# Relationship between Muslim Accountability Enhancement and Religious Practices Appreciation

M.Z. MOHD ZIN[1], MOHD SYAHIRAN ABDUL LATIF[1], NURFAHIRATUL AZLINA AHMAD[2] and ROHAYA SULAIMAN[3]

[1] *Akademi Pengajian Islam Kontemporari,Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Sarawak,, MALAYSIA.*

[2] *Akademi Pengajian Islam Kontemporari,Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pulau Pinang,, MALAYSIA.*

[3] *Akademi Pengajian Islam Kontemporari,Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor,, MALAYSIA.*

Email: mohamadzaid@uitm.edu.my | Tel: +6082678199

## Abstract

Muslim accountability enhancement frequently associated with individual commitment in the religious practice. The question is, whether the accountability and religious practices appreciation have a positive relationship? If interrelated, what is the intended practice? Hence, qualitative methods of phenomenology are used to identify the religious practices performed. This writing was formed from a series of semi-structured interviews, document analysis and non-participation observation methods in examining religious practices, which influence professional Muslim youth accountability enhancement. Results showed that accountability is derived from the religious practices appreciation through i) *infiradi* practice and ii) *ijtima'i* practice, which form the individual accountability enhancement towards Allah s.w.t (*habluminallah*) and society (*habluminannas*).

*Keywords*: Religiosity Practice, Accountability, *Ijtima'i* Practice and *Infiradi* Practice.

## 1.0 Introduction

Religiosity defined as a believer to the Oneness, submissive and obedient to Allah commandments and prohibitions through Prophet Muhammad guidance. Muslims duly aim worship as a practice and life principle, sharia as a rule and the necessity of *akhlaq* (manner) characterize (Al-Qaradawi, 1984). In the context of Muslim societies in Malaysia, religiosity appreciation embraces religion practice by Muslims involves other individual, families, communities and nation (Zulkiple & Nor Salimah, 2006). Islamic system itself encompass suitability to humanity (Moayedi, 2009). Muslims are encouraged to achieve the reason of human existence in the world, by implementing individual physical, spiritual, intellectual and emotional elements (Mohammad Ghozali & Nor'Azzah, 2017).

Islam is an important dimension in the Muslim community, a proactive "progressive theology" and guarantees as multi-religious Malaysian social security (Schottmann, 2011). It is compatible with changing circumstances and proven build a high civilization. As a professional Muslim, the youth need to remain competitive. This study focuses on the professional Muslim youth intrinsic strength, via religious practiced and implement it in an effective requirement. Thus, the findings used as a benchmark which indicate a gap if any, among the "real things" and "what should be" done by a Muslim (Khalidah, 2014).

Religious practices are defined as the Islamic comprehensive proficiency, including thinking, speaking, conducting, setting principles, making decisions and taking action process based on knowledge and religious comprehension. It is capability forming and enhancing human beings value, in terms of mental, physical, emotional and spiritual elements. Religious practices unimplemented especially in workplace, reflect that Islamic religion unexecuted as Prophet Muhammad era which has be evidenced its effectiveness through the civilization empire development in the human history (Rohana & Norhasni, 2016).

Actually, Islam religion should be internalized in the soul, practicality expressed through religious practices, which ultimately provides a momentum on the inner strength development holistically, through a knowledge, skill and spirituality combination. Therefore, Muslim individual are categorized excellent when religiosity practice influencing the life's actions and procedures (Zulkiple & Nor Salimah, 2006) . Internal strength is constantly renewed and enhanced through religious practices (Annalakshmi & Abeer, 2011), ability to felt by other Muslim based on external behavior (conversation and deed) and internal (sense and beliefs) (Azma, 2006).

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Motivation triggered by religious practice such as praying, able to provide positive reflexes in enhancing superiority and confidencity at workplace. To attain quality standards of worship, participants stated that spirituality fulfillment such as attending religious programs was needed (Kale & Shrivastava, 2003) for heartfelt formation as a catalyst for inner strength assist in addressing communication issues at workplace (A. M. Hasan, Ab Mumin, & Siti Arni, 2013).

## 2.0 Methodology

This study adopts phenomenology qualitative research approach. It is about six participant's life experience and personal stories; an appropriate "context of life" assessment used as a platform for phenomena exploration. This phenomenological method investigates collecting relevant data, interpreting and presenting findings based on participants' perspectives. Religious practices comprehensive theories are built from the data collection obtained via in-depth interviews with participants that have diverse education and family backgrounds, but acquire heuristic experience as a professional civil servant despite being range age youth. The findings involving individual experiences based on their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, thoughts, actions and behaviors in religious beliefs.

## 3.0 The Importance of Religiosity in Accountability Enhancement

The empirical studies relate to the religious influence on accountability are Cornwall et al. (1986); McNichols & Zimmerer (1985); Pargament et al. (1988); Giorgi & Marsh (1990); Shepard & Hartenian (1991); Thomas (1997); Siu, Dickinson & Lee (2000) and Burks (2007) assert the sustainable commitment to religiousness generate moral decisions in the workplace. In religious studies by Conroy and Emerson (2004), expressing religiosity associated with ethical attitude and affect the accountability consistency formed. Donahue (1985) and Woodrum (1988) point out individuals that implement religious commitment high performance, tend to conservatively view at issues of moral conduct. While Cornwall et al.  (1986) includes individual commitment aspects to religiosity depicted by participation in religious activities.

Religiosity not only applicable to certain situations but generate a comprehensive and significant framework for the entire life (Burks, 2007). Therefore, decision to separately religiosity to attain personal tendency until affect accountability while working is unrealistic. Although religiosity associated with personal matter, but accountability result during work makes it change to the general form as every decision taken will affect others. This statement was also supported by Kohlberg (1981) stating that consensus on religiosity influenced the individual's response consciously and functioned as a moral support when decision was implemented.

According to Kale and Shrivastava (2003) and Moayedi (2009), by establishing religious practices in the workplace, mental, emotional and physical relevance will reinforcement among the employee and the profession itself. This encourages individuals to dedicate and accountability. Whereas Salsman et al.  (2005) stated that there was a positive relationship between religious factors with physical and mental health. His research proved the positive attitudes among patients, reduction in cardiac rates, suicide rates and cancer patients' suffering influenced by the religious strength factors. Indirectly, positive emotions and attitudes are built. It shows the religious beliefs and practices are positively related to the psychological well-being index and negatively associated with anxiety about life.

In the expression of experience, Vujicic (2012) in his book, *Unstoppable: The Incredible Power of Faith in Action* states that confidence and submissive to God will lead to issues solution. Vujicic also pointed out that faith related to the personal achievements. This statement supported by Mogahed (2014) who believes only God as reliance in adversity. It is the most beneficial relationships to knowing ourselves and acquiring achievement.

Islam emphasized *redha* aspect with the life strain and appreciative the blessing endowed by Allah s.w.t and each occurrence has its own wisdom. Thus, tolerant and positive nature should be formed despite facing distress.  Allah s.w.t has the ability to change difficult situations probability to facilitate (Z. Hasan, 2013). A firm belief in God lead destiny changing capability and faith obsession encouraging successfulness and relates to the internal representation. This means that faith promotes individuals to exploit self-potential in the quest for success. The spiritual preparation assist individual to have the endurance, competitiveness and motivation when confront with ethical issues. It also seeks to encourage diligent behavior that is consistent with Islamic faith (Wa'iy, 2004). Society nurtured by faith and worship perceives the Islamic values system (*fikrah*). Questions, events, behaviors, values and individual relationships will be influenced by the Islamic religion understanding itself and it is a benchmark of the cautious individual (Al-Ghazali, 2015).

## 4.0 Findings

Religiosity practice is a complex phenomenon and requires a proactive approach in dealing challenges (Heinsohn, 2012). This findings regarding the understanding of the Islamic accountability concept and the religiosity appreciation affiliation as catalyst in the accountability stabilization.
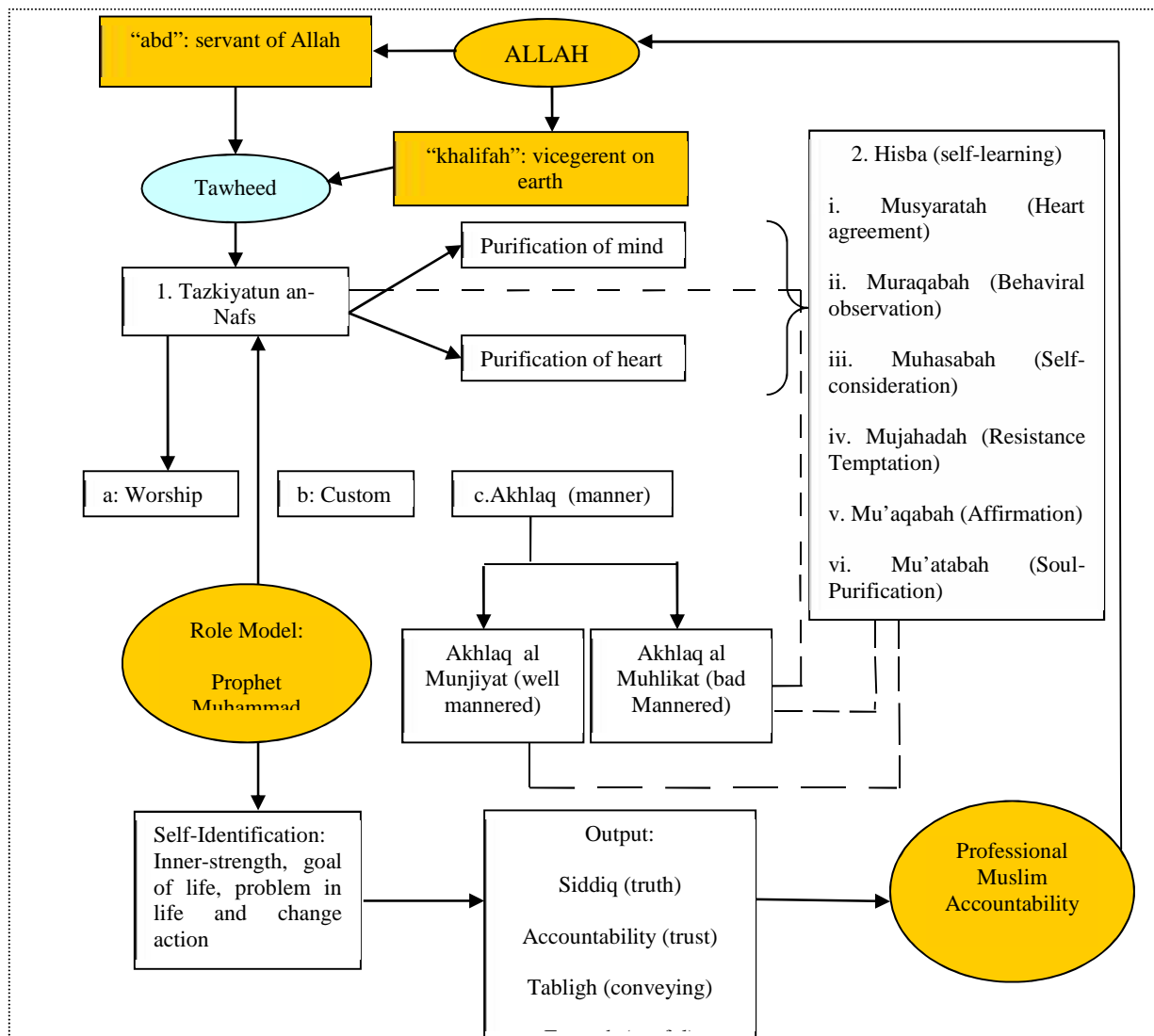
### Professional Muslim Youth Accountability Model



Figure 1: Professional Muslim Youth Accountability Model

Referring to the model, variable "?" is *ijtima'i* practice and "??" is *infiradi* practice. In the diagram, *ijtima'i* practice, *infiradi* practice and *murabathah* practice is the main cause of "e" constructs, the Prophet Muhammad and his companions as a model that forms the nature of *siddiq*, trust, *tabligh* and *fatonah*. "e" construct has a direct impact on the professional Muslim youth accountability ("f" constructs). Through interviews, explained the rituals including *fardu* prayers practice, *dhuha* prayers, praying, *dhikr, istighfar*, al-Quran recitation, preaching, charity, fasting and *istiqamah* attending religious programs categorized into two parts; (i) the *ijtima'i* practice and (ii) *infiradi* practice. Both practices are influenced by the "a" construct, as Allah, "b" construct which is human being as khalifah, "c" construct is human being as servant and "d" construct as *tawheed*. During the interview session, although the participants did not explicitly discuss detailing about Prophet Muhammad and his companions as role models, however, there is a relationship between the nature of *siddiq,* trust, *tabligh* and *fatonah* which is basically influenced by *ijtima'i* practice and *infiradi*

practice towards the professional Muslim youth strength. Therefore, the question of having religious figures as role models should be considered. Human beings as khalifah ("b" construct) and man as Allah's servant ("c" construct) have a profound effect on the Muslim youth morality and nature. Trustworthy and virtuous formed as a result of awareness that Allah continuous observe human bahavior. Allah says in surah al-Taghabun, verse 4 which means: *"He knows what is within the heavens and earth and knows what you conceal and what you declare. And Allah is Knowing of that within the breasts."* It shows the faith impact in lives, providing a clarity objective in workplace and put Allah command as a major achievement.

Technically, knowledgeable and upholding Islamic values and practices are an advantage to improve the social and psychological work environment. In addition, Muslim youths who work based on the accountability transformation and task performance encourage in motivate colleagues collectively. The link between religious practices that produces a robust inner circle with accountability able to visualized and studied through the conceptual framework model that has been planned as an extension of the theoretical framework used (fig. 1). Islam are not limitation and exclusive religion, in fact the Islamic sustainable accountability concept aims to protecting the universe interests.

### 4.1 Accountability in Muslim Professional Youth Perspective

Accountability is an individual internal motivation result. The implementation occur consistently in accordance principles and regulations. Inner strength controlling individual behavior and improve themselves continuously (Saad, Aziz, & Sawandi, 2014). The accountability definition depends on the participants' perspective. Interview results indicate the accountability definition divided into; (1) Accountability to Allah and (2) Accountability in the workplace.

Accountability concept has varying meanings depending individual point of view (Lindberg, 2013). It is an internal motivation result encouraged by consistently implementation in accordance with certain principles and regulations. Respondent 2 stated: *"For me, it refers to the responsibility entrusted to someone."* While respondent 6 express: *"For me accountability, honestly from my understanding it is more towards sincerity."* In terms of respondent 5 understanding, accountability is an employer trustworthiness to individuals. The trust and honesty nature should be established. Respondent 5 asserted:

> "This accountability, follows my beliefs is reliability. That is, the reliability of a person in doing a task or work, trust. For example, is it his or her ability to carry out work or responsibility, in front of the boss or behind the boss? Behind his boss he did not work, chatting with collagues. Have to honestly with responsibility without being seen."

i. Accountability to Allah

The accountability sub-dimension to Allah s.w.t shows the participants assuming Allah s.w.t is a major 'stakeholder'. Basically, sharia regulation as the ultimate goal being the main catalyst in decision making. Individual who believes in Allah s.w.t have a *taqwa* (piety) concept. In addition, Muslim behavior supposed based on the al-Quran and al-hadith, convinced being accountable for the deeds, 'sin' and 'reward' concept and acceptance as Allah's retribution. Accountable Muslim understand the intent and decision supposed rectified to obtain Allah s.w.t pleasure (Moayedi, 2009).

In tracing the accountability definition, respondent 1 emphasized the *taqwa* concept. He said: *"In Islam there is taqwa. Out of the religious context, taqwa does not exist in life. But when one person is a believer (faith), he is cautious and will have an accountability aspect."* While respondent 2 states: *"We can't avoid the Quran and the Hadith. Every responsibility, the final result is back to Allah."* Respondent 2 holds firmly each deeds expression solely to get the Allah's pleasure. Meanwhile, Respondent 5 stated: *"Islam has a 'reward' and 'sin' concept, a retribution."* Respondent 3 relates accountability to the *tawheed* concept, Oneness of Allah and its relation to ethics that needs to emphasize. He said: *"Islam has a tawheed concept, direct to Allah. Perhaps conventional does not involve religious elements, it's more to morals and ethical, but that concept is in Islam itself, right?"*

However, relationship between individual and Allah can be felt with the soul that ultimately forms *ihsan* (courtesy) nature, awareness self-indulgence observes by Allah. Indirectly, accountability to Allah encourages the accountability stabilization in workplace. Respondent 1 shares the feeling by stating, *"depending on whether he is doing. Believing or not, honestly, we didn't clearly see but I believe when relationship with Allah continues, I believe Allah always sees us."* This awareness encourage respondent 2 to work diligently. According respondent 2: *"First of all, ihsan. We do a job and instill the resolute that Allah sees us. That's the standard I put myself on."* While respondent 5 applies the *ihsan* concept during affairs. Respondent 5 confidently predict the *ihsan* and knowledge combination capable to generate

greater personality. He said: *"The basic concept is Allah knows everything. So, we stick to that fact and knowledge guides us better."*

ii. Accountability in the Workplace

Accountability sub-dimensions in the workplace indicate that participants define accountability as the reliability and responsibility. Accountability also relates to the behaviors, duties and regulations that are fulfilled at workplace (Syed Omar, 1994). Through honesty and trustworthiness, individuals deemed accountable and perform the task properly without requiring surveillance by the employer (Shah Alam, Mohd, & Hisham, 2011). Sincerity and honesty while performing duties associated with the procedure at work. Satisfaction and tranquility gained before, during and after completing the task, based on the belief that is a worship. At the beginning of the task, achieving Allah s.w.t pleasure being the intention. Satisfaction during work is obtained through work implementation appropriate with the sharia requirements. While tranquility after work is achieved after work as a worship is realized (Sharifah Hayaati, 2010).

Respondent 3 explains the importance of performing tasks in accordance with job specification affecting the final decision on task implementation. He states: *"Morality, ethicality and honesty. What is contained within the work scope, need to perform in the best possible method and procedures. Include we have a result of the implementation of the work."* According to respondent 5, *"needs to be accountability, trust and honesty. It has to be a positive thinking and a lot of patience."* While respondent 6 emphasizes rules in workplace ultimately form self-determination and disciplined. He explains: *"It must follow strict procedures and I learn to comply with the rules, to shape thoroughness, discipline and honesty."* From the respondent 4 point of view, accountability in the workplace definition to cooperate and communicate effectively with colleagues. She also emphasized the exemplifying work prospect: *"we facilitate and illuminating, means what people didn't understand or misinterpretation you explain."*

Internal strength constantly renewed and enhanced through religious practices (Annalakshmi & Abeer, 2011). This coincide Azma (2006) finding that emphasizes religiosity practice generate absolute faith and reflection to other Muslim based on external behavior (conversation and deed) and internal (feelings and beliefs). Attaining worship quality standards, participants expressed spiritual fulfillment such as praying and attending religious programs required as a catalyst and provide positive reflexes in enhancing excellence and confidence. In addition, motivation triggered through religious practice helps in addressing current issues at workplace such as communication issues (A. M. Hasan et al., 2013). Bilateral ties in the workplace is an effective communication, aimed at strengthening accountability in work performance and as a platform in enhancing relationships with colleagues, concurrently embracing the *da'wah* element in communication. The process of self-sustainability through religious practices ultimately creates the identity, self-discipline and personal principle of an individual.

Respondent 1 stated committed, consistency and discipline in religious practice lead to self-reinforcing and inculcate discipline. Example, focuses on prayer indirectly educate him to be vigilant, disciplined and responsive to the task. He acknowledged: *"If disciplined in performing religious practices and respecting religion, indirectly, able to concerning the work and be disciplined."* While respondent 3 explains laziness performing religion rituals causes the task unachieved work standards. It is because the work spirit rely on the deeds performing. He added worship has a positive relationship with the task quality. Respondent 6 said: *"Forming timeliness indirectly are the religion doctrines. Religion values such as ethical, morality and honesty. Timing on working and back time, ensures task completely outstanding and it's all related to religion. I think the value of religion is very important."*

## 4.2 Religiosity Practice in Accountability Enhancement

Islam is a way of life including faith, worship and *akhlaq* aspects. The practice of Islam that has proven to be perfect, comprehensive, structured and systematic can strengthen the faith and fortify itself against deviation from religion (Adnan, Mastor, Kasan, & Hamzah, 2017). The worship that includes religious practices performed by participants divided into; (1) *ijtima'i* practice (religiosity appreciation by groups) involvement in religious practice consist congregational prayers, talks, *yasin* and al-Quran recitation, *hadith* share via email and preaching among colleagues. While (2) *infiradi* practice (religiosity appreciation individually) as *dhuha* prayer, al-Quran recitation, *dhikr*, charity, and *muhasabah* (self-reflection).

i. *Ijtima'i* practice

Religious practices implicate the accountability stabilization whether directly or indirectly especially in the workplace and consistent religious practice proved affected individual working approach (Burks, 2007). Although individual attitudes are the most difficult indicator to change, it capable developed through religious practices (Fatimahwati, Muhammad Zahir, & Fatimah, 2015). Example, performing prayers not only permissible to read the holy verses of the

al-Quran and the prayer movements (Al-Ghazali, 2015). Praying requires a neat and focused preparation, beginning with the perfect ablution until the completion of the prayer, which causes the educated individual to be disciplined constantly. While discipline in prayer also educate individuals to obey, regulatory, punctual and apply the properties acquired during the execution of tasks in the workplace. The exploration of this issue is important because religious practice is indeed a key and is synonymous with the formation of employee accountability (Saad et al., 2014).

The religiosity practices acquaint with self-inspiring, avoidance negative behavior and cultivate feelings of guilt when committing a sin. Internal strength built through religiosity practice strength. Akhlaq achieved through training and solicitude, which the implementation is difficult in the beginning, but successfully implemented as a habit according to sincerity and patience (Zulkiple & Nor Salimah, 2006).

Participants surpass the challenges through religiosity practices. Therefore, participants capable to rational and cultivate the *aulawiyyat* (priority) to the duties entrusted, *wasatiyyah* (moderation), *qanaah* (enough with sustenance bestowed by Allah) and *ihsan* (behavior being observed by Allah) (Ismail, Stapa, & Suhaimi, 2012). Practicing includes praying, al-Quran (Koran) recitation, praying and remembrance through *alhamdulillah* and *istighfar* greetings, affirm and support participants to confront the challenge and encourage accountability enhancement in the workplace. This coincides with the Islamic human traits involving personality development, awareness development, stress management and social relations (Bagasra, 2011).

ii. *Infiradi* Practice

Based on the Islamic perspective, al-Quran and al-hadith are the behavior foundations. Dynamic Islam is able to prevent ethical misconduct as the Allah commandment in surah Ankabut, verse 45 means: *"Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to thee, and establish regular Prayer: for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt. And Allah knows the (deeds) that ye do".* In addition to prayers, rituals and other obligatory assimilation continuing to develop noble character. This proves that worship and Allah prohibition definitely extensive success to individuals (Jamiah, 2005). This coincides with the Saeed (2011) which states several religious practices used to address individual difficulty. Among the practices are praying, fasting, al-Quran recitation and giving alms. These practices constitute surrendering to Allah s.w.t and assist others seen as a righteous act (Aldulaimi, 2016).

**5.0 Conclusion**

Research focuses on Muslim youths that are categorized as professionals and have an important role in the work sector. Statement religious practice is indirect related to sustainable accountability is a negative connotation. This study has proven the exploration of the Muslim youth religious practice undoubtedly has been the impact factor to the Muslim youth accountability itself in life, not only as an employee in the organization but as devout servant to Allah. In addition, this exploration provide understanding and views from different point of accountability. The religious practice exploration addressed the existing accountability models constraints which were previously limited to conventional concepts. Religiosity practice model also seeks to identify the core dimensions as guidelines to organizations and individuals accountability.

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