

BUILDING A VALUE-BASED WORKFORCE THROUGH ISLAMIC WORK VALUE-BASED RECRUITMENT: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The increasing ethical infringements, moral violations, and disciplinary problems among employees point to the deteriorations in employee values. Hiring employees merely on common competency-based recruitment (CBR) versus value-based recruitment (VBR) ignores the critical role of values in guiding employee behaviours, thus contributing further to the problems. This study involves a qualitative approach using NVivo text analysis tool to analyse texts and word frequency from 44 references, including 35 journal articles, six policy papers, two books or book chapters and one conference proceedings. The results show that Public Sector ICT Management Review was the top journal with the highest coverage of the study's main themes, followed by the Journal of Education for Teaching, the Human Resource Management Review, and the Advances in Health Science Education indicating the importance of the value-based workforce in these four areas of employment (i.e., public sector, education, human resource, and health). The word frequency analysis also shows the five most-used words were “values,” “work,” “based,” “selection,” and “recruitment.” These findings show that the references used in this study are valid and reliable relevant to the study's main themes. Value-based workforce relates to value-based recruitment – building a value-based workforce begins with a good recruitment strategy. In the Islamic context, Islamic work values are highly influential and Islamic work-related values have been used as recruitment conditions for hiring employees during the Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) time and the rightly guided caliphs. If incorporated into the value-based model of recruitment, Islamic-related work values could potentially build a value-based workforce. This study has a significant implication to managers especially in finding good employees for the success of the organisation. Recruiting employees through value-

based recruitment and selection is believed could reduce many work-related issues and improve organisational effectiveness. This study adds to the body of knowledge on value-based hiring by incorporating theories and Islamic work ideals, which can be used as a guide for future research.

Keywords: value-based recruitment, value-based workforce, Islamic work values, competency-based recruitment, employees

INTRODUCTION

Unethical infringement, performance and commitment problems, workplace incivility, disciplinary cases are among the most significant issues facing human resource management regarding employee attitudes and behaviours at work (Alzola, 2018; Arshad & Ismail, 2018). Problems such as unethical conduct, withdrawal behaviours, absenteeism, presentism, and other counterproductive behaviours are very costly to the organisations (Einarsen et al., 2018; Paterson & Huang, 2019). Employees with high rank, position, and salary are no exception to such problems (Nawawi & Salin, 2018; Van Scotter & Roglio, 2020). Many temptations in organisations attract employees to sway from ethical norms and professional practices (De Cremer & Vandekerckhove, 2017). Current recruitment practices which only focus on hiring employees based on knowledge, skills, experiences, abilities, known as competency-based, fails to guarantee employees will not engage in unscrupulous activities (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Vincent, 2019). This recruitment method does not screen candidates for values-priority and values-specific (Otoo, 2019) except in specific jobs such as those in healthcare, military, retail and banking sectors, and other high security-risk sectors and safety-sensitive jobs (Groothuizen et al., 2018; Luu et al., 2017).

Some professions use value tests to check the suitability of the applicants for recruitment (Fine et al., 2016; Patterson et al., 2016). Integrity, honesty, and other personality tests are typically given to applicants applying for critical jobs. Although many organisations have used value tests as a determining factor in recruitment, little research has endeavoured to consider this method as value-based recruitment. Moreover, value tests are limited to integrity and honesty tests which are not overarching enough to include other values such as justice, fairness, hardworking, timeliness, and so forth (Karren & Zacharias, 2007; Oliver et al., 2012). Many seem to overlook the importance of values when hiring candidates. Especially for jobs that have less health and security-risks such as jobs that are not directly dealing with cash, products, and valuable assets or public safety, values were not given high priority in the recruitment process. However, in sectors that

have high risks of corruption, misuse, and fraud, values in recruiting employees are emphasised (Nei et al., 2018). This shows the important and critical functions of values in reducing unethical employee behaviours. To have trustworthy, honest, committed, and hardworking employees, organisations need to screen applicants during the recruiting stage (Zak, 2017).

Value test can be administered for example through self-report inventory and/or using behavioural interviews. It may consist of several critical work values such as responsibility, trustworthiness/truthfulness, justice/fairness, integrity/honesty, and benevolence that are highly needed by any organisations. This test can measure employees' values practices and their tendency to prefer or adopt particular values. Currently, only integrity and honesty tests have been used in the recruitment in many professions especially in retailing industry. To be highly effective, value test needs to include the critical values needed by the organisations not only for the performance enhancement but also for employees' sustainable development in terms of professionalism and ethical conduct. Value test can be administered at the recruitment stage especially prior to employee selections. Recruiters can administer the test to gauge the possibility of the candidates to work effectively on the jobs and also to predict their unethical inclinations. This can be further cross-validated during the interview sessions and in other selection activities that test for leaderships, teamwork, and so forth. Although using value tests cannot fully ensure the employees hired will not engage in unethical behaviours, it could help recruit employees based on values that match the organisation, thus reducing the tendency to involve in activities that contradict with the values advocated by the organisations (Qin et al., 2018). In contrast, employees hired merely for their knowledge, experience, skills, and abilities are at higher risk of engaging in unethical behaviours.

To develop a favourable workplace that is effective and functioning, organisations need to consider the values that the applicants endorsed in the recruitment process in addition to their knowledge, experience, skills, and ability. Employees with work value orientation congruent with the organisation can create a harmonious and vibrant working environment conducive to optimal performance and good practices (Said et al., 2016). Employees hired without assessing their work value orientations jeopardise organisational effectiveness and good governance. To build a value-based workforce and uphold good governance, value-based recruitment is essential.

This paper has two important objectives. First, it aims to discuss the significance of value-based recruitment (VBR) for building a value-based workforce. Second, it aims to shed light on key Islamic work values that could be incorporated into VBR

to have a greater effect on an employee's ability to perform the job effectively and ethically in order to create a more moral and value-based workforce. These two objectives can be a ground-breaking avenue for future studies to explore the scope, significance and applicability of a value-based model of recruitment.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

This study employs a qualitative method to analyse the evidence from the text (e.g., articles, policy papers, books or chapters, and conference proceedings) on the importance of building a value-based workforce. A content analysis method through NVivo automated text analysis software version 12 Plus was used to analyse the data of the study. Content analysis is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing a large number of words into fewer clusters based on particular coding rules (Stemler, 2001). NVivo is useful for analysing a larger amount of text through text search's command and word frequency queries to arrive at useful results such as references, coverage, word count, weighted percentage of use, word cloud, and cluster analysis. The content analysis searches and categorises the main themes of the study based on the research objectives. Among the main themes of the study were VBR, value-based employment, value-based selection, value-based hiring, and value-based workforce. NVivo via text search's function identifies and finds the matching themes based on the text and/or word in the dataset. To make sure the data are derived from the relevant articles, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were determined (Windle, 2010), allowing the search regarding the topic of concern to be within the restricted scope of the study, thus increasing the reliability of the findings. The content analysis was run on the published relevant sources that matched with the major themes of the study. This method narrows the search and produces the results of the highest matched, thus increase the reliability and validity of the study. The results of the search were uploaded to NVivo using the functions "import" and "files," converting them into data for the qualitative analysis.

Search Strategy

Academic online databases and google scholar were used to search for the extant literature on the importance of having a value-based workforce. The search for the literature review used the keywords such as "value-based recruitment," "value-based hiring," "value-based selection," "value-based workforce," and "value-based employment." The full texts of the articles relevant to the study were saved

on the hard disk and were uploaded to NVivo as data. Only the keywords that accurately reflected the study's main themes were used in this study, which led to more accurate and reliable results. This will allow the relationship between the study's core themes, keywords, and objectives to be correctly justifiable.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The analysis only uses relevant references that correspond to the major themes of the study. To narrow the search, only references related to the major keywords were used. References that did not relate to the major themes of the study and were not academically published, such as unpublished theses or personal compilations were excluded. Only references from scholarly publications were consulted. The study does not restrict the search to a specific timeframe. Doing this will only reduce the search output as this area of research is still lacking.

Data Analysis

Data from about 58 sources was uploaded for subsequent analysis. With the aid of the software's "add stop words" feature, some extraneous terms—those unrelated to the main themes, such as "also," "although," "2003," and "many"—were manually eliminated from the search. The analysis was run firstly using the commands "text search" and "run query" to identify the existence of the major themes in the data. The data that do not hit the major themes were removed. The dataset was reduced by about 14 sources. Thus, the final data consist of 44 sources. The next analysis was to identify the major themes of the study using the functions "explore," "word frequency," and "run query." This study limits the criteria of word frequency to 30 display words, with a minimum length of three and the exact matches grouping category. These functions of synthesis can improve the results into a more manageable number in terms of word frequency, word cloud, tree map, and cluster analysis, important for the reliability and validity of the findings.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The results from the NVivo computerised automated text search analysis show that 5,578 major themes were found from the data of the study derived from 44 references, of which 35 were journal articles (16.07%), six were policy papers (1.76%), two were books or book chapters (0.70%), and one was conference proceedings (0.46%). This covers roughly 20% of the dataset's main themes in total. This percentage shows that there is still a dearth of research in this field of study. The results also show that the *Public Sector ICT Management Review*

(12.85%) was the top journal with the highest coverage of the main themes of the study, followed by the *Journal of Education for Teaching* (8.53%), the *Human Resource Management Review* (7.68%), and the *Advances in Health Science Education* (7.63%). This shows that the public sector, education, human resources, and healthcare are the job sectors where value-based workforce are most prevalent. Table 1 displays the results.

Table 1
Publication used the analysis and frequency of the major themes

Name of journal/publication	References	Coverage (%)
1. The Wiley Blackwell Handbook	2859	0.63
2. Monograph-Policy Research Programme	611	0.60
3. Human Resource Management Review	216	1.45
4. Advances in Health Science Education	204	1.10
5. Journal of Education for Teaching	201	1.62
6. US Army War College	189	0.08
7. Wiley Blackwell	189	0.07
8. Industrial Management & Data Systems	151	1.23
9. Public Sector ICT Management Review	115	2.44
10. The British Psychology Society	85	0.20
11. International Healthcare Quality Assurance	71	0.77
12. Human Resource Management	70	0.46
13. Journal of Advanced Nursing	65	0.63
14. Journal of Organisational Behaviour	63	0.44
15. British Journal of Community Nursing	58	0.82
16. Nursing Standard	56	1.22
17. Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Computer Science & information Technology	36	0.46
18. Project Management Journal	35	0.19
19. The Journal of Developing Areas	32	0.39
20. Canadian Public Administration	29	0.20
21. Nurse Education in Practice (Elsevier)	26	0.29
22. The Academy of Management Review	25	0.23
23. HR Daily Newsletter	24	1.43
24. Harvard Law & Policy Review	46	0.30
25. Health Progress	16	0.57
26. Review of Integrative Business & Economics Research	12	0.10

(Continued on next page)

Table 1: (Continued)

Name of journal/publication	References	Coverage (%)
27. Journal of Nursing & Care	11	0.11
28. Pearson (White Paper)	10	0.12
29. Journal of Medical Ethics	9	0.13
30. Journal of Advanced Nursing	8	0.07
31. Journal of Library Administration	8	0.07
32. Journal of Organizational Change Management	6	0.07
33. Journal of Organizational Development Change	6	0.07
34. Social Science Research Network (SSRN)	6	0.06
35. The Academy of Management Review	5	0.13
36. Journal of Business Psychology	4	0.02
37. Journal of Leadership & Organizational Development	4	0.03
38. Leadership and Organisation development	4	0.03
39. Cardenos Ebape	3	0.01
40. Journal of Business Ethics	4	0.04
41. College Quarterly	2	0.03
42. Financial Executives	2	0.06
43. EBS Review	1	0.01
44. Journal of Personality & Social Psychology	1	0.01
Total	5578	18.99

Note: Major themes of the study are VBR, value-based hiring, value-based selection, value-based employment, and value-based workforce

The results of the NVivo automated text analysis using word frequency's function show that the most frequently found words were "values" (i.e., $f = 5283$, $\% = 0.73$), "work" (i.e., $f = 3440$, $\% = 0.47$), "selection" (i.e., $f = 2363$, $\% = 0.33$), "based" (i.e., $f = 2361$, $\% = 0.33$), and "recruitment" (i.e., $f = 2245$, $\% = 0.31$), while the word "performance" (i.e., $f = 2155$, $\% = 0.30$) was the seventh on the list. This gives an indication that value-based recruitment and selection could lead to performance. Table 2 displays the result.

Table 2
Frequency of words

Words	<i>F</i>	Weighted %
Values	5283	0.73
Work	3440	0.47
Selection	2363	0.33
Based	2361	0.33
Recruitment	2245	0.31
Medical	2192	0.30
Performance	2155	0.30
Organizational	2101	0.30
Management	2098	0.29
Psychology	1801	0.29
Health	1475	0.20
Important	1470	0.20
Team	1463	0.20
Development	1343	0.19
Personality	1270	0.18
Care	1254	0.17
Assessment	1196	0.16
Leadership	1178	0.16
Employees	1146	0.16
Healthcare	1072	0.15

Note: *F* = frequency

The result of the word frequency analysis using 50 words most frequent found “values” to be closely clustered with “based” and “recruitment” to form VBR. Values were also found in the same cluster as other relevant main themes, such as “selection,” “work,” “management,” “organizational,” and “performance.” When narrowing down the word analysis using the five most frequent words, the word cloud shows the significant major theme of the study, which is “work value-based recruitment/selection.” This signifies that the data of the study are acceptably valid and reliable to be used in the study. Figure 1 displays the results of the word cloud.

The horizontal dendrogram of the cluster analysis using seven clusters shows several words relevant to the major themes, such as “values,” “recruitment,” “based,” “selection,” “work,” “management,” and “performance” appeared in the output. When cluster analysis was run using one cluster, five important words of

“value-based recruitment work selection” resulted, indicating the sources used in this study were validly representing the main theme of the study. Figure 2 displays the results of the cluster analysis.

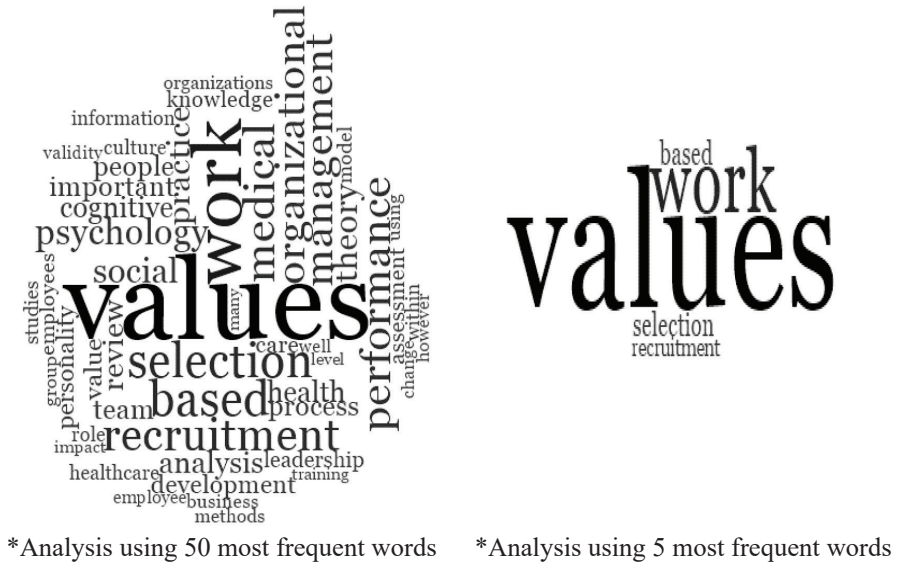


Figure 1. Word cloud of word frequency analysis

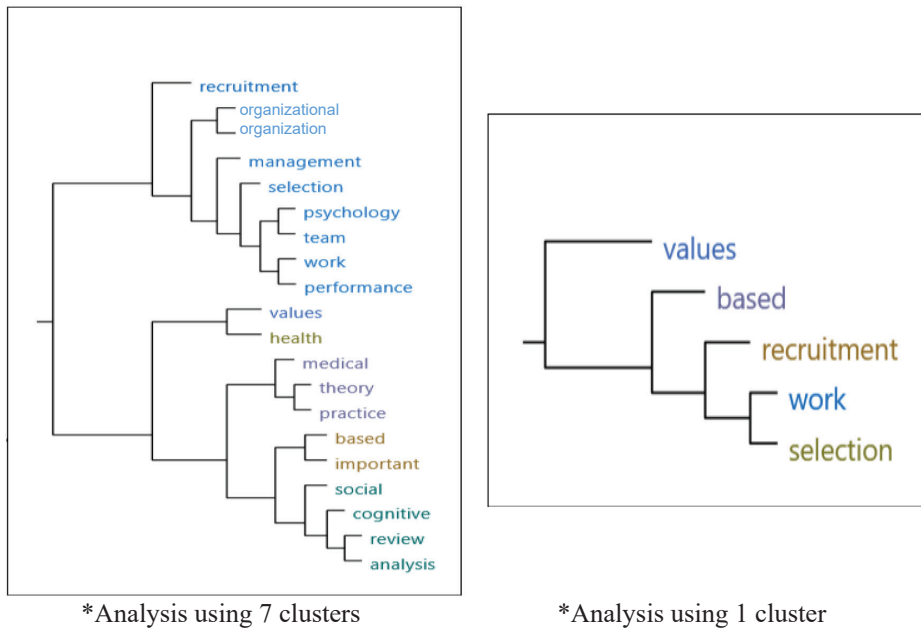


Figure 2. Horizontal dendrogram of the cluster analysis

LITERATURE REVIEW

What is Value-Based Recruitment?

VBR refers to the process of selecting and hiring employees based on values fit between talents or applicants with the values needed to effectively perform the job (see for example, Groothuizen et al., 2018). Certain values such as compassion, transparency and justice are essential and critical for performing certain jobs (Patterson et al., 2016). Without these values, employees cannot deliver their tasks and responsibilities effectively and satisfactorily. VBR has been used to hire employees in certain jobs in the UK and Canada, especially in jobs related to nurses and police officers (Klingenberg & Pelletier, 2019; Miller, 2015). However, VBR is still a relatively very new phenomenon and limited to certain jobs that critically need employees who embrace particular values to perform their tasks professionally. By prioritising values in VBR indicates the importance of values in the life of employees which guide their behaviour performance. However, VBR can only be effective if the values are genuinely held by the employees and endorsed by organisations. Thus, the values needed for the performance of the job must match with the values held by the applicants. In VBR, common competencies such as knowledge, skills, experiences, and other abilities are still important for screening and pooling the applicants (Stock, 2013). However, the decisive factors that determine the suitability of applicants to be hired depend on their values that match the values needed to perform the job effectively.

Hiring employees without appropriate values fit risks employees working solely to fulfil their tasks as stated in their job description. They are less likely to go above and beyond their job descriptions (Winter & Jackson, 2014). Hiring employees through VBR can have a significant impact on the performance as value fit employees will individualise the job (Athota et al., 2020) instead of just institutionalising it. In other words, employees are more willing to go the extra mile to perform the task if they advocate the same values personally about performing their jobs.

Overview of Theories on Values in the Literature

The VBR is coherent with many theories and findings of studies on values. VBR can be considered a practical manifestation found in many value theories such as the person-job fit (Kristof-Brown, 2000), value congruence theory and value-attitude-behaviour (VAB) (Homer & Kahle, 1988). Person-job fit theory conceptualised that the match between employees' values and the values needed to perform the jobs effectively can improve the performance of the job (Carless, 2005). Value congruency occurs when employees espouse values needed to perform the jobs

(Han et al., 2019). The value fit increases employees' morale and enriches their feeling of belonging to their organisation (Lee & Bruvold, 2003). As a result, employees become more committed and loyal to their organisation. They will also work hard because they feel valued, intrinsically satisfied and motivated. In addition, value congruence could enhance employees' satisfaction, organisational commitment, and decrease employee turnover tendency and any counterproductive behaviours (Seggewiss et al., 2019). Consequently, it will have positive effects on employees and organisational work outcomes (Han et al., 2019; Qu et al., 2019).

The theory of VAB also supports the role of values on individual behaviours (Homer & Kahle, 1988). VAB posits that values are the sources of motivation for individuals in guiding or influencing their attitudes to actualise them in their behaviours (Ponizovskiy et al., 2019). In all these theories, values are the key concept that guides individual actions (Han et al., 2019). VAB explains individual behaviours based on their values is consistent with person-job fit theory and was widely used in the management literature to justify the performance effectiveness of the employees and organisations (Kristof-Brown, 2000; Patterson et al., 2016). The theory of person-job fit posits that when there is a fit between employee and the job, the performance reaches the breakeven (Schuh et al., 2018).

According to Collins and Porras (1994) and Milliman et al. (1999), the stronger the values held, the higher their effects on individual behaviours. Normally, religious values tend to have a strong hold on its believers (Praveen et al., 2009). Values that are encouraged by the religions, society, and organisation tend to have more spiritual fulfilments and meanings to individual life, and thus will receive the highest conviction for individuals to behave consistently with their values (Neubert & Wood, 2019). Studies on values can provide references and guidelines for human resource (HR) strategic planning to create a more sustainable human resource development among its workforce. In order to create a value-based workforce, organisations need to first assess employee values during the recruitment process. Screening candidates for the appropriate values matched with the organisations' values and good practices can be a strategic HR planning to build a sustainable value-based workforce.

In the Islamic context, in order to build a value-based workforce among the employees, organisations can adopt work-related values found in the Islamic teachings to be incorporated in VBR when recruiting employees. Muslims are more familiar with Islamic work-related values (Wahab & Masron, 2020). As such, they will be more receptive to the inspiration of building a better and sustainable value-based workforce. Furthermore, the Islamic work values are consistent with

ethical and professional conducts and good governance practices of organisations (Rattani & Hyder, 2019), thus suitable to be applied in VBR for recruiting valued-based employees.

The importance of Islamic values should not be underestimated as several studies have found direct effects between the Islamic work values and employees related performance such as organisational commitment, organisational involvement, turnover intention (Mohammad et al., 2018), job performance, and innovative capability (Javed et al., 2017). Specifically, the practise of values of benevolence, piety, justice, patience, consultation, cooperation, trustworthiness, responsibility, and self-reflection have shown to relate positively with sustainable work behaviours (Wahab, 2017). Other studies such as Hayati and Caniago (2012) also found the Islamic work values of honesty, trustworthiness, patience, fairness, dedication, and hard work in their Islamic work ethics to affect employee commitment and performance. These values which formed the basis for the Islamic work ethics also have shown significant effects on work engagement (Farid et al., 2019) and organisational citizenship behaviour (Hassi et al., 2021).

In the organisations, performance effectiveness can be achieved not just through direct employees' performance but also through employees ethical and sustainable behavioural practices (Alshehhi et al., 2018; Wahab, 2021). The organisations that merely focus on profit-oriented goals will create a competitive and selfish-oriented culture, influencing employees to involve in unscrupulous and unsustainable activities. Therefore, important for the organisations to balance their pursuit of profit with good and social responsibility practices. Since good values influence good behaviour, thus having sustainable work values among employees could prevent many ethical issues and incidences of incivility in the workplace.

DISCUSSION

The Suitability of Islamic-Related Work Values in Value-Based Recruitment

Generally, the values advocated by religious beliefs exerted a significant influence on their believers (Cavanagh & Bandsuch, 2002; Milliman et al., 1999). Empirical research on values has shown consistent support for the effect of religious values on behaviour (e.g., Rokeach, 2008). Therefore, highly influential values should be incorporated in recruitment and selection processes to pool the best candidates to complement their abilities, skills and other proficiencies needed to perform the job.

Among others, religious values are influential, particularly among Muslim employees. In Islam, religious values are found in every injunction (Al-Qaradawi, 1999). Islamic values are full of guidance that can intrinsically motivate the followers to endorse and embrace, including in performing the job effectively (Forster & Fenwick, 2015). Wahab and Masron (2020) indicated that Islamic-related work values such as piety, benevolence, justice, responsibility/hardworking, good intention, among others are very important for the ethical and professional functioning of employees to perform well. These values can help to develop employees to become dedicated, hardworking, fair, and honest morally and spiritually and can also safeguard employees against unethical and other unacceptable work behaviours which are considered sinful and punishable by God. These values can complement other requirements such as skills, abilities, education, and experience to achieve holistic performance success in organisations, in this life and the hereafter.

Islamic work values are religiously-oriented work values, yet universal in nature. Having employees with competencies such as knowledge, experience, skills, and ability without possessing good work values and spiritual attachments to those values is insufficient as employees may end up experiencing stress, burnout or depression (Basinska & Dåderman, 2019). Spiritual contentedness and intrinsic satisfaction can emerge if employees espouse congruence values as needed to carry out jobs effectively and at the same time, fulfil their religious needs. This value congruence motivates employees to achieve more intrinsic meanings in performing their jobs (Pfeffer, 2010). Employees without congruent values may still perform the job but will not reach deeper spiritual contentedness except for some extrinsic satisfaction.

VBR: Evidence from Islamic Sources

Islam, through the Quran and hadith, has provided evidence regarding the employee recruitment and selection that Muslims must follow. In many occasions, the Quran and the hadith emphasise the importance of Islamic values to decide the kind of employees to hire. The Quran (28:26) states that: “Truly, the best of people for you to employ is one who is strong and trustworthy.” The word “strong” in this verse may refer to the physical and intellectual ability to perform the job in terms of having knowledge, skills, experience as of competency-based of recruitment, while “trustworthy” refers to the candidate’s value. Thus, this verse underscores the importance of competency and values in recruiting employees.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) also used to say: “We do not or shall not employ a person who desires to be appointed.” This hadith emphasises the importance of responsibility in recruiting employees. Muslims during the Prophet’s (pbuh) lifetime were the best believers and had strong convictions towards faith (*iman*) and piety (*taqwa*). Thus, Muslims during the Prophet Muhammad’s time were fully aware of the consequences of the burden that goes along with the trust for not properly carrying out responsibilities. In the history of Islam, many pious companions (*sahabah*) were appointed in leadership roles or government positions through consultation (*shura*) (Shafiq, 1984). They were appointed for their good conduct packaged with good values, strong faith, and the fear of being a *fasiq* or sinful person such as through self-advertised recruitment (Mujahid, 2012).

Ali Ibn Abi Talib, the fourth caliph, also resorted to the importance of values for selecting candidates. This was evidenced in a letter that he wrote to his governor in Egypt stating that:

You should scrutinise their record of services with good rules before you and select those who have left the best impression with the people and who have a reputation of honesty...put in charge of each service a person who is not afraid to shoulder responsibilities (Ali, 2010).

This letter exemplified the importance of good values in an employee. From the content of the letter, Ali Ibn Abi Talib emphasised work experience (i.e., scrutinised record of services), responsibilities (i.e., not afraid to shoulder responsibility), and honesty (i.e., the reputation of honesty). Ibn Taymiyyah, a famous prominent Islamic scholar, also indicated that in selecting employees for jobs dealing with wealth and the treasury, the employees must be competent and trustworthy (Ibn Taymiyya, 1966).

Another evidence on the importance of values was based on a hadith in which Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) advised Muadh Ibn Jabal to use the Quran and the hadith when making his judgement, while his last advice was to behave with good character. The Prophet said: “Make your character excellent for the people O Mu’adh Ibn Jabal.” Good character can be interpreted as having good values especially if the values are reflected in attitudes and behaviours.

In appointing a new governor or army leader, Abu Bakar, the first Caliph Al-Rashidun, used consultation in checking the qualities and qualifications of the candidates (Mujahid, 2012). Abu Bakar consulted Prophet Muhammad’s Companions like Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, or even the person he wanted to appoint, and sometimes he appointed the governors from the people

of the region. However, all this was done when Abu Bakar was certain about the sincerity, knowledge, trustworthiness, and ability of the person he wanted to appoint (Mujahid, 2012). This shows that values are important in Islam's recruitment process and a critical part of the recruitment process in Islamic history. In short, VBR was the practice of the Messenger of God and the rightly guided caliphs (*Al-Rashidin*).

Key Islamic Work Values

Although numerous Islamic values are indicated and implied in the Quran and Sunnah (The Prophet's practices), the most widely accepted work-related values in Islam are piety (*taqwa*), responsibility (*mas'uliyah*), benevolence (*ihsan*), justice/fairness (*'adl*), perfectionism (*itqan*), gratitude/thankfulness (*shukr*), consultation (*shura*), patient (*sabr*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), cooperation (*ta'awun*), self-reflection (*muhasabah*), consistent (*istiqamah*), truthfulness or honesty (*sidq*), and trustworthiness (*amanah*) (Branine & Pollard, 2010; Hoque et al., 2013; Wahab & Masron, 2020). These values are frequently found in the Quran and hadith as well as Islamic teachings. Muslims who follow the teachings of Islam will reflect these values in their behaviour.

Piety

Piety (*taqwa*) is a paramount value that all good Muslims aim to achieve. The principal behind piety lies in the connotation of following God's orders due to fear of God (Ibn al-Mubarak, 1998). This means belief in the Oneness of God, the Al-Mighty, the Most Powerful and the only Lord who deserves to be worshipped. It is to be conscious of the power of the Al-Mighty God to whom belongs the ultimate power to inflict punishment will guard and protect those with piety from harming others and disobeying God's commandments (Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, 2002). The significance of this value is that it will guard employees who embrace it from involving in activities prohibited by God such as fraud, embezzlement, misuse of power, counterproductive behaviour, corruptions, unethical conducts, procrastination, to name a few. Piety governs their behaviour (Siddiqui, 1997). Thus, if piety is included in VBR, organisations will have high integrity, good conduct, and a professional value-based workforce.

Ihsan

The consideration of *ihsan* as an Islamic value is based on the hadith in which Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "*Ihsan* is when you worship God as if you see Him, and even if you do not see Him, He sees you." This hadith indicates that

ihsan refers to the beautification of an action to achieve excellence (Khan, 2019). The analogy used by the Prophet (pbuh) in the above hadith indicates that Muslims need to act in accordance with God orders either at work, at home or anywhere. At work, employees will be focused, good in conduct, truthful, just and fair, and sincere in intention to fulfil the responsibilities above and beyond those required as they realise that God is watching them even though they cannot see God directly. God sees them if they embrace benevolence as advocated in Islamic teachings (Wahab & Ismail, 2019). *Ihsan* in Islam cannot be achieved if employees only work hard, while at the same time are unjust, behave unethically, disobey God's commandments, and the like. Incorporating this value as a criterion in VBR for recruiting employees will help produce a holistic value-type workforce needed for the success of organisations, maintaining the societal order and for the self-growth of the individual employee.

Mas'uliyah

As a value, responsibility is emphasised in Islam based on the hadith: "Every one of you is a leader and you will be responsible for your leadership." In this hadith, responsibility is termed as "*mas'uliyah*" (Wahab & Ismail, 2019). This hadith does not refer to the responsibility of being just a leader. It insinuates that responsibility has to be fulfilled, whether individually or collectively, in all aspects that are not prohibited by God, especially when one is given a trust to fulfil. The value of responsibility refers to the need to take charge and lead to fulfil the responsibility entrusted, as God orders man to honour the responsibility and the trust, or when anything is promised to be fulfilled (e.g., Quran 4:58). The emphasis of this hadith is in the sense that shouldering a responsibility is innate and automatically arises in an individual who is responsible. At work, the value of responsibility has a significant implication for employees because it will make them become more reliable, dependable, ethical, truthful, and committed. *Mas'uliyah* as a value in Islam means being responsible within the boundaries of Islamic teaching such that it does not transgress God's commandments of *amal ma'ruf, nahi mungkar* (doing good and avoiding evil) (e.g., Quran, 3:110, 3:104). Thus, if responsibility is incorporated in the VBR as one of the values needed in the candidates, organisations will have a workforce composed of employees who abide by the principle of trust and honour. Thus, problems of unethical infringement, aggressiveness, other workplace issues are less likely to occur. Employees who embrace this value will consider irresponsibility as a form of shame or dishonour to their personal self.

Itqan

Itqan is an Arabic word which could be translated to mean perfectionism. Allah says in the Quran (27:88):

You see the mountains and think them firmly fixed: but they shall pass away as the clouds pass away: (such is) the artistry of God, who disposes of all things in perfect order: for He is well acquainted with all that you do.

In this verse, *itqan* connotes perfection – it involves well-planned, efficient and well-executed actions. Based on this verse, *itqan* refers to the action of God, which is always in full perfection, artistically and intellectually well-planned, well-balanced, and organised in perfect order, thoroughly designed and executed perfectly. At work, *itqan* will guide employees to become experts in their jobs, to plan their performance to perfection and will leave no room for flaws (Ishak & Osman, 2016). Thus, if *itqan* is incorporated as a value in VBR in recruiting employees, the organisation would have employees who are thorough, well-planned, and detailed which is crucial for optimal performance.

Ikhlas

In the Quran, *ikhlas* (sincerity) is mentioned many times (e.g., Quran, 15:40; 19:51; 37:169). God also dedicated an entire chapter of the Quran named after sincerity which known as *Al-Ikhlas*. The chapter (*surah*) of *Al-Ikhlas* emphasises the Oneness of God, who must not be associated with. God says (Qur'an, 11:1–4): “Say; He is God, the one and only. God, the eternal, absolute. He begets no, nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him.” Thus, *ikhlas* is a value of Islam that refers to everything that is done for the sake of God. Sincere people are honest, truthful, loyal, and trustworthy. Persons who are sincere in their hearts are believed to produce a quality of work that comes from the heart (Caza et al., 2015). Most organisations seek to have this type of people because they work with their soul (wholeheartedly); they know what is right and wrong and are dedicated and committed to achieving the desired outcomes (Singh & Chopra, 2018). They will not be swayed easily by the temporary gains achieved by unethical means (Cialdini et al., 2004) as sincerity is rooted deeply in their belief in God. Public trust and confidence towards the organisation will increase if the employees recruited endorse sincerity and uphold it in their profession (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). If this value is used as a criterion to select employees, the organisation will have a dedicated and reliable workforce. Many issues can be avoided if employees cultured this value in the organisation.

Sidq

Sidq or truthfulness refers to being constantly truthful. *Sidq* is mentioned in the Quran (9:119): “O you who believe, fear God and be with the truthful ones.” In Islam, being truthful is when the actions, words and inward states are in harmony (Ismail & Badron, 2012). Thus, for a person who is truthful, his speech, behaviours and inclinations, attitudes, or interests must not contradict one another. Truthful is also the trait of the sincere and honest. This is based on the hadith narrated by Abu Said Al-Khudri where the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, “The truthful and honest merchant will be with the Prophets, Saints and Martyrs (on the Day of Judgement).” If this value was used as a criterion in VBR to recruit employees, issues related to violations for the professional code of conducts or transgressing the acceptable norms of good practices or good governance can be avoided (Iqbal & Mirakhor, 2017). As truthful qualities are important in all jobs and crucial in careers associated with medicine, safety procedures and product and services involving human lives, it is a very important value to be used in employee recruitment.

Amanah

Amanah in Islam is a comprehensive value. It may refer to being trustworthy as a vicegerent in this world as based on evidence from the Quran and the *Sunnah* related to *amanah*. In a hadith narrated by Basyar Ibn Al-Khashashiyah: “He asked Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) regarding whether neighbours who always do mischief. He asked whether he can counter the mischief with mischief. The Prophet (pbuh) told him to fulfil the *amanah* and do not betray those who used to betray him.” In the Quran, God orders man to deliver *amanah* to those who have the right to receive it. Allah says: “Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge them with justice” (Quran, 4:58). In another verse related to *amanah* (Quran, 23: 8), Allah specifies *amanah* as referring to specified trust and fulfilling promises. In a hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) specifically indicated that one of the characteristics of a *munafiq* is when he is entrusted, he betrays it. This means that *amanah* refers to the trust given by people in connection to a position or profession at work or to a position in a society, and to a position given by God as a vicegerent in this earth as implied in God’s injunctions of *amal ma’ruf, nahi mungkar* (Salamon, 1986). Therefore, incorporating trustworthiness in the recruitment and selection criteria will benefit the organisation because employees who embrace the value of *amanah* will feel responsible in the complete sense of the word. They are reliable in fulfilling their responsibilities, performing their jobs, and towards others such as subordinates, environment, society and God. If this value was used as a condition in recruiting employees, the organisations would have a good quality workforce.

‘Adl

Literally, *‘adl* means to be straight or right. Legally, *‘adl* signifies firmness towards the path of truth and refraining from what is religiously blameworthy. This implies following God’s commands and abstaining from His prohibitions (Ismail & Badron, 2012). Justice as an Islamic value is based on evidence mentioned in the Quran that God orders Muslims to exercise justice. God says in the Quran (2:282):

O you who have believed, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down. And let a scribe write [it] between you in justice. Let no scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him. So let him write and let the one who has the obligation dictate. And let him fear Allah, his Lord, and not leave anything out of it. But if the one who has the obligation is of limited understanding or weak or unable to dictate himself, then let his guardian dictate in justice.

Justice in Islam is also closely related to *amanah*. Employees having *‘adl* as an embedded value will avoid injustice (e.g., cruelty, unfair treatment, inequality, cronyism, favouritisms, and discrimination) and have a high potential to be good employees. Consequently, they will become good leaders as they will treat their colleagues fairly. They will also be good at distributing tasks and appointing their subordinates for promotions. This is important as it will create a good environment for well-being and mutual respect among the employees that will create a healthy organisational culture. Employee morale will also heighten, the spirit and feeling of satisfaction and teamwork will improve, along with the feeling of brotherhood at the organisation. Most important is that this value will produce employees with admirable behaviours because good values lead to good behaviours (Painter-Morland et al., 2019). By including justice as one important criterion in employee recruitment, organisations can pool talented employees with all-encompassing skills, experience, and abilities as necessary for achieving organisational goals and creating holistic value-based human resources (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

Shukr

Shukr as a value in Islam refers to praising God either through words such as “*Alhamdulillah, Subhanallah, Allahuakbar*” or through attitudes, and actions such as obeying God’s orders, giving donations, helping others and refraining from God’s prohibitions. The concept of thankfulness in Islam is closely related to the concept of *‘abid* or servitude (Farooqui, 2005). Obeying God’s orders and leaving His prohibitions are also considered acts of *shukr*. As a creation of the Creator, man honours God by worshipping Him (*ibadah*) and being patient in facing trials

and tribulations (Al-Ghazali, 1997). When a person feels thankful to God, he or she will be obedient and follow the rules and orders. He will not transgress or betray the trust given by the Creator. Employees who embrace *shukr* will not go against the Master, and at work, they will act ethically without betraying the trust of the organisation (Khalil, 2015). They will be more appreciative, supportive, resilient, and will survive better than those who did not embrace *shukr*. Therefore, it is critical to incorporate the value of *shukr* in VBR for any jobs especially those involving intensive and persistent training as well as moral strength such as for army personnel, police, or jobs that require high levels of loyalty. It would also be good for jobs requiring high commitment or those related to keeping secrets such as governmental officers, HR, lawyers, and other administrative positions.

Sabr

The effectiveness of *sabr* is like a very bitter medicine needed to cure a dreadful disease. In Islam, *sabr* is considered half of faith (Al-Qaradawi, 1991). God says in the Quran (12:90) “Behold, he that is righteous and patient, never will Allah suffer the reward to be lost, of those who do right.” In the Quran, God called for *sabr* in times of facing tests and disasters such as pain, hunger, weakness, and loss of loved ones (Al-Khattab, 1997). *Sabr* is useful as intrinsic motivation and can educate and train the desires to accept God’s tests and obey God, the Master of the Universe and the Creator.

Imam Al-Ghazali divided *sabr* into four provisions (*hukum*) – compulsory (*fardhu*), rewarded (*sunnat*), discouraged (*makruh*), and prohibited (*haram*). To be patient in abstaining from doing what God forbids is *fardhu*, *sabr* in doing what God encourages (*sunnat*), and doing what God forbids (*haram*) and *sabr* in fighting God’s punishment such as fighting over feeling remorse when punished for making mischief (*makruh*) (Al-Qaradawi, 1991).

Patience as a value in Islam requires Muslims to also stay firm in patience (*musabirah*). God says in the Quran (3:200) “O you who have believed, persevere and endure and remain stationed and fear Allah that you may be successful.” *Musabirah* means to stay strong in patience and be persistent and resilient over and above the competitors or enemies (Al-Qaradawi, 1992). Thus, *sabr* is also closely related to forgiveness, trust in God (*tawakkal*) and piety (*taqwa*). In Islam, patience is highly encouraged as it can increase *iman* and cause sins to be forgiven (Al-Khattab, 1997). Patience can improve a person’s morale and train his or her mind and spirit to be strong and well-prepared (Ahmad, 2011). Therefore, it is important for employees to be equipped with *sabr* especially in jobs that deal with uncertain and rapid changes. Thus, incorporating patience in VBR would be an

added value to the organisation and contribute to the effectiveness of employees in sustaining the challenges and pressure at work while performing their jobs.

Shura

Ibn Arabi (1958) defined *shura* as a meeting in which each one seeks the advice of another. Many verses in the Quran encourage the practice of *shura*. For example, God says in the Quran (42:38): “who conducted their affairs by mutual consultation.” In another verse (Qur’an 3:159), God says: “and consult them in affairs.” *Shura* was practised during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the four rightly guided caliphs. Abu Bakar consulted other companions prior to appointing new governors or army leaders (Mujahid, 2012). He often consulted his companions before making an important decision. Abu Bakar emphasised being truthful in speech and when seeking the advice of others in order to be given truthful counsel (Ibn al-Athīr, 1863).

Most current organisations practise concepts similar to *shura*. Participative leadership style, self-managed teams and teamwork are examples of modern management terms of mutual consultation. Thus, mutual consultation is an important value to be incorporated in VBR, especially if the employees need to perform the job effectively and require mutual consultation and mutual adjustment and communication with other subordinates, team members, and clients. Screening candidates for this value during the recruitment process foster participative and good practices among the workforce.

Muhasabah

The practice of *muhasabah* in the Quran can be seen in Quran (24:18) “O you who believe! fear Allah, and let every soul consider what it has sent on for the morrow, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is aware of what you do.” Self-reflection or *muhasabatul nafs* is a first step in the practice of *sufism*, known as *tazkiyyatul nafs* or self-purification (Al-Ghazali, 1967). *Muhasabah* involves self-reflection of the heart, the sayings and the actions or parts of the body regarding following God’s orders and avoiding God’s prohibitions (Al-Yamani, 2012). Thus, *muhasabah* is the realisation of the need for self-reflection about the sins and bad deed or behaviours. Ibn Qayyim (2001) and Noordin and Rahman (2017) indicated that *muhasabah* is auditing and revising the past and making oneself more committed to the future. The concept of *muhasabah* can promote a culture of evaluation in the organisation (Ahmad, 2013). *Muhasabah* can nurture good character in a person (Moghul, 2017) as the practice of self-reflection can develop the sense of empathy and other good values such as justice,

humbleness and kindness, and honesty. The practice of self-reflection can improve the organisational effectiveness as employees will evaluate their own as well as their organisation's weaknesses against the benchmark and improve their strength and agility. Incorporating this value in VBR is especially important for jobs and organisations that practice employee empowerment and decentralised decision making and have an organic organisational structure.

LIMITATION AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This paper has some limitations that warrant acknowledgement. This study uses qualitative data derived from the references undertaken in many different contexts, thus posing some limitations especially in generalising the finding to other populations such as the Islamic context. Although this study points to the importance of incorporating the Islamic work values in the criteria of VBR, careful considerations should be exercised prior to implementing it, especially when no empirical research undertaken to verify it.

Despite its potential applications and advantages in hiring value-based employees, research on VBR is currently sparse. This study can add useful insight and knowledge to understanding VBR and its role in overcoming competency-based recruitment (CBR)'s shortcomings in terms of the efficiency of hiring new employees. The literature on the VBR is also backed up by a number of several important theories that have been confirmed by extensive empirical study, which strengthens the use of the VBR in hiring individuals who will be useful and effective. This study also has significant practical implications, particularly for the human resources division in hiring staff that not only possess the necessary competencies but also the strong work values required to be productive at their jobs. Given that the literature analysis suggested that VBR could be the answer to many workplace issues, including employees, this study can serve as a reference for many professionals and academics looking to address the flaws in the present employment recruitment system. Workplace problems such as misuse of power, fraud, corruption, low commitment, and other performance issues remain prevalent among most employees in organisations. Despite the advancement of technology and modernisation of human civilisation, problems related to the devaluation of human behaviours persist. Workplace problems related to employee attitudes and behaviours can be prevented if the HR department could retool their recruitment process to include value-based criteria. In VBR, the recruitment process focuses on recruiting employees with values, whether exclusively or in addition to other competencies and criteria. Values are given more emphasis in VBR because values were found to predict employee behaviours and reflect the inner self. Employees

possessing these values will perform with their soul, i.e., are passionate about their jobs and work full-heartedly. Recruitment is an important strategy to find good employees for the success of the organisation. Finding employees with values to match the values and competencies needed to perform the job effectively is critical for the effectiveness of the organisation.

The Islamic-related work values are advocated by the Quran and hadith that were revealed for the betterment of man in this life and hereafter. The Quran has repeatedly detailed that Muslims who embrace full-heartedly the values mentioned in the Quran and hadith are promised by God not to be misguided (e.g., Quran, 4:19, 7:96, and 11:11). Most of these values were adopted by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), his companions and the rightly guided caliphs as a determining criterion in recruiting employees. Therefore, if integrated in VBR, it is believed that these values will produce a well-balanced body-mind-soul workforce, important for the sustainability of human resource development. More importantly, religious values have strong convictions to believers. Thus, religious values have a more significant impact on people than other values that are not strongly believed by them. Furthermore, religious values generally advocate good principles, encourage morally oriented actions and good norms and practices, even many contemporary work values were mostly originated from religious values. Thus, using Islamic-related work values proposed to be incorporated in VBR especially in the Muslim context to build a more value-based workforce would be an important contribution for more empirical studies to delve into the effectiveness of this recruitment method.

This study also serves as a conceptual work for future research to embark on empirical assessment to examine the effectiveness of VBR against conventional competency-based recruitment in hiring good workers. It helps verify the effectiveness of the Islamic-related work values in hiring better and more value-based employees and investigates their tendency to involve in unethical or other unscrupulous workplace activities.

CONCLUSION

In today's business environment, a value-based workforce is vital. Through VBR, organisations could potentially select talents with good competencies (e.g., knowledge, skills, experience, abilities, etc.) and values that are critical for the survival and sustainability of the organisation. However, incorporating the wrong values into VBR may have an adverse impact on employee work-related outcomes. Thus, depending on the context, certain values may have more effect than others.

For Muslims, Islamic work values may have a substantial impact on their attitudes and behaviours compared to other religious believers. In a Muslim context, most Islamic work values are linked to culture and corporate values; thus, incorporating Islamic work values with VBR in pooling talents in the selection process can be a competitive advantage to the organisation.

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