

PROPOSING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ROLE OF TAQWA IN THE CAREER SUCCESS OF MUSLIM MANAGERS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Issues related to career success for managers have long been cited but very little attention has been given to it from the Islamic perspective. The Islamic perspective emphasizes more on intrinsic (subjective) career success, setting references from the life of Prophet Muhammed (PBUH. following his footsteps, having Taqwa in heart in order to aim for ultimate success in career. The Islamic perspective of career success differs from the western or the so-called socio-cultural prediction of career success. The spiritual aspect is completely neglected due to the fact that most career success theories have originated and constructed from the Western perspective with no weightage given to the Islamic perspective. This study proposes a conceptual framework exploring the possibility to investigate the role of Taqwa in the career success of Muslim managers. It attempts a theoretical framework with an empirical model of career success from the Islamic perspective, specifically aiming to investigate direct relationship between Taqwa and career success. The outcomes of the study contribute towards theory from individual as well as managerial perspectives.

Keywords: Conceptual, career success, Islamic spirituality, Taqwa (Islamic Piety), Muslim managers.

INTRODUCTION

In an ever-changing business environment, organizations are interested to invite individuals who hold the value they embody (Schneider, 1987; Judge & Bretz, 1992; Schneider, Smith, & Paul, 2001). From the managerial standpoint, organizations are constantly manifesting their interest in finding career success factors or predictors to select and develop high potential employees (Sulaiman, Ishak & Shamuganathan, 2012) which is attainable through the employee's career success leading to organizational success (Judge & Bretz, 1994; Turban & Dougherty, 1994; Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995; Kirchmeyer, 1998; Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999; Wayne, Liden, Kraimer, & Graf, 1999). Managers are usually not satisfied with their career path or their income and position (Korman, 1980; Korman, Wittig-Berman & Lang, 1981; Judge, Higgins, Thoresen & Barrick, 1999) and therefore constantly focus on career success (Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005), rather than responding to its social strings (Van Maanen, 1977, p. 18). Eventually, practitioners, researchers and academicians have interpreted what career success means to individuals but underestimated the importance of cultural issues in defining, describing and explaining the principles of career success (Chudzikowski, Demel, Mayrhofer, Briscoe, Unite, Bogićević Milikić & Zikic, 2009).

Career success is defined as the positive psychological or work-related outcomes, or individual's personal and professional achievements from work experience (Judge et al., 1995; Seibert, Kraimer & Liden, 2001; Heslin 2003; Ng, Eby, Sorensen & Feldman, 2005; Breland, Treadway, Duke & Adams, 2007). It has two dimensions, extrinsic (objective) which takes visible element such as salary and ascendancy (Jaskolka, Beyer & Trice, 1985), and the intrinsic (subjective) which comprise attributes like job satisfaction (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988). It is individual's own interpretation and perception of one's career stimuli (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988; Arthur et al., 2005; Tuerwahong & Sulaiman, 2018), that can be investigated according to individual's role and identity (Everett Hughes', 1958 in Arthur et al., 2005). Little consideration is given to methods people pursue to achieve their career outcomes according to their own preferred criteria (Heslin, 2005). On the other hand, career satisfaction is measured through individuals' subjective judgments about their career (e.g., Burke, 2001; Judge et al., 1999). In such studies, conceptualizing and operationalizing creates opportunities to improve construction of theory, pointing at understanding, predicting and facilitating "career success" experience (Heslin, 2005).

People from different cultures and countries define and evaluate career success differently and uniquely (Hofstede, 2001). For this reason, Western literature often separates values from individual's personal religious beliefs (Abdullah, Omar, Rahman & Adham, 2013), creating an issue in different parts of the world (Kats, Hetty Van Emmerik, Blenkinsopp & Khapova, 2010), especially in Muslim setting (Sulaiman, Ishak & Shamuganathan, 2012; Tuerwahong & Sulaiman, 2018). Therefore, researchers cannot generalize certain career aspects that was developed in western countries (Stead, 2004), diverse national cultural settings (Mohd Rasdi, Ismail & Garavan, 2011), it must be critically reflected and justified first.

Islamic perspective of human nature and human needs are different from the western perspective (Sulaiman, Ahmad, Sbaih & Kamil, 2014). Hence Career success in Islamic perspective is interpreted differently from the western perspective (Sulaiman et al., 2014; Tuerwahong & Sulaiman, 2018), emphasizing more on intrinsic (subjective) career success (Sulaiman et al., 2014). The key characteristic of Islamic spirituality and interpretation of

career success primarily comprise Tawhid, Taqwa, Ibadah, and Ukhuwwah (Zaman, Sulaiman & Hashim, 2013). Thus religion (Islam) has huge impact on a Muslim manager's life, it is the main purpose of his existence in this world (Zaman, Sulaiman & Hashim, 2013; Sulaiman et al., 2014; Tuerwahong & Sulaiman, 2018) and setting Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) as the reference point to follow his footsteps and having Taqwa in heart. Rituals are found to be related to individual's continuance commitment to the organization (Zandi, Kamil, Sulaiman, Ishak & Sahudin, 2017). Employees with higher degree of Taqwa via Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility allow them to improve the relationship with society and environment (Mohsen, 2007), which is the best method to improve commitment.

The main objective of present research is to investigate the influence of Taqwa (Islamic piety) and career success of Muslim managers which has not been studied before. It is aimed to propose a new career success theoretical framework from the Islamic perspective and their predicting a relationship based on the investigation of the direct relationship between Taqwa and the career success of Muslim managers. There is a need to completely understand cross cultural dimension in managerial success (Mohd Rasdi et al., 2011). The current study aims to extend career success research beyond familiar clusters, by filling this deficiency of knowledge in the field of career success literature through integrating both Taqwa (Islamic piety) and career success to provide a comprehensive outlook and understanding of career success from absolute Islamic view. This will assist individuals to conceptualize their own career in order to achieve career success according to individual's own values and beliefs, and to overcome issues related to career success achievements.

The current study is guided by following research questions; (1) How does Taqwa (Islamic Piety) affect career success of Muslim managers? (2) How does Islamic spirituality (a component of Taqwa) affect career success of Muslim managers? (3) How does Islamic social responsibility (a component of Taqwa) affect career success of Muslim managers? These questions will become the basis of the propositions for this study

LITERATURE REVIEW

Career success

Career success is defined in both objective and subjective forms. In its objective form, it was first defined by Hughes (1937, 1958), measuring it with salary, promotions and occupational status (Hughes 1937, 1958). The subjective career success was introduced as the individual's perception about one's own satisfaction, feeling of accomplishment and experiencing of contentment in one's career (Gattiker & Larwood, 1986; Peluchette, 1993; Judge et al., 1995; Heslin, 2003, 2005; Ng et al, 2005; Stumpf & Tymon, 2012; Abele, Hagmaier & Spurk, 2016), where it is the individualistic approach (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). A number of researchers claimed that, in order to have full understanding of individual perception on career success and career development, it is essential to study subjective assessment of employees (Driver, 1979). A person's own evaluation and judgment of his/her success might be intensely influenced by subjective internal career concepts (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977, p. 34).

In the recent studies that are consistent with the previous studies (Judge et al., 1995; Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999), career satisfaction is employed as a pointer of subjective career

success. Understanding individual's ability, values and needs has intrinsic motivation factor which has influence on career success (Schein, 1978, 1990). It is completely wrong to assume that, in a certain social setting, all members do share the same subjective career orientation (Bailyn, 1989, p. 482).

Career success variables and measurements

Career success can be measured by several other factors (Gattiker & Larwood, 1986) such as objective variables like salary and promotions (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Scandura, 1992; Whitely, Dougherty & Dreher, 1991; Abele et al., 2016; Schneer & Reitman, 1997; Martins, Eddleston & Veiga, 2002). Other researchers (Gattiker & Larwood, 1986; Pfeffer, 1977; Hughes, 1937; and Abele et al., 2016) used salary level and job title as measures of career success. Gould and Penley (1984) used salary progression as pioneer and other authors (Kotter, 1982; Elliott, 1982; Pfeffer, 1977; Gould & Penley, 1984) have also taken plateau as an expanded measure of career success.

However, past career success studies acknowledge objective career success measurement inadequate enough to evaluate career success as a whole. A common belief exists that individuals emphasize more on subjective measures such as work-life balance, challenges, new skills developments and sense of achievement (Bridgstock, 2009; Gattiker & Larwood, 1988; Heslin, 2005; Zopiatis, 2010). Both extrinsic and intrinsic measures are significant to determine the career success standard conventionally, as well as the feeling of success which one can relate to their own personal goals and expectations in life (Judge & Bretz, 1994; Judge et al., 1995; London & Stumpf, 1982; Seibert et al., 1999). Suggested variables used for career success are demographic, human capital, motivational and organizational variables (Judge et al., 1995). However, Seibert et al., (1999) suggested organizational, structural and dispositional variables as prime variables. This finding is consistent with Judge et al., (1995) conceptual model of executive career success which recommends adding dispositional variables to the collection of variables associated with career success, as dispositional variable has influence on career process and outcome. It also has the potentials to explain variance in career success.

Career success varies in terms of several other factors that are not related to job performance, e.g. reward, career choice or the state of the economy (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2010; Mizruchi, Stearns & Fleischer, 2011). Mirvis and Hall, (1994) and Hall, (1996) stress upon setting psychological success as the measure of career success, and the work value as an important predictor of career success (Koh, 2016). Other factors like knowledge, education level, work experience, work-life balance and skills do contribute to career success (Sulaiman, et al., 2014). Gattiker (1985), Gattiker and Larwood (1986) have created a scale assessing five factors of subjective career success including interpersonal, financial, job, hierarchical, and life success. First four measures are regarded as the organizational success measures, and the last measure (life success) was categorized as the non-organizational success. Parker and Arthur (2002) created a three-factor scale of "knowing-how," "knowing-why," and "knowing-whom" success factors and grouped 10 to 20 sub-factors under each factor (Shockley, Ureksoy, Rodopman, Poteat & Dullaghan, 2016).

Three recent studies (e.g. Zhou, Su, Guan, Li, & Pan, 2013; Pan & Zhou, 2015; Shockley et al., 2016) have reiterated the need of additional inclusive and subjective career success to be elucidated in its structure. Pan and Zhou (2015) also recommended to replicate the factor structure using the items from Zhou et al. (2013), such as shorter scale, convergent

establishment, and incremental validity. Other studies like Shockley et al., (2016) have also identified common themes such as quality of work/performance, relationships/influence on others, financial factors, career advancement, life beyond work, growth and learning, autonomy, satisfaction, respect/recognition, and having an impact/meaning, and the dimensions were identified from every measures, then the classification was done into one or more themes. Table 2.1 compiles qualitative studies on subjective career success variables from 1985 to 2013.

Table 2.1 Qualitative Studies of Subjective Career Success

Study	Description of sample	Quality of work/ Performance	Relationships/ influence on others	Financial factors	Advancement	Life beyond work	Growth and learning	Autonomy	Satisfaction	Respect/ recognition	Having an impact/ meaning
Subjective Career Success Inventory (SCSI)	30 employees across industries and ages	Quality work	Influence			Personal life	Growth and development	Authenticity	Satisfaction	Recognition	Meaningful work
Zhou et al. (2013)	30 Chinese employees			External compensation		Work-life balance			Intrinsic fulfillment		
van den Bos (2012)	20 employees in non-profit and profit firms			Job security		Work-life balance			Job satisfaction, career satisfaction		
Kets de Vries (2010)	160 senior executives	Winning/ overcoming challenges	Power	Acquiring wealth		Good relationship with family, ability to maintain friendships	Winning/ overcoming challenges		Satisfying work	Recognition/ fame	Meaningful work
Enke and Ropers-Huilman (2010)	26 senior students at Catholic women's colleges					Balance between work and family					Contributing to a community
Dries et al, , (2008)	22 managers in Belgium	Performance	Cooperation	Security	Advancement		Self-development		Satisfaction	Recognition	Contribution
McDonald & Hite (2008)	20 young professionals			Adequate compensation	Job progression	Having adequate time for family and time to devote to non-work	Continually challenging oneself, developing skills			Recognition	Meaningful work
Hennequin (2007)	25 French blue-collar workers	Job success (autonomy, expertise, pleasure)	Interpersonal relationships	Monetary rewards, fringe benefits, social status	No. of promotions, hierarchical position	Life balance		Job success (autonomy, expertise, interest, pleasure)	Career satisfaction, job success (autonomy, expertise, interest, pleasure)	Social status, recognition, reputation	
Lee, Lirio, Karakas, MacDermid, Buck & Kossek, (2006)	87 professionals/ managers across organizations	Performing well			Upward mobility	Having a life outside of work	Learning		Fun and enjoyment, doing Interesting work	Appreciation/ recognition, peer respect	Having an impact/ making a contribution

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Study	Description of sample	Quality of work/ performance	Relationships/ influence On others	Financial factors	Advancement	Life beyond work	Growth and learning	Autonomy	Satisfaction	Respect/ recognition	Having an impact/meaning
Parker and Arthur (2002)	Three focus groups of MBA students		Supportive work atmosphere, stability, influence others, working with others, leadership, coaching, learning through feedback, gaining support, company-specific relationships, support for potential, work relationships, suppliers, internal support, working in teams, mentoring	Providing for family, security		External relationships	Innovation, skills and knowledge, challenge, learning, developing new knowledge, distinctive skills, job situations, learning through feedback	Flexibility		Approval	Societal approval, projects
Juntunen, Barraclough, Broneck, Seibel, Winrow & Morin, (2001)	18 Northern Plain Indians across professions and ages		Contribute to well-being of others	Material gain					Personal satisfaction		
Sturges (1999)	36 managers in UK telecom company	Accomplishment, sense of personal achievement	Influence	Rewards		Balance			Enjoyment	Personal recognition	Making contributions
Duxbury, Dyke, and Lam (1999)	254 employees federal government Canada	Self-esteem, reward, and accomplishment	Ability to contribute and influence	Recognition and extrinsic rewards	Career progress		Learning		Enjoyment and satisfaction in the work itself	Self-esteem, reward, and accomplishment, recognition and extrinsic rewards	Ability to contribute and influence
Gattiker (1985)	32 managers and support staff in manufacturing plant	Job success	Interpersonal success	Financial success	Hierarchical success	Life success					

Source: Shockley, K. M., Ureksoy, H., Rodopman, O. B., Poteat, L. F., & Dullaghan, T. R. (2016). Development of a New Scale to Measure Subjective Career Success: A Mixed-Methods Study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 37(1), 128-153.

Career success from the Islamic perspective

Career success in Islam holds a perspective and interpretation different from that of the western perspective. It emphasizes more on intrinsic (subjective) career success and does not only limit to this world, but extends to the success in the life hereafter (Zaman, Sulaiman & Hashim, 2013; Sulaiman, et al., 2014; Tuerwahong & Sulaiman, 2018). In this regard, religion (Islam) has huge impact on Muslim managers' lives, where it is the main purpose of their existence in this world.

In this context, spirituality is thus the key factor for a Muslim manager's career success. It shapes an individual's character to be more ethical, people-oriented, fair and just in their relationship with others, by working hard and using time more efficiently (Tuerwahong & Sulaiman, 2018). Muslim managers are well aware and conscious of Maqasid al-shari'ah and their responsibilities in this life. Their real concern is the life hereafter and the acceptance of Allah (SWT) of every single action of their life (Sulaiman et al., 2014). This ideology suggests that one should work towards success in this life in order to attain ultimate success in the life hereafter and in order to be accepted by Allah (SWT). This goal is attained through setting Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) as the reference point (Zaman, Sulaiman & Hashim, 2013; Tuerwahong & Sulaiman, 2018), to follow his footsteps, demonstrate strong universal values and espouse the spirit of Taqwa (Islamic piety).

Various measurement scales have been used to map career success from the Islamic perspective (Table 2.2). The data in the table reveals that existing scales are not accounted for adequate measurement of the career success from the Islamic perspective. The reason is that any contemporary subject cannot be adequate without the association of Islamic spirituality. Such concept that are embedded in Taqwa (God-Consciousness/ Piety) define the individual's responsibility towards Allah (SWT) (Mohsen, 2007). Having good relationship with another human being is another important aspect of a Muslim's life. This includes patience, emotional control, forgivingness, *Sadaqah*, integrity, fulfilment of promise, charity, guarding of chastity, sincerity and love of family (Mohsen, 2007). All the above attributes of Taqwa as proposed by Mohsen (2007) and Kamil, Al-Kahtani & Sulaiman, (2011) shape a complete framework for Muslim managers to do the permissible and avoid the prohibited. These attributes also form the spirituality dimensions of a Muslim manager which can determine his career success. The combination of universal values and Taqwa may lead to the true definition of career success (Tuerwahong & Sulaiman, 2018).

Hence it is clearly indicated that, components and dimensions of Taqwa are not addressed in any literature. There is a lack of measuring scales or methods to measure career success from the Islamic perspective (Mohsen, 2007). Based on the findings of this research, Table 2.2 lists qualitative studies on subjective career success in the Islamic context.

Table 2.2 Qualitative studies of subjective career success in Islamic context

Study	Description of sample	Quality of work/ performance	Relationships/ influence On others	Financial factors	Advancement	Life beyond work	Growth and learning	Satisfaction	Respect/ recognition	Having an impact/meaning
Yousof & Siegel, (1994)	146 questionnaire (78 male and 68 female)	Performance	Giving support, internal support, well being of others	higher salary	Hierarchical success	Having family commitments	Skills, abilities, attitude, self concept, motivation and education	Greater interest, challenge, job security, higher-salary, responsibility		
Sulaiman, Ishak & Shamuganathan, (2012)	111 managers from the private sector	Individual differences, performing well	Agreeable, extroversion, conscientiousness, openness, emotionally stable to others	Higher salary	Career advancement		Effectively manage own career	Career satisfaction,	Wealth, power and respect	Contributing to organizational success
Sulaiman, et al., (2014)	7 senior Muslim managers (6 males and 1 Female) from banking, government manufacturing and automobile sectors	Motivation and career success from the Islamic perspective, be pious Muslim	Help, motivate others to hold on to Islamic principles at work, give charity, serve Ummah		Spiritual advancement, gain more reward, high rank in the Eye of Allah	Follow Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) foot steps in every facet of life, worship, give back to the society good family relationship, ability to maintain friendships work life balance, and family Fulfilling family needs	Motivation, increase Islamic knowledge, be better Muslim and servant of Allah	Seeking the pleasure of Allah, bless by Allah and good abode in the hereafter	Recognition from Allah and society, accomplish Ment and extrinsic rewards	giving charity and donations to the poor and the society
Zaman, Sulaiman & Hashim, (2013)	13 Muslim managers, (10 males and 3 females)	Faith, accomplishment, one's duty as Muslim	Take care of others, give support, improving relationship,	Higher income for donating to orphan, poor, building Mosques	Good akhlaq, eliminate arrogances, be humble	Work-life balance, worship, family commitment,	Acceptance, good faith in Allah, Islamic belief and practice,	success in this world and in the hereafter, achieve desired Interest, pray 5 times, honesty and trust in Allah, Sharing knowledge, help each other	Seeking of Allah pleasure	Donating to orphan, poor, building Mosques, give back to society
Mohd Rasdi et al., (2011)	288 managers of Malaysian Public sector	Career success	Interpersonal success	Promotions	Number of promotions	Personal life	Overcoming challenge, networking	Intrinsic and extrinsic fulfilment and satisfaction	Recognition	
Tuerwahong & Sulaiman, (2018)	13 Muslim managers (9 males and 4 females) from directorship, business owner, vice president, general to senior managers from Banking, service, IT, education, automotive point	Taqwa, career success from the Islamic perspective, motivation, religion, faith, accomplishment, set Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) as reference point	Patience, love of family, forgivingness, sadakah, guarding chastity, fulfillment of Covenant, emotional control, integrity, charity, sincerity, Justice, truthfulness,		Spiritual, responsible, gratitude, faith, acceptance by Allah, confident	Rituals, Belief (Iman), forgivingness/Repentance (Al a'fw), Remembrance of Allah (Dhikrullah)	Increase in rituals motivation to attain Jannah, be role model to the rest, follow Qur'an and Sunnah	Gain Allah's pleasure, attaining paradise aware of true success,	Recognition from Allah and Prophet Muhammed (pbuh)	True success, focus on bigger picture, work hard, patience better Muslim, contribute to other's success

Source: based on the findings of the current study

The Islamic worldview

The word “Islam” is derived from the word ‘aslama’ means “to resign oneself” or “to give oneself up to God” (Mahmudunnasir, 1981). Islam is ad-din (a way of life) (al-Attas, 1985), and it provides a complete guideline in every single aspect of the believer’s life (Muhamad, 2007). Islam means commitment, submission, obedience, surrender (Ahmad, 1997; Kharofa, 1992) and is the only true religion (universally) for mankind as revealed in the Holy Qur’an (3:19). The number one basic principle and code of Islam is believing in the existence of Allah (SWT) and His Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), known as Tawhid (Muhamad, 2007). In the verbatim sense, a Muslim is one who submits him/herself to the will of Almighty Allah (SWT) (Mir, 2010) and it is extremely crucial to obtain and fulfill self purification and attains the pleasure of Almighty Allah (SWT) known as Haqooq Allah (Mir, 2010). Islamic worldview contains the essential concept of God, and the core concept of man, the nature/universe and the religion (Haneef, 1997; Kamil et al., 2011).

The concept of God

“Allah” is the name of One True God and nothing else can be called Allah. The term “Allah” has no plural or gender. In the religion of Islam, concept of God or Tawhid is the most fundamental and underlying concepts, that permeates all aspects of life (Haneef, 1997; Saleem, 2009; Kamil et al., 2011; Bhatti, 2015). Tawhid means unity or affirming the oneness (Bilal, 1994), and there is no God but God (Saleem, 2009). In God’s attributes, it is acknowledged the absolute perfection, greatness and uniqueness of God without any compromises. God is the powerful and has full authority over everything, and everything else is entirely obedient and dependent on Him. Muslims are motivated to be conscious and be aware of the constant existence of God (Allah) in oneself and everywhere (Kamil et al., 2011). This allows individuals to manifest their best behaviors in any working place or position (Bhatti, 2015), and eventually results in best performance to lead to success.

The concept of Man

Man in Islam is said to be created by God in fitra (a state of free from any sin) (Abdalati, 1998; Chapra, 1992; Hamid, 1999). Hence, the man is imbued with God’s spirit (Qur’an 15:28-29), and is bestowed with physical, intellectual and spiritual potentialities that require man to constantly nurture and develop. Man is the slave of Allah (SWT) (God) and His vicegerent on earth (khalifat Allâh fi’l - ard.) (Haneef, 1997) and abd’ (servant) of God (Qur’an 2:30). There is dual function of Man in Islam (Hassan, 1992), as a servant of Allah (SWT) and as a khalifah on earth. Prophet (PBUH) have said “each one of you is a care-taker and each of you will be questioned (on the Judgment Day) of what he/she has taken care of”. This conviction strengthens the Muslim’s belief in their responsibility towards taking care of duties at work, particularly organization (Kamil et al, 2011), and disciplines individuals towards success in this life as well as the life hereafter.

The Concept of Nature/Universe

The concept of nature/ universe in Islam consists of the “heavens and the earth and all in between”, a phrase used repeatedly a number of times in the Qur’an (Haneef, 1997). Nature/universe is bestowed as a sign to human beings for the purpose of directing him to worship God. It is the combination of visible and invisible worlds, wherein the visible world refers to the materialistic world around us; and the invisible world (ghaib) is what we cannot see but is equally real and existing to every Muslim’s belief. Kamil (2011) cites Haneef (1997) stating that all that we see in nature is God’s creation (Qur’an 7:54; 22:18; 24:41) and that God made man its khalifah (custodian) and abd (servant of God) (Qur’an 2:60; 6:95-103;

15:16-23; 16:3-21). Man (the khalifah and abd) reflects upon the magnificence and orderliness of nature, sees the “signs” of God’s existence and brings mercy to him (Qur’an 2:21-22; 116-117; 14:32-34), by submitting himself to God. The unique concept of universe/nature as stated in Islam however lacks in the western value system (Kamil et al, 2011), and therefore it can play a motivating role in Muslim employee’s career development.

The concept of Din (Religion)

The term din (religion) means complying with Allah’s (SWT) eternal rule, to submit and serve. Mankind is tested only by Allah (SWT) in this world to follow and practice the straight path to succeed in the life hereafter (Haneef, 1997). Din is absolutely one of the most important term in the Qur’an (Haq, 2015) and is the fourth key concept that shapes the Muslim’s belief. It motivates the Muslim employee in constantly remembrance of the Islamic rules, regulations and limitations set by Allah (SWT) through Shari’ah of the din (religion of Islam), and obedience to Allah (SWT). This will bring goodness to oneself and humanity, success in work as well as in the life hereafter (Kamil et al, 2011). Therefore, a believer should carry these four concepts (God, man, nature/universe and din), that will shape their life and behaviors in the work environment (Kamil et al, 2011).

Akhlaq (Morality and Ethics in Islam)

Akhlaq is an Arabic plural noun (singular Khuluq), which means disposition, or man’s fundamental value orientation in life and his/her essential nature of being in this world (Francis, Sahin & Al-Failakawi, 2008). It also refers to the personal/social conduct of an individual (Donaldson, 1953; Izutsu, 2002), meaning morality and ethics (Saleem, 2009). Another definition regards it as “the study of human conduct on how it should be” or akhlaq is what “Islam orders to its followers to be adherent to good moral and ethical values” (Saleem, 2009). The term Akhlaq is not only limited to ethics, morality and individual’s behavioral viewpoint, but it also covers the relationship with Allah (SWT) and purification of inner self (nafs).

Akhlaq is that principle of ethics which determines every intrinsic role of a Muslim and regards every act in Islam as an off-shoot of individual’s Iman (Muslim belief system) (Ahmad, 2008). Allah (SWT) commanded the Muslims to follow the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) in all facets of life in order to get Allah’s (SWT) mercy and forgiveness. The Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is a complete guide and example for Muslims to follow and to manifest the best Akhlaq. Abu Hurairah cites the Messenger of Allah (PBUH): “Indeed, I have been sent to complete the best of character (Akhlaq)” (Sahih Muslim, 6017). Ethical concepts are therefore embraced by Muslim workers and leaders with wider and holistic implications (Ahmad, 1997). It is embedded in the Islamic belief system and is perceived as acts with regard to the individual or the organization (Kamil et al, 2011). This at the end is the indication of Muslims’ consideration towards ethical behavior as an act of Ibadah (worship) to results to Allah’s (SWT) reward (Kamil et al, 2011).

Motivation from the Islamic viewpoint

In Islam, the essential part of motivation comes from belief, as a holder of amānah (or Trustess of Allah (SWT)) on earth. Other motivational factors such as self-fulfillment, upward mobility and material are not considered as the fundamentals of motivation for Muslims (Hassan, 1995). Work is a form of virtuous deed (amal salih) and form of (Ibadah) or a servitude to God. Work allows a Muslim to attain true success (falah) in this world as well as in the life hereafter (Bhatti, 2015). The reward and punishment a Muslims get through

his good or bad deeds will not only be confined to this world, but even in the life after death (hereafter) (Hassan, 1995; Ahmad, 2008; Ahmad & Fontaine, 2011; Amin, 2011; Kamil et al., 2011; Bhatti, 2015).

Multiple factors contribute to motivation of an individual from the Islamic viewpoint (Jabnoun, 2005; Ahmad & Fontaine, 2011; Amin, 2011; Kamil et al., 2011; Bhatti, 2015). The factors that determine a reward or punishment include Iman (faith), tawbah (repentance), taqwa (Islamic piety), justice (Al-Adalah), spiritual motivation and ihsan (love of God). These factors are manifestations of Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs) (Kamil, 2012) which every Muslim employee needs to inculcate in his behavior.

Taqwa (Islamic Piety)

The essence of Taqwa lies in inner strength which is contrary to Quwwah (material strength) and it is a constant consciousness of the existence of the Almighty Allah (SWT) which warrants all Muslims to walk on the path of righteousness (Taqwa, 2002). It is considered as one of the universal values held by Islam and it is applicable in all situations in all societies (Alhabshi & Ghazali, 1994).

Definition of Taqwa

Piety was derived from Latin *pietas* meaning ‘mercy, tenderness, piety, dutiful conduct, loyalty, patriotism; faithfulness, gentleness, kindness’ (“Online Etymology Dictionary,” 2000). These definitions do align with the moral dimensions of Taqwa in Islam. Taqwa is derived from the Arabic root *t-q-y* and its literal meaning is ‘to protect/preserve oneself’ (Khatami & Tawa, 2015). In another definition, the word Taqwa is linked with the root “*wiqaya*” meaning staying away or limiting oneself from all acts that are forbidden (Ibn Kather, 2003), fearing Allah’s (SWT) commands (Kamil, Sulaiman, Osman-Gani & Ahmad, 2010), and the awareness of believer’s duty towards Him (Beekun and Badawi, 1999).

Zandi et al., (2017) quoted what Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says in a hadith, “Taqwa is here (while pointing to his chest three times, i.e. in the heart)”. Hence, if Taqwa resides in the human heart, it is the state of realizing and being conscious of Allah’s (SWT) existence and presence. It also means having faith in His acceptance, fearing His punishment, avoiding oneself from committing any sorts of sin to cause Allah’s (SWT) wrath (Qutob, 1986). Taqwa is thus the protection of heart against all elements that distance believer’s heart from Allah (SWT) and brings one closer to Allah (SWT) through believer’s own actions (Topbas, 2009).

Purpose, Role and importance of Taqwa

The main purpose of Taqwa is to help a Muslim avoid Allah’s (SWT) punishment by doing what He has commanded and stay away from what He has forbidden (Al-Sharawi, 2004). Taqwa has been operationalized in contemporary business research (Kamil et al., (2010). Al-Atrash (2002) conceptualized Taqwa as the absolute state of maturity in mind, heart and body, that are united and entirely synchronized to run a business or apply in the work place. Albashi and Ghazali (1994) has listed Piety (Taqwa) as one of the core values in Islam. The implication of Taqwa is to safeguard oneself from harm and other threats to preserve one’s identity and being a subject of Islam. It is a powerful tool to make one to be religious as well as earn an income (Abdullah & Majid, 2003). It also provides good faith and piety at work place, to show sincerity with high productivity and trustworthiness (Bhatti, Alkahtani, Hassan & Sulaiman, 2015).

Characteristics of Muttaqeen

Taqwa acts as a guidance to a Muttaqin (the pious and righteous person) (Ibn Kather, 2003). “Muttaqeen are the believers who disbelieves in anything other than Allah (SWT) as Gods, and who works in His submission” and believes in unseen, performs prayers, spends in causes of Allah (SWT) as said by Ibn Abbas (Ibn Kather, 2003). A Muttaqeen is one who truly and faithfully believes in the oneness of Allah (SWT) and does righteous deeds. By doing so, Allah (SWT) will regard one with success in the land (Ibn Kather, 2003), and “guidance for Muttaqeen means, “a light”. Allah (SWT) describes Muttaqeen as believers who sacrifice their desires on wealth in the world, who look after those are in need (Mohsen, 2007), “Those who fear Allah’s (SWT) punishment, and who hopes in Allah’s (SWT) mercy”.

A Muttaqeen must establish regular prayers, pay Zakah (charity), act good himself and encourage good deeds, discourage and stop what is evil, and control anger (Mohsen, 2007). He also firmly believe that it is Allah (SWT) with whom rests the end of (all) matters (Ibn Kather, 2003). In view of the Qur’anic verse (Qur’an, 5: 8-9), Ibn Kather (2003) explains that a Muttaqeen should stand out firmly for truth for the sake of Allah (SWT), not for the sake of people or for fame or recognition. He should observe justice and shun all wrongdoings, transgression and disobedience. Notably, a Muttaqeen should not need to be carried away by his/her extreme dislike for someone. Rather, he/she needs to be just with everyone and everybody, whether a friend or an enemy (Ibn Kather, 2003). This is why Allah (SWT) has said “Be just: that is nearer to Taqwa”. Moreover, “Allah (SWT) is well familiar with all our actions and behaviors.

All the teachings in Qur’an, Hadith and from Islamic scholars (e.g. Ibn Kather, 2003; Mohsen, 2007) unanimously state that Allah (SWT) has defined the qualities and characteristics of a Muttaqeen. For instance, Qur’an defines these qualities; 1) Belief (Iman), 2) Abiding Prayers, 3) Seeking Allah (SWT) forgiveness, 4) Zakat (Charity), 5) Fasting, 6) Hajj, 7) Emotional control, 8) Forgivingness, 9) Restraining from wrong doings, 10) Patience, 11) Justice and 12) Truthfulness.

The Dimensions and Components of Taqwa

Looking at the given definition and characterization, the two components of Taqwa can be drawn from the characteristics of Muttaqeen, which are Islamic spirituality and Islamic Social Responsibility (Mohsen, 2007; Kamil et al., 2011; Ramli & Osman-Gani, 2011; Bhatti, 2015; Zandi et al., 2017). Spirituality in Islam mainly deals with individual’s inner dimensions in their life cycle and holds Islamic components and values as a means to attain spirituality in life (Kamil et al. 2011).

Spirituality, too, refers to Iman (faith), it signifies individual’s faith and belief in Allah (SWT), in His oneness, in His angels, messengers, books, the day of judgment and the hereafter (Al-Khalifa, 1994). A Muslim cannot maintain spirituality without being connected to the almighty Allah (SWT) through five pillars of Islam; Shahadah (declaration of faith), prayer, charity (Zakat) fasting and pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) (Hawa, 2004). Spirituality in Islam manifests itself through believing in the oneness of Allah (Iman), prayer (Ibadah), repentance (Tawbah), and remembrance of Allah (Dhikrullah) with conscious mind, that brings believers closer to Allah (SWT) (Mohsen 2007; Choudhury 2008; Kamil et al. 2011, Bhatti 2015). It is mainly the realization and consciousness of the notion of Taqwa (Nasr,

1987; Mohsen, 2007), which is referred to as faith, action and behavior in accordance with Islamic values and principles (Bhatti, 2015). Spirituality is the main trait and purpose of Muslims in their daily life (Rulindo, Hidayat & Mardhatillah 2011) and universal value manifests itself in the teaching of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions. Spirituality also comprises more than prayer and it includes the compliance of other obligations (Kamil et al., 2011).

Human beings need to develop two relationships; first with God, second with other human beings (Mohsen, 2007). The believers who submit themselves to Allah (SWT) are in total state of worship which leads to stronger spirituality (Saleem, 2009). Moreover, Al-Gazali (2004) asserts that, Ritual (Ibadah) acts such as prayers (Salat), fasting (Saum), Charity (Zakah), and pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) should be for the betterment of one's relationship with Allah (SWT) otherwise they remain empty rituals. One can reach the highest degree of spirituality and physical fitness only by acting upon these rituals (Ibrahim, 1997).

Islamic social responsibility is the responsibility to one's self, other human beings and nature at large (Mohsen, 2007). Practicing it will result respect, harmony, justice, integrity, development of individuals and the society with consciousness of achieving forgiveness and pleasure of Allah (SWT) (Mohsen, 2007; Kamil, 2012; Bhatti, 2015). Islamic social responsibility's core elements are constructed by Mohsen (2007) and followed by Kamil et al. (2011) and Bhatti (2015) as patience, justice, integrity, emotional control, sadaqah, zakat forgiveness, fulfillment of covenant, guarding chastity, truthfulness, love of family and sincerity (Ikhlas).

The components and dimensions of Taqwa (Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility) are illustrated below (Figure 1.1)

Taqwa	Belief (Iman)	Islamic Spirituality	Belief (Iman)
	Prayers Fasting Hajj Zakah		Rituals (Ibadat)
	Asking for Allah's Forgiveness Never Obstinate in doing the wrong <i>Dhikrullah</i>	Islamic Social Responsibility	Repentance /Asking Forgiveness (<i>Tawbah / Al-afw</i>) <i>Dhikrullah</i>
	Patience Emotional Control Forgivingness Sadaqah ^[1] _{SEP} Zakat Justice ^[1] _{SEP} Integrity Fulfillment of Covenant Guarding chastity Truthfulness Love of Family Sincerity (Ikhlās)		Patience Emotional Control Forgivingness Sadaqah ^[1] _{SEP} Zakat Justice ^[1] _{SEP} Integrity Fulfillment of Covenant Guarding chastity Truthfulness Love of Family Sincerity (Ikhlās)

Figure 1.1 The components and dimensions of Taqwa based on the characteristics of Muttaqeen

(Source: Mohsen (2007) and Kamil (2012))

^[1]_{SEP}: *The components and dimensions of *Taqwa* based on the characteristics of *Muttaqeen* as shown in the figure is a modified version presented by Kamil et al. (2011); Kamil (2012); Bhatti (2015); Zandi et al., (2017).

The Muttaqeen and Career Success

Allah (SWT) describes Muttaqeen as believers who sacrifice their desires on wealth in the world and look after those who are in need (Mohsen, 2007). Muttaqeen are the believers who possess Taqwa (Kamil, Osman-Gani, Sulaiman & Ahmad, 2012). The qualities and characteristics of a Muttaqeen are; 1) Belief (Iman), 2) Abiding prayers, 3) Seeking Allah's (SWT) forgiveness, 4) Zakat (Charity), 5) Fasting, 6) Hajj, 7) Emotional control, 8) Forgivingness. 9) Restraining from wrong doings, 10) Patience, 11) Justice and 12) Truthfulness. These are the essential part of Muslim managers on how they perceive career success. Remarkably, Muslim managers demonstrated all above qualities and characteristics of Muttaqeen, have clearer view and understanding on the relationship between Taqwa and career success (Tuerwahong & Sulaiman, 2018). It is shown that, the most important aspect of career success from the Islamic perspective is related to the success in the hereafter (Tuerwahong & Sulaiman, 2018; Zaman, Sulaiman & Hashim, 2013).

A qualitative study conducted by Tuerwahong & Sulaiman (2018) concluded that, for Muslim managers to be successful, they must follow the footsteps of Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) and "practice good behavior and personality". Muslim managers should find their success in giving back to the society (through charity), having self-satisfaction, Shukr

(gratitude), Wasatiyyah (balance), and connecting oneself to the Qur'an. Other rituals that a Muslim must follow are being Saleh (pious), Shahid (witness), peace within oneself, gratitude, Sadiq (truthfulness) and Waratha al - anbiya (heirs of the Prophet). The study also listed a number of career success contributing factors that can help individuals to be successful, for instance, Ibadah (worship), constant Dua (supplication), performance of compulsory prayers, paying Zakat, fasting during Ramadhan (fasting month), performing Hajj and Umrah. In addition, a Muslim must show trust in Allah's (SWT) plan, keep his promises, participate in Jihad (struggle for the good), strive for knowledge, truthfulness, patience, act just and fair, show obedience and strong faith in Allah (SWT), and recognize emotional control and Redha (acceptance of God's will). Apart from having above contributing factors, one has to restrain oneself from certain forbidden acts in order to reach ultimate success such as harming others, cheating, doing and talking evil, playing politics, bribing, keebr (arrogance), and desire of worldly pleasure.

To sum up, these components of Taqwa (Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility) play a contributing role in building career success of all Muslim managers. The characteristics of Muttageen are embedded in Muslim manager's life. Ibn Kather (2003) states that, guidance for the Muttageen means, a light for those who have Taqwa. According to "Ibn Abbas, Ibn Masud and other companions of the Prophet's (PBUH), "guidance for Muttageen means, "a light"". In the journey of success, all the characteristics of a Muttageen are instilled in Muslim managers, as well as it is the source for how they perceive career success. Therefore, it can be concluded that, one cannot separate Taqwa from career success.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

The discussion in the previous sections suggests that there exists an interdependency of both subjective and objective elements in the making of a career's success. From the Islamic perspective, however, there is a need for theoretical platform that must be both logically and empirically adequate (Bacharach, 1989). As said earlier, the Islamic perspective is different from the western perspective in determining human nature and human needs. The reason is that most career success theories have originated and been constructed from the western perspective. Little has been done across cultural and other religious perspectives, particularly from the Islamic (Sulaiman et al., 2014).

Moreover, theories about career success of managers often overlap each other (Arthur et al., 2005) as there are several conceptual approaches like the individual approach (originated from human capital and motivational models focusing on individual traits), structural approach (organizational structures providing career success opportunities) and behavioral approach (mentoring managers for career-enhancement strategies) (Nabi, 1999; Ballout 2007). Several career success models have also been developed by researchers using demographic, human capital, work-family, motivational, organizational and industry variables (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Judge & Bretz, 1994; Judge et al., 1995; Kirchmeyer, 1998). In each of these models, the spiritual part has been neglected. Therefore, Ng et al., (2005) and Tuerwaong & Sualiman (2017) recommend that future research should focus more on developing different methods of ensuring and predicting career satisfaction. Hence, there is a need to identify new key variables in order to predict career success.

This study proposes a conceptual model which comprises Taqwa, with two dimensions of Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility, as the independent variable and career success as the dependent variable (Figure 2.2). This proposed model requires the relationship

of independent and dependent variables to be tested. It suggests that, Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility have a positive influence on career success.

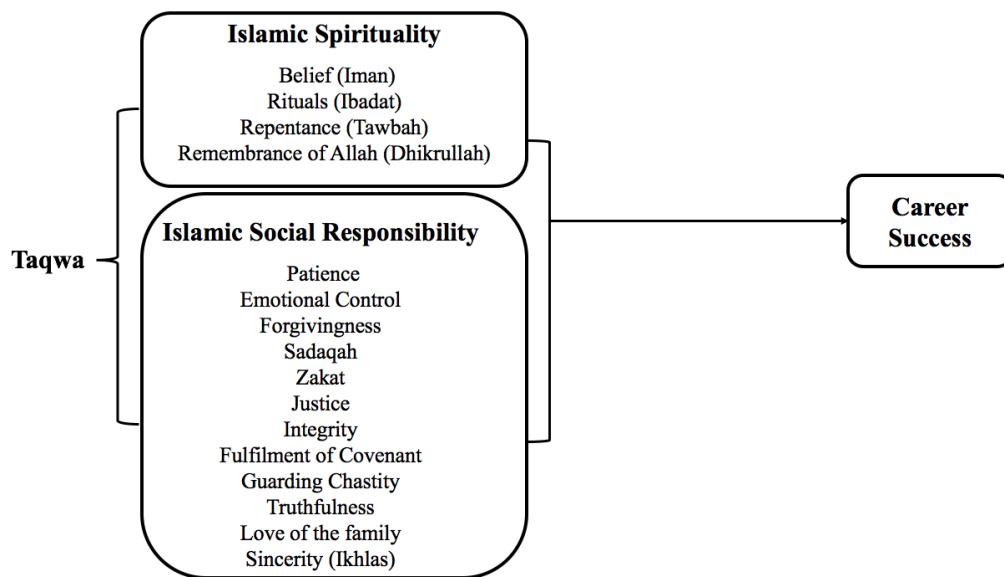


Figure 2.2 Proposed relationship among the variables in this study's Conceptual Model

Propositions of the study

In order to show a positive relationship between Taqwa principles like the Islamic spirituality and Islamic responsibility and Career success (Figure 2.2), it will be required to provide adequate evidence of stronger relationships between the variables. A few propositions need to be formulated and developed. For instance:

Proposition 1

The Taqwa principle of Islamic spirituality is demonstrated in elements like Belief in Allah (SWT), Islamic rituals, the concept of Repentance and frequent remembrance of Allah (SWT). Having these elements in place will positively influence the career success of Muslim managers. Here lies the first proposition of this study.

Proposition 2

The Taqwa principle of Islamic social responsibility manifests in several elements like Patience, Emotional Control, Forgivingness, Sadaqah, Zakat, Justice, Integrity, Fulfillment of Covenant, Guarding Chastity, Truthfulness Love of family and Sincerity (Ikhlas). Having these elements in place will positively influence the career success of Muslim managers.

In order to materialize these principles and their elements in the career success of Muslim managers, there is a need to adopt an approach of participation and inclusivity by a manager. It means that Muslim managers should show their fullest faith in these principles. This is consistent with the argument taken up in a similar study (Bhatti et al., 2015) wherein all non-materialistic things are regarded as a part of Taqwa providing the inner good faith and piety through elements like sincerity, productivity, and trustworthiness. Similarly, there is another study on workplace in organizations which regard Taqwa as an endogenous element in the workplace to enable justice and other similar elements at work place (Evans, 2016).

The underlying principle in building up these two propositions as a conceptual framework of this study is to give meaning to Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility. The conventionalists may argue that faith and religion are individual priorities but these

propositions will prove that faith or belief also has a role to play in unifying managers in organizations leading to their career success. Truly speaking, these propulsions will also positively evidence of the fact that the mind, heart and movement of individuals are a result of their inner energy, perseverance and endurance, which are only manifestations of the Taqwa principle (Abdullah & Majid, 2013). Last, but not the least, having a framework with Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility as Taqwa principles to study Career success will also signal at the positive relationships between physical, material, financial, and moral capacities of a Muslim manager, which are essential prerequisites in an organization. These capacities also predict good teamwork and productivity essential for the career success.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of this study is to understand the Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility from the managerial approach. Hence, it will be required to make a detailed discussion on managerial environment where these Taqwa principles of Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility can be studied. Taqwa has already been considered as the main differentiating component between success and failure as found in the literature review and a study of these Islamic principles. Additionally, it is expected that when Taqwa comes in action, the Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility will automatically influence the career success of Muslim managers

Hence, based on the research propositions, it is strongly recommended that Muslim managers should apply and follow Taqwa principles like Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility in their organizational setups. Furthermore, Muslim managers should try to attain all the elements that have been mentioned in these propositions as elements of Taqwa. It is needless to say that Muslim managers' high level of Taqwa will eventually lead to a high level of relationship with career success. The study should also argue that Taqwa is that internal defense that addresses an external dynamism or the capacity to build up proactive strategies in managers. These propositions will postulate this argument and provide sustainability in the capacity building and achieving a competitive advantage in an organizational situation.

The study should use a purposive sampling method and collect data through questionnaires from Muslim managers working in business organizations. Purposive sampling is a subjective or convenient sampling method under the non-probability sampling technique which will be very helpful in this study. The purposive sampling will also help the researcher to understand informants willing to participate in the study (Barratt, Ferris, & Lenton, 2015; Hornibrook, May, & Fearn, 2015). Besides questionnaires, interviews may also be conducted with top management of the sampled organizations. Such interviews will not only provide rich information for the study (King & Horrocks, 2010) but will also help to understand the context (Charmaz, 2014) in order to estimate the influence of Taqwa on Muslim managers. Moreover, the top management will also provide a useful juxtaposition of Taqwa with organizational success principles like corporate governance and quality control that are considered as success principles in an organizational context.

CONCLUSION

This study attempts to investigate the role of Taqwa in the career success of Muslim managers in Malaysia, by proposing a new theoretical framework and empirical relationship,

to present a new model of career success from Islamic perspective. Specifically, the study aims to investigate direct relationship between Taqwa and career success.

This study also attempts to fill the literature gap on career success from the Islamic perspective in relation to Taqwa. It allows Muslim managers to understand their career success from more in profound perspective and may assist them to connect their success in this world to ultimate success (hereafter). It also gives clear guideline on seeing the true success in this world as well as the success in the hereafter, which is the sole purpose of human kind living in this world. Finding of this study may assist non-Muslims managers or individuals with better understanding of their Muslim colleagues and employees in motivating them to the path of success.

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