner (2012) the development of spirituality, religion and faith in the world of commerce are due to the leader as well the business where they seek for those meaning and higher purpose. In addition, the management discipline is moving towards emerging spirituality and religion into their concern (Kazmi, 2004). Islamic thoughts are very widespread where Khraim, Khraim, Al-Kaidah, and Al-Qurashi (2011) mentioned that Islam guides our life completely since it covers and regulates life in every aspect through the socio-economic system. Since Islam comprehends and covers all facets of life, it undeniably embraces other parts such as in leadership and human spirituality.

Although all the relevant information is shared and taught in the Qur'an, the literature on leadership from the Islamic viewpoint is still limited. Furthermore, the management principles as introduced by the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. as well of his leadership should not be gone in implementing management and leadership principles from the Western viewpoint (Shirazi B, Langford DA, & Rowlinson SM, 1996). The management in the organizations also should think of how to establish it to make the organization become more competitive as compared to others as well as becoming more effective and efficient in providing their services. However, in Malaysia, little initiatives have been made in order to enhance civil service. Tjiptoherijanto (2012) stated that in the year 1990 the Malaysian Government declared the date of October 31st as the Civil Service day which is also known as Hari Q or Quality Day in which the purpose is to strengthen the values of quality principles in an organization. Since many researchers' belief that there is still lack of research regarding Islamic perspective in management, thus this research proposes to examine about this problem and explore more about Qur'an way of leadership (Zandi et al., 2013a). On the other hand, the research will also examine the relationship between Islamic spirituality concept (which consists of belief, ritual, and repentance) and the effectiveness of the leadership.

In this research perspective, spirituality is measured from the Islamic standpoint, as a result, it will contribute specifically in the academic area where there is still lack of studies conducted in term of leadership in Islamic perspective. In fact, there is still lacking literature review on leadership effectiveness from Islamic context (Zandi et al., 2013a). In addition, Zandi et al. (2013a) also mentioned that the number of researches in this area conducted in non-western countries is still minimal. Ali and Weir (2005) also identified that the research from the Islamic perspective is still lack and not much of the current study

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emphasizing on the topic from an Islamic perspective. Shirazi et al. (1996) on the other hand point up the philosophies of the management as emphasized by the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. and his way of leadership should not be ignored in adopting the management and leadership principles from the western. It is also supported by Kazmi (2004) who his study stated that the research in Islamic perspective should emphasize for the management to see how this viewpoint could help and offer the new ideas or views to the current management problems. According to Ather and Sobhani (2007), the organization needs the Islamic leadership quality as an important character for its improvements, however, there is still lack of those quality practised by its leaders and human resource. To date, the number of organizations and institutions around the world that using Islamic approach of services has rapidly grown. Zandi et al. (2013a) stated that the Islamic banks, schools and other institutions around the world have grown rapidly as well in western countries.

While in Malaysia, Islamic value policy in public administration has been introduced in 1985 which this value needs to be adapted to produce one identity and unity of public administration in Malaysia (Portal 1 Klik, 2016). Several studies have been carried out in a way of examining the practices of Islamic principals in Malaysian Public Services. Based on a study conducted by Latif (2007), the practices of applying Islamic Principles in ethics of Civil Sectors have successfully decreasing discipline issues. The uniform bodies selected within Kuching area include Malaysia Royal Customs Department, Malaysia Royal Police and Malaysia Royal Navy. To be more specific the research was conducted with uniform bodies in Sarawak concerning on how the leadership effectiveness in the public sector can be measured besides using the existing resources which typically focusing on western theories. Hence, this research also attempts to discover into this issue by investigating the concept of leadership based on Qur'an and examining the relationship between spirituality dimension and leadership effectiveness from the Islamic point of view.

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Islamic Leadership Effectiveness***

Senam et al (2015) stated that the purpose of leadership in Islam is to serve and assist the organization members, community as well as the society at large by leading and guiding people to what is good in this world and the Hereafter or in Arabic it is called as Al-Falah. From western scholar, leaders are genuinely

transformational when they increase awareness of what is right, good, and important to their followers, and when they support to raise their followers' need for achievement and self-actualization. Moreover, leaders also will transform when they foster in followers higher moral maturity, and when they move followers to go beyond their self-interest for the good of their group, organization, or society (Bass, 1998).

Therefore, leadership effectiveness can be accomplished when people look beyond their own interest for the good sake of their group, organization and society (Wilmore & Thomas, 2001). This study focuses on Islamic Perspective, therefore, it is essential for us to comprehend several terminologies related to leadership in the Islamic context, the terms that are associated to characterize leadership based on Islamic literature and Muslim scholar are "Al-Khalifah", "Al-Imamah", "Al-Imarah" or "Amir" and "Al-Wilayah" (Abdallah et al., 2019).

#### ***Iman (Belief) a Variable under Spirituality***

Ibrahim (1997) stated that belief or Iman has provided leaders with an advantage to lead successfully as it provides greater values and Al-Ghazali (2004) in his study on characteristics of a Muslim added that Belief serves to function a harness for wrongdoings. Thus, Iman or belief can be defined as the leader's awareness to Tawhid (Tauhid) which means belief in Allah's S.W.T. attributes that lead the leader to depend on Him, trust Him, seek His help and observed His commands in relation to his work (Nayal Rashed, 2007). An earlier study conducted by Zandi et al. (2013a) has revealed that leaders' level of spirituality will influence the leaders' effectiveness, where one component of spirituality which is leader's Belief or Iman was found to be positively and significantly associated to leadership effectiveness in a business context. Thus, leaders' belief in daily practices and decision making in the workplace will generate internal harmony for reaching stability, precision, and satisfaction in the leaders' sentiments and rationality (Sami & Naveeda, 2021).

#### ***Ibadat (Ritual) a Variable under Spirituality***

Guidance and leadership in Islam are not limited only to rituals and religious matters because for all Muslim it is a way of life and it is a responsibility for Muslims to ensure all activities including works, business, and economics are obeyed to Islamic principles as specified in the Al-Qur'an and Sunnah (Senam et al., 2015). Thus, in the Qur'an, Allah S.W.T. clearly mentioned in the following

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verses in Surah Al-Imran and Surah Al-An'am that our whole life is devoted to Ibadat (Ritual) and to remember Allah S.W.T. Thus, the positive impact of Islamic leadership in contemporary and modern perspective has also been proven empirically in an earlier study where Islamic leadership can increase organizational performance (Wan Norhayate, Marlisa, & Aizzat, 2014; Zandi et al., 2013a; 2013b). However, other studies have found that Rituals or Ibadat was found to be positive but insignificant correlated to business leadership effectiveness (Zandi et al., 2013a).

### ***Taubat (Repentance) a Variable under Spirituality***

Studies conducted by Zandi et al. (2013b) reveal that repentance or Taubat is one of the spirituality components that were found to be negatively and insignificant associated with business leadership effectiveness. In the modern English definition, the word "repentance" can be well-defined as the action of turning from sin and the dedication of self to the amendment of one's life such as to feel regret, sorrow, or "to be sorry". On the other hand, in Islamic and Arabic the repentance is taken from the word "Taaba"/ "Yatoobu" which means "to return". Precisely, Taubat or repentance is denoting to the action of leaving from what Allah has prohibited and returned to what Allah has commanded. It has been proven in Qur'an, where repentance is vital for all human being particularly for Muslims.

### ***Theoretical Background***

The theoretical framework shown below was developed based on the discussed literature reviews and adopted from the previous study conducted by Zandi et al. (2013a), Indri (2018), and Ghencea et al. (2020). Therefore, researchers decided to adopt the spirituality dimensions which consist of belief, rituals, and repentance as independent variables that are predicted to influence the Islamic leadership effectiveness. In addition, the ritual and repentance are also predicted to mediate belief towards the Islamic leadership effectiveness among uniform bodies in Sarawak namely Malaysia Royal Customs Department, Malaysia Royal Police and Malaysia Royal Navy. The research framework is shown in Figure 1, followed by seven hypotheses of the study.

*H<sub>1</sub>: Belief has a positive influence on repentance.*

*H<sub>2</sub>: Belief has a positive influence on rituals.*

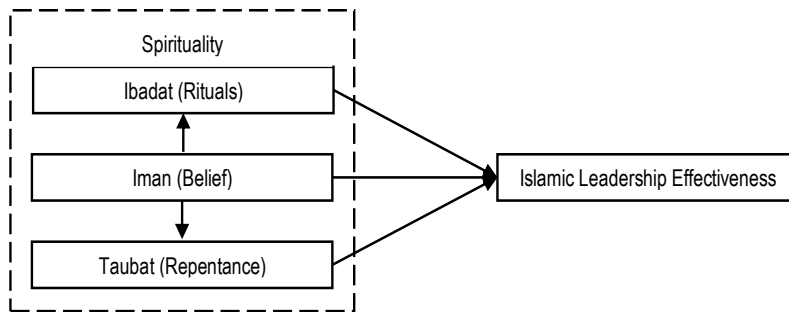
*H<sub>3</sub>: Belief has a positive influence on Islamic leadership effectiveness.*

*H<sub>4</sub>: Repentance has a positive influence on Islamic leadership effectiveness.*

*H<sub>5</sub>: Rituals has a positive influence on Islamic leadership effectiveness.*

*H<sub>6</sub>: Belief has a positive influence on Islamic leadership effectiveness mediated by repentance.*

*H<sub>7</sub>: Belief has a positive influence on Islamic leadership effectiveness mediated by rituals.*



**Figure 1. Research Framework**

### **Data and Demarcation**

To ensure that the sample characteristics corresponded to the nature of the study, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was adopted to verify that the collected data were indeed from valid sources. For this study, the questionnaire was used as an instrument to gather relevant information from respondents. The questionnaire was divided into three sections; Section A (Demographic profile), Section B (Independent Variables), and Section C (Dependent Variable). The scaling technique required respondents to indicate a degree of disagreement with each series of statements. A Likert 5-point scale was used to differentiate the degree of agreement and disagreement (eg. Rahmawati et al., 2021; Ramadania et al., 2021). The target population for this study is both male and female government servant in the Malaysia Royal Customs Department, Malaysia Royal Police and Malaysia Royal Navy at Kuching, Sarawak. Sample size estimation was determined using G\*power 3.0 analysis (Faul et al., 2007). By using G-Power Analysis software, with the effect size of  $f^2$  0.15,  $\alpha$  error pro 0.05, power  $G_f$  0.95 with 3 tested predictors. 119 respondents are needed as the minimum sample for this study. 300 survey questionnaires were distributed to the target population and 123 survey questions were returned and usable to be further analyzed. Figure 1

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depicted the research framework that contained statements of three variables investigated. The variables were examined using multiple items (Hayduk & Littvay 2012) and the data was then analysed using SmartPLS 3.0 (Ringle et al., 2015) to assess the hypotheses.

### Results and Discussion

#### *Respondents' Profile*

Below are the demographic profiles of the respondents involved in this study. Most of the respondents were male (58.5%) while female comprises of 41.5 percent, 38.2 percent of them work with Royal Customs, followed by police 35 percent, and Royal Marine in 26.8 percent.

**Table 1. Respondents' Profile**

Variables	Items	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Male	72	58.5
	Female	51	41.5
Occupation	Jabatan Kastam Diraja Malaysia (JKDM)	47	38.2
	Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM)	43	35
	Tentera Laut Diraja Malaysia (TLDM)	33	26.8
Income Level [RM]	1000 or less	1	0.8
	1001 – 2000	21	17.1
	2001 – 3000	48	39
	3001 – 4000	40	32.5
	4001 – 5000	8	6.5
	5001 and above	5	4.1
Education Level	SPM or below	48	39
	Diploma/STPM/Certificate	34	27.6
	Bachelor Degree	39	31.7
	Master Degree	1	0.8
	Doctorate/Ph.D.	1	0.8

More than 71 percent of the respondents earned RM2001-RM4000 monthly. Majority of the respondents had SPM certificates (39%), followed by those who possessed a bachelor's degree (31.7%) and diploma/ STPM (27.6%). The Table 1 shows the detail.



**Measurement Model**

Table 2 demonstrates the findings of construct reliability (CR) and convergent validity testing. The results verify that the constructs (or variables under investigation) to have high internal consistency (Roldán & Sánchez-Franco, 2012).

**Table 2. Measurement Model Assessment**

Construct	Item	Loadings	CR	AVE	Convergent Validity (Ave >
Belief	B1	0.891	0.944	0.772	Yes
	B2	0.864			
	B3	0.895			
	B4	0.862			
	B5	0.882			
ILE	B6	0.913	0.939	0.630	Yes
	B7	0.912			
	B8	0.799			
	B9	0.846			
	B10	0.869			
	B11	0.836			
Repentance	B12	0.780	0.890	0.670	Yes
	B13	0.889			
	B14	0.785			
	B15	0.818			
Rituals	C1	0.854	0.946	0.745	Yes
	C2	0.862			
	C3	0.697			
	C4	0.828			
	C5	0.795			
	C6	0.822			
	C7	0.762			
	C8	0.787			
	C9	0.723			

\*No item was deleted as loading Composite Reliability > .708 (Hair et al., 2010, & Hair et al., 2014)

From the sufficient average variance extracted (AVE) to corroborate the convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017). There were no items deleted as Cronbach’s Alpha and composite reliability were above 0.708 (Hair et al., 2010; 2014).

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***Discriminant Validity***

Table 3 displays the HTMT criterion to evaluate discriminant validity (Ringle, et al., 2015). The result specifies that discriminant validity is well-established at HTMT0.90 (Gold et al., 2001).

**Table 3. HTMT Criterion**

	Belief	ILE	Repentance	Rituals
Belief	–			
ILE	0.728	–		
Repentance	0.833	0.873	–	
Rituals	0.746	0.663	0.789	–

*Criteria: Discriminant validity is established at HTMT0.90*

The findings indicated that it is appropriate to proceed with the structural model assessment to test the hypotheses of the study as there is no issue of multi-collinearity between items loaded on different constructs in the outer model.

***Structural Model Assessment***

A 5000-bootstrap re-sampling of data is conducted to examine the hypotheses of this study (Hair et al., 2017). Table 4 demonstrates the assessment of the path coefficient, which is represented by Beta values for each path relationship. The results for direct effects indicate that belief was indeed to have positive influence on repentance and rituals but not on the Islamic leadership effectiveness. Meanwhile, repentance and rituals were shown to be have contradicted results on Islamic leadership effectiveness. Repentance is capable to influence Islamic leadership effectiveness but not rituals. For mediating effects, belief is seen to support the notion of influencing Islamic leadership effectiveness mediated by repentance. Rituals on the other hand do not mediate the relationship between belief and Islamic leadership effectiveness. The findings contradicted with previous study where leader’s belief was found to be positively and significantly linked to leadership effectiveness (Zandi et al., 2013a). This study however parallels with Zandi et al. (2013a) that shown repentance has a positive influence on leadership effectiveness.

Table 4 also displays the quality of the model. Belief was shown to carry substantial effect size  $f^2$  on repentance and rituals (H1 and H2). H4 was also found to pose substantial effect size  $f^2$  on Islamic leadership effectiveness (Cohen, 1988). The coefficient of determination represented by  $R^2$  which explains whether spirituality (belief, repentance and rituals) could explain Islamic leadership effectiveness indicates substantial effect (Chin, 1998). Besides, multi-collinearity between indicators is assessed.

**Table 4. Path Coefficients and Model Quality Assessment**

Direct Effect	Beta	S.E.	t-value	p-value	5.00%	95.00%	Decision	$f^2$	$R^2$	VIF	$Q^2$
H1: Belief -> Repentance	0.737	0.052	14.064	0.000	0.622	0.829	Supported	1.187	0.543	1.000	0.359
H2: Belief -> Rituals	0.698	0.075	9.308	0.000	0.522	0.816	Supported	0.953	0.488	1.000	0.354
H3: Belief -> IFE	0.210	0.138	1.521	0.129	-0.091	0.450	Not Supported	0.046	0.623	2.553	0.377
H4: Repentance -> IFE	0.561	0.090	6.214	0.000	0.374	0.721	Supported	0.326		2.563	
H5: Rituals -> IFE	0.078	0.134	0.580	0.562	-0.143	0.377	Not Supported	0.007		2.288	
Mediating Effect	Beta	S.E.	t-value	p-value	5.00%	95.00%	Decision				
H6: Belief -> Repentance -> IFE	0.414	0.070	5.894	0.000	0.275	0.541	Supported				
H7: Belief -> Rituals -> IFE	0.054	0.092	0.592	0.554	-0.094	0.244	Not Supported				

Path Coefficient 0.01, 0.05 (Hair et al. 2017)

Lateral Collinearity: VIF 3.3 or higher (Diamantopoulos & Sigouw 2006)

$R^2 \geq 0.26$  consider Substantial (Cohen, 1989)

$F^2 \geq 0.26$  consider Substantial (Cohen, 1989)

$Q^2 > 0.00$  consider large (Hair, 2017)

All indicators for variables satisfy the VIF values and there are consistently below the threshold value of 5.0 (Hair et al., 2014) and 3.3 (Diamantopoulos & Siguwaw, 2006). Therefore, it can be concluded that collinearity issues do not reach critical levels in any of the variables and is not an issue for the estimation of the PLS path model. The predictive relevance values of all exogenous (independent) variables towards endogenous (dependent) variable were larger than 0, indicating that the independent variables could predict the Islamic leadership effectiveness, as presented by  $Q^2$  using blindfolding procedure (Hair et al., 2017).

Besides that, the researchers also would like to recommend for future research to expand the sample size as to improve the accuracy of the data obtained and it will be more representable where the issues of time constraints are very subjective

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because some other researcher will be tied in tough schedule while some are not. Therefore, the extended time frame could be more useful for the researcher to distribute and collect the questionnaire from a large scale of respondents. The researcher would also like to propose other factors that drive leadership effectiveness among Muslim workers such as integrity, responsibility, sincerity, and workers' competency that may lead to an improvement in leadership effectiveness.

### Conclusions

In conclusion, most of the respondents from support group scheme of service and there are three uniform bodies involved in this research which are Malaysia Royal Customs Department, Malaysia Royal Police and Malaysia Royal Navy. The Pearson's correlation analysis shows that belief, ritual, and repentance have a positive relationship and high correlation towards leadership effectiveness with Pearson correlation value of 0.678, 0.612, and 0.770 respectively. According to regression analysis, only 62.4% of the variance in the leadership effectiveness has been significantly explained by the Iman (Belief), Ibadah (Rituals), and Taubat (Repentance), Meanwhile, the remaining 37.6% were explained by the other factors that are not included in the module. Standardized coefficients of beta value show that Taubat (Repentance) is the most influenced factor towards the leadership effectiveness of the Muslim workers in uniform bodies.

The result is unexpected because most of the previous studies have mentioned that the Ibadat has negative and insignificant result but in this research, we found that Ibadat also has a positive relationship and significant towards leadership effectiveness as same as Iman and Taubat.

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All the authors have gone the extra mile. Each has contributed to this manuscript. JK is to conceptualize ideas and designing methods. NL and AFB write, revising, and collecting citations. Distribution and data processing by HP. Then, HH as validation, data interpretation, and describing the findings. DCD did submission of manuscripts and reporting.

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