ISLAMIC WORK ETHIC AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR: A STUDY AMONG CIVIL SERVANTS IN MALAYSIA

Subramaniam Sri Ramalu,

Zulhusni Mohamad Rashid

ABSTRACT

The government machineries has vital role to play in execution of various national economic transformation plans in realising vision 2020. The efficient service delivery will help the government machineries to be more cost-effective and better equipped to meet the demands and expectations of the public for 2020 and beyond. The focal point in addressing public expectation is the public service employee's job performance and quality of the public service delivery. Civil servants who possess Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) that transcend beyond their task performance expectation is highly sought to enhance government delivery efficiency to the public. Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) has become the most influential factor that has practically shaped Malaysian work value systems and their workplace behaviour. This study examines the relationship between IWE and OCB using a survey method. A total of 153 state civil servants from the Unfederated Malay States (UFMS) namely Johor, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu have participated in this study. The findings of this study revealed that IWE is a vital work values that promotes OCB among the civil servants in Malaysia especially among the Muslim employees who embraced Islam as their faith. Specifically, the result of this study revealed that greater IWE is related to greater sportsmanship, civic virtue, altruism and courtesy dimension of OCB. IWE however was not significantly related to conscientiousness facet of OCB. The findings of this study have made significant contribution to the body of knowledge in understanding OCB among civil servants in Malaysia who predominantly guided by IWE. This study also has few practical implications to government agencies and policy makers in devising appropriate human resource strategies to ensure efficient public service delivery.

Keywords: Islamic work ethic, organizational citizenship behaviour, civil servants, Unfederated Malay States.

Introduction

Malaysia is in final leg in her journey towards realizing Vision 2020 to become high income knowledge-based economy. In order to realize this aspiration, government machineries and public service delivery system must act as catalyst provide necessary support for the economic growth. The government challenges are also becoming more complex due to technological and cultural changes, demographic shifts and fast movement of money, goods and people and increasing demand and expectation from the public. Government constantly revise its service delivery model to remain relevant and better suited to today's technologies, socioeconomic and generation needs. The reform to new delivery and service will help the government machineries to be more cost-effective and better equipped to meet the demands and expectations of the public for 2020 and beyond. This will also require the public sector to be leaner, facilitative, more efficient, more productive, more skilled, more open, more innovative, and less bureaucratic, in order to better deliver for the public and for Malaysia.

Government's pledge to become more citizen-centric and focus on enhancing the efficiency and productivity of the public service manifested in almost all the national economic development plan beginning from the First Malaysia Plan (1966–1970) to the current Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016-2020). A number of initiatives were undertaken to improve the efficiency of public service delivery. Among the first initiatives was the establishment of Malaysian Public Complaints Bureau (PCB) in 1971 to ensure an effective and equitable public administration and service delivery to the public and act as a mediator between the government and the public as well as to provide a medium for the public to voice out their complaints in dealing with government agencies (Malaysia Public Complaints Bureau, 2013). National Integrity Plan and Integrity Institute of Malaysia were established later with the objective to improve governance and work ethics, prevent misuse of power and curb corruption among the civil servants. To further strengthen the public service delivery, the Malaysian government has introduced the Government Transformation Plan (GTP) and Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) (Mahazril, Zurainim Hafizah, Adnan, Zaherawati, Nazni & Badrul, 2012).

The central point in addressing public expectation is the public service employee's job performance and quality of the public service delivery because it reflects the overall performance of their departments and agencies at large. Despite all these effort, the quality of public service delivery to the public service still failed to achieve the expected result (Siddiquee, 2006). Table 1 depicts the number of complaints received by PCB from 2010 to 2015 for both Ministries and States agencies (Malaysia Public Complaints Bureau, 2010-2015). Quick glance on the statistics depicted in Table 1 provides some insight into actual performance of these government agencies though the number of complaints seems to decrease gradually. The total complaints received especially on the delay and no action taken category still an unhealthy trend for a country targeting to become developed nation by 2020.

Table 1: Total Complaints Received (2010-2015)

Year	Overall Complaints			No Action/delay		
	Agencies			Agencies		
	Ministry	State	Total	Ministry	State	Total
2010	9,503	5,197	14,700	3,817	2,635	6,452
2011	8,321	5,035	13,356	3,241	2,734	5,975
2012	7,647	4,899	12,546	3,095	2,784	5,879
2013	6,183	3,696	9,879	2,428	1,846	4,274
2014	4,518	2,681	7,199	1,596	1,132	2,728
2015	3,892	2,496	6,388	1,432	1,129	2,561

Source: Malaysia Public Complaints Bureau 2010-2015

One of the effective ways to enhance the public service delivery efficiency is by having employees that are more likely to engage in positive and proactive work behaviour and willing to go beyond the expectation in performing his/her job. Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), a concept of employee proactive behaviour has been thoroughly studied and is positively linked to both employee and organizational performance. According to Organ, Podsakoff and MacKenzie (2006), OCB makes a significant contribution to overall organizational performance considering that it can facilitate work processes by filling the gaps associated with non-prescribed tasks that job descriptions might not have been covered clearly. Podsakoff et al. (2009) have compiled considerable evidences on OCB where it can be linked directly to variability in organizational performance including both productivity and efficiency indicators. In the context of public service, civil servants with OCB are likely to transcend beyond their in-role or task performance expectation to deliver more than expected from their side hence enhance government delivery efficiency to the public (Kim, 2005; Vigoda & Golembiewski, 2001). Studies also concluded that employees that display OCB in their work will lead to greater job performance in public sector (Ali Rastagar, Zarei, Mousavi Davoudi, & Fartash, 2012; Nikolaou & Robertson, 2002; Wei, 2014). Merely fulfilling in-role or task performance which has predominantly taken root as the work culture among government agency employees will no longer adequate with the rising demand and expectation from the public. The escalating number of complaints received by the government agencies due to poor service quality can be significantly reduced if the service provider willing to go extra mile in discharging their job for public good hence become the motivation of this study.

In identifying motives and understanding OCB, some behavioural researchers have turned their attention to dispositional factors. Dispositional factors are those factors that are "internal to the individual and which individuals bring with them from situation to situation and from one organization to another" (Scholl, 2008). The organizational outcomes are largely influenced by individual dispositional factors in the form of work values (Moorman & Blakely, 1995; Van Dyne, Vandewalle, Kostova, Latham & Cummings, 2000; Wagner & Rush, 2000), personality traits (Neuman & Kickul, 1998; Organ & Ryan, 1995; Konovsky & Organ, 1996), attitudes and cognitive style that are relatively consistent over time and situations and are difficult to change (Davis-Blake & Pfeffer, 1989; Scholl, 2008; Weiss & Adler, 1984). Among these individual dispositional factors, work ethics received considerable attention among the researchers in behavioural science. Prior to study on Islamic work ethics, Protestant work ethic which was proposed by Blood (1969) is one of the most discussed and examined work values across the social sciences and prior research suggests that the Protestant work ethic is dispositional in nature (Mirels & Garrett, 1971). In his study, Ryan (2002) also found support for individual work values namely Protestant work ethic as a dispositional factor related to OCB. In line with Mirels and Garrett (1971) and Ryan (2002) argument on outcome of religion based work values, Abdi, Muhamad Nor and Radzi (2014) opined that Islamic work ethic is a dispositional variable which varies among the individuals. In addition, Nasr (1984) reckoned that the Islamic work ethic is worthy of discussion because it plays a significant role in the realization of the Muslims around the world. As a country with Malay Muslim as majority of population that practice Islam, the religion has become the most influential factor that has practically shaped Malaysian work value systems. Besides that, the inculcation of Islamic values policy and the introduction of Islam Hadhari approach during the reign of the former Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Abdullah Hj. Ahmad Badawi also allowed Islamic work ethic to be instilled efficiently into the Malaysian public sector (Syed Ismail, 2007).

Prior studies done in the Malaysian public service shows that Malaysian public sector employees strongly observe Islamic work ethic at their workplace (Kumar & Rose, 2010; Mohd Yunus, Abdul Rahim, Shabuddin & Mazlan, 2011). Within the context of this study, all the state civil servants in Unfederated Malay States are Malay Muslim and it is ideal to investigate the adoption of Islamic work ethic at their workplace and subsequently the cross-over effect on their work behaviour. *The researcher* in a view that Islamic work ethic *will have* influence on OCB based on prior research done by Alhyasat (2012), Abbasi and Rana (2012), Fakhar Zaman and Ramay (2012) and Zahrah (2015). As the above discussion attests, this study attempts to examine the relationship between Islamic work ethic and OCB among state civil servants focusing on the Unfederated Malay States in Malaysia hence become the problem statement of this study.

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between Islamic work ethic and OCB.
Specifically, Islamic work ethic positively related to (H1a) Sportsmanship, (H1b) Civic Virtue, (H1c) Conscientiousness, (H1d) Altruism and (H1e) Courtesy dimensions of OCB.

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected using mail survey method. The respondents are state civil servants from the Unfederated Malay States (UFMS) namely Johor, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu. The population size for this study is 754 middle level administrators of state service from grade N41 to N54, classified as management and professional group (Malaysia Public Service Department, 2002) working in the four UFMS. The sample population obtained from Human Resources Department of each state. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed and total of 256 surveys were sent out. A total of 153 usable questionnaires were returned representing 60% response rate. A standard multiple linear regression analysis using enter method was performed to test the proposed hypothesis of the study.

Islamic work ethic was measured using instrument developed by Ali (1992) consisting 17 items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The Cronbach's alpha of the scale range between 0.76 and 0.89 (Ali, 1992; Kumar & Raduan, 2010; Yousef, 2000a). Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Questionnaire (OCBQ) established by Podsakoff et al. (1990) was used to measure OCB. The OCBQ was employed to investigate the five facets of OCB namely altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue which consist of 24 items measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The OCBQ average internal consistency reliability range between 0.70 and 0.85 (Podsakoff et al., 1990).

RESULT

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The respondents included 113 (73.9%) males and 40 (26.1%) females. In terms of age distribution, 32 (20.9%) respondents were between 20 to 29 years old, 80 (52.3%) between 30 to 39 years old, 29 (19.0%) between 40 to 49 years old and 12 (7.8%) respondents above 50 years. Majority of the respondents i.e. 132 (86.3%) married and 21 (13.7%) were single. Bachelor degree holders comprised of 104 (68.0%) of the respondents followed by 47 (30.7%) with master degree and 2 (1.3%) of respondents are PhD holders. Respondents from Kedah state represents (34.6%) or 53 individuals, 32 (20.9%) from Terengganu, 30 (19.6%) from Kelantan and 38 (24.8%) from Johor. Majority of the respondents, 64 (41.8%) served for 6 to 10 years, 41 (26.8%) served between 1 to 5 years, 26 (17.0%) served between 11 to 15 years and 22 (14.4%) served more than 16 years. Meanwhile 57 (37.3%) respondents in grade N41, 52 (34.0%) in grade N44, 23 (15.0%) in grade N48, 12 (7.8%) in grade N52 and 9 (5.9%) in grade N54.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS, RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS AND CORRELATIONS

The descriptive statistics for all variables are presented in Table 2, along with correlation matrix. IWE was correlated positively with four dimensions of OCB (sportsmanship $r = 0.45$, civic virtue $r = 0.47$, altruism $r = 0.39$ and courtesy $r = 0.30$, all ps<0.05). IWE however was not correlated significantly with conscientiousness ($r = 0.07$, $p > 0.05$).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics, reliability coefficients and correlations (N=153)

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.IWE	4.50	0.38	(0.87)					
2.Sportsmanship	5.68	0.69	0.45**	(0.83)				
3.Civic Virtue	5.63	0.79	0.47**	0.56**	(0.78)			
4.Conscientiousness	5.97	1.19	0.07	0.19*	0.08	(0.79)		
5.Altruism	5.81	0.78	0.39**	0.57**	0.47**	0.14	(0.71)	
6.Courtesy	4.50	0.38	0.30**	0.47	0.26**	0.11	0.37**	(0.75)

Note: Coefficient alphas are presented along the diagonal
$^*p<0.05$, $^{**}<0.01$

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The main hypothesis and sub-hypotheses postulates IWE is positively related to OCB and its dimensions. A standard multiple regression was conducted to test the hypothesis. The result of regression analysis for these hypotheses testing is shown in Table 3. The regression model for relationship between IWE and OCB was statistically significant, $R^2 = 0.26$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.25$, $F(1,149)=52.73$, $p<0.05$. IWE ($\beta=0.51$, p<0.05) was positively related to OCB indicating that individuals with higher IWE tended to demonstrate higher OCB. Thus, the main hypothesis 1 was supported. As for the sub-hypotheses, Islamic work ethic positively related to (H1a) Sportsmanship. The regression model for relationship between IWE and sportsmanship was statistically significant, $R^2 = 0.20$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.19$, $F(1,149)=37.410$, $p<0.05$. IWE ($\beta=0.45$, p<0.05) was positively related to sportsmanship indicating that individuals with higher IWE tended to demonstrate higher sportsmanship. The second sub-hypotheses (H1b) Civic Virtue also supported. The regression model for relationship between IWE and civic virtue was statistically significant, $R^2 = 0.22$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.21$, $F(1,149)=42.61$, p<0.05. IWE ($\beta=0.47$, p<0.05) was positively related to civic virtue indicating that individuals with higher IWE tended to demonstrate higher civic virtue. The third sub-hypothesis was not supported. The regression model for (H1c) Conscientiousness was not significant, $R^2 = 0.05$, adjusted $R^2 = -0.02$,

$F(1,149)$=0.69, p>0.05. IWE (β=0.069, p>0.05) was not significantly related to conscientiousness. The fourth sub-hypothesis (H1d) Altruism was supported. The regression model for relationship between IWE and altruism was statistically significant, R^2 =0.15, adjusted R^2 =0.14, $F(1,149)$=27.002, p<0.05. IWE (β=0.39, p<0.05) was positively related to altruism indicating that individuals with higher IWE tended to demonstrate higher altruism. Finally sub-hypotheses (H1e) Courtesy also supported. The regression model for relationship between IWE and courtesy was statistically significant, R^2 =0.088, adjusted R^2 =0.081, $F(1,149)$=14.199, p<0.05. IWE (β=0.29, p<0.05) was positively related to courtesy indicating that individuals with higher IWE tended to demonstrate higher courtesy. As a conclusion, H1, H1a, H1b, H1d and H1e were supported while H1c was not supported in this study.

Table 3: Result of standard linear regression analysis between IWE and OCB and its dimensions (N=153)

Variable	OCB β (t)	Sportsmanship β (t)	Civic virtue β (t)	Conscientiousness β (t)	Altruism β (t)	Courtesy β (t)
IWE	0.51 (7.3)**	0.45 (6.1)**	0.47 (6.5)**	0.07 (0.84)	0.39 (5.2)**	0.29 (3.7)**
R^2	0.26	0.20	0.22	0.05	0.15	0.088
Adjusted R^2	0.25	0.19	0.21	-0.02	0.14	0.081
F	52.73**	37.41**	42.61**	0.69	27.02**	14.19**

Note: * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$

DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between IWE and OCB among state civil servants focusing on the Unfederated Malay States in Malaysia Firstly, the findings of this study shows that respondents (N=153) recorded a relatively high Islamic work ethic with mean score of 4.36 on a five-point Likert scale. The findings of the present study are consistent with previous research findings especially those conducted in Malaysia (Ali, 1988, 1992; Kumar & Rose, 2010; Mohd Yunus et al., 2011; Yousef, 2000, 2001). The present study demonstrates that Islamic work ethic still remains superior and acknowledged in the public sectors in Malaysia indicating that the state civil servants in Malaysia have high orientation towards Islamic work ethic. The embedded positive values in Islamic work ethic of state civil servants is deemed good for Malaysia in achieving its target as a high income nation status and developed nation by year 2020. In summary, the findings revealed that the state civil service view work as a virtue in human's lives (Rizk, 2008) therefore, employees holding strongly to Islamic work ethic can help the head of department in many state government agencies to overcome work related problems arising from attitude and behaviours of their staffs as well as work hard to achieve their goals. With regards to OCB, the results indicate that the overall level of OCB experienced by the state civil service in this study was relatively high. The findings of the present study are consistent with previous research (Elamin & Tlaiss, 2015; Saraih, Ali, & Khalid, 2015). This implies that the h*igher the score greater the level of citizenship behaviour.* In short, it can be concluded that the state civil servants have high orientation and the willingness to go beyond the tasks in their job description and exhibit extra role behaviour in order to achieve work goals. Employees holding strongly to OCB can help the head of department organizations attaining the optimal performance of organizations they are leading.

As coined by Ali (1988), hard work is considered as a virtue, to succeed one need to work hard and failure in life may be caused by not working hard. Consistent with the prediction and theorizing within the exchange ideology, the social exchange theory and self-determination theory, the study shows that employees with strong work ethic, weak exchange ideology and possess intrinsic motivation, regardless of treatment received by their employer; will keep on performing their tasks effectively and as an exchange, he or she will reciprocate by engaging in positive work behaviours such as OCB. The finding of this research indicates that the state civil service practices and adhere to the values of Islam at the workplace. Values shown such as collective *responsibility* and working hard towards the same goals, showing unwavering commitment and perseverance at workplace, ensuring that products and services meets the customer demands; as well as creative in carrying out the *tasks* that have been *assigned* to them. Subsequently, the attitude and behaviour of the employees at the workplace are more positive when they follow the principles of Islam. In short, employees who are considered high on Islamic values are more ready to demonstrate unspecified and proactive behaviour that are directed to benefit the entire organisation. This result is also in line with past study that was conducted with several research results Alhyasat (2012), Abbasi and Rana (2012) and Zaman et al. (2012) that shows positive relationship between Islamic work ethic and the employees' willingness to show discretionary behaviour toward their organisation. The present study findings support the idea that employees that are mostly Malay Muslim are devoted to the rules and instruction of Islam at workplace, which influence their pro-social behaviour positively. Lastly, the current study also represents one of these efforts that aim to enhance and enrich the field of OCB by highlighting comparatively new dispositional variables namely the Islamic work ethic and its effect on behavioural variable, namely OCB.

CONCLUSION

Basically, the Social Exchange Theory and Self Determination Theory were used to underpin the research framework of this study. This study contributes new knowledge to the body of research primarily with regards to the relationship between Islamic work ethic and OCB which is little known thus far especially among civil servants in Malaysia. Besides that, this study offers an insight investigation into the Malaysian civil service sector, whereby most of the previous studies on citizenship behaviours were conducted in other sector such as in service, financial and manufacturing sectors in Western environment. Basically, the results obtained have contributed empirical evidence to the theoretical framework and enriched the conceptual model in the Malaysian civil service environment as a whole and State civil service in particular.

As suggested by Creswell (2005), managerial implications comprise the usage of the results obtained for practice and for decision making process. Basically, the main research question of this study is concerning the relationship between the Islamic work ethic and OCB among state civil service in Unfederated Malay States in Malaysian. A number of findings (Abbasi & Rana, 2012; Alhyasat, 2012; Fakhar Zaman, Marri, Sadozai, & Ramay, 2012) suggested that Islamic work ethic have significant influence on citizenship behaviour. Consequently, high levels of work ethic can increase the citizenship behaviour of the state civil service. This study has demonstrated that state civil servants' Islamic work ethic was found to affect their job attitude, especially their engagement towards their work which could impact their work outcome especially their extra role behaviour. Specifically, this study shows that Islamic work ethic as an important dispositional factor in promoting voluntary behaviour among employees. Therefore, in order for the state government to promote extra role behaviours among the state civil servants need to promote and uphold the Islamic work ethic in their respective organization. In terms of human resource development, as suggested by scholars

and practitioners (Ahmad, 2011; Kirke, 2012; Salem & Syed Agil, 2012), the state human resource management can concentrate on developing formal or informal developmental and training programs to enhance the Islamic work ethic and OCB of the existing state civil services. On the other hand, the human resource management can also support and promote the present developmental programs concerning Islamic work ethic and OCB. Since it's not easy to evaluate the candidates' level of work ethic, and citizenship behaviour during the recruitment process, the human resource department can use appropriate tools that can be used in selection processes which can help the management to choose the right candidate that are suitable for the job at the state government agencies.

There is few limitation of this study that deserves future research to address them. Firstly, the present study was conducted within the confinement of public sector as a whole and state civil servant in particular. Due to its specific context, it is possible that it limits the generalizability of the results. Future research should extend the research to private sector or other types of organizations in order to enhance its generalizability. Furthermore, this study uses civil servants as the primary unit of analysis. If future researches are able to use other types of unit of analysis such as governmental organizations i.e. office or bureau, it may help to extend the generalizability of the results. Besides that, it could be expanded and replicated to other organizations and industries, which could help to validate the current research model in other settings. Secondly, in obtaining the perceptual data, civil servants are required to rate their own level of Islamic work ethic and OCB. According to Podsakoff and Organ (1986), there is a potential problem related to social desirability bias and this will lead to issues of integrity of data collection. While it is impossible to eliminate social desirability bias, however the future research can detect and control by administering a 'social desirability scale in order to elicit a more accurate account of attitudes and behaviours. Thirdly, the present study only focuses on Islamic work ethic as the antecedent to OCB. There are other types of variables that can influence OCB. For example, the negative emotion is the barrier for employees to demonstrate positive work behaviours. In order to understand what other factors that could mediate the relationship between the independent and dependent variable, future research may consider negative emotion such as burnout as possible mediating variables in the relationship between Islamic work ethic and OCB. Besides that future research may want to extend this model by introducing a moderator. Additionally, future research can also examine other mediators and moderators in a single study. This can be done either through a mediated-moderation model or a moderated-mediation model.

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Subramaniam Sri Ramalu
Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business,
Universiti Utara Malaysia 06010 UUM Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia
Email: subra@uum.edu.my

Zulhusni Mohamad Rashid
Othman *Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business,*
Universiti Utara Malaysia 06010 UUM Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia
Email: zulhusni_81@yahoo.com