THE CONCEPT OF CAREER SUCCESS AMONG MUSLIM MANAGERS

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of a study on the understanding of career success among Muslim managers and the factors contributing it. Career success has been defined differently in different contexts. In western literature career success has referred to as reaching the top post in the company or getting the highest salary, or getting the most number of promotions or to obtain the most powerful position in the shortest possible time or to get job satisfaction. But to the Muslim managers career success seems to have different characterization from the western definition. A qualitative study was undertaken to identify the definition of career success among Muslim managers from small to large enterprises. Thirteen Muslim managers were interviewed from different sectors. They consist of 9 males and 4 females. This study concluded that to Muslim managers Career success means to be successful both in this world as well as in the hereafter. Setting Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) as the reference point, they have to follow in his footsteps. The study reveals that having strong Islamic spirituality or Taqwa (i.e belief in God, obeying God's commands, observance of prayers, payment of zakat, giving to charity, honesty and sincerity, patience, asking for forgiveness and giving forgiveness) certainly contribute to career success.

Keywords: career success, Islamic spirituality, Taqwa, Muslim managers

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, studying career success in the work place has aroused researchers' interest. It is extremely crucial to understand the factors that have impact on employee's career success in order to develop a competent workforce (Ballout, 2009) and employee's personal success has direct contribution to organizational success (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999). Thus, career success has not only become the individuals' concern, it is also the organizations' concern as it helps to achieve organizational success (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999). Several previous studies have examined the phenomenon of career success and researchers had extensive speculation in deciding what managerial career success is and what factors contribute to it (Ellis & Heneman, 1990). However, these studies were mainly from the Western perspective (Ballout, 2009).

Of late Spirituality in the workplace is becoming more and more the researchers' focus of interest (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002; Graber & Johnson, 2001; Thompson, 2000; Graber & Johnson, 2001; Singh & Mishra, 2016; and many more). It has been suggested that organization with policy towards spiritual enhancement makes employees develop their potentials to the fullest, which would lead to improvements in work performance and create friendlier corporate world (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). Therefore, all the views of spirituality should be encouraged in the workplace (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002) and the "spirited workplaces" have done better with respect to profitability (Thompson, 2000). "Spirituality" refers to the state of being spiritual which means to be concerned with sacred or religious things (Universal Dictionary, 1990).

In different cultural contexts, the career success is shaped differently (Ituma & Simpson, 2007). In western culture researchers defined and interpreted "career success" from mainly the worldly perspective (Kats, Emmerik, Blenkinsopp, & Khapova, 2010). To begin with, career success has different notion in research field, it is the job success for Gattiker and Larwood, (1988), psychological outcome for Eby, Butts and Lockwood, (2003), satisfaction for Seibertet, Kraimer and Liden, (2001), and ends with a question that can only be answered by individuals (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). Sulaiman, Ahmad, Sbaih and Kamil, (2014) concluded that, Islamic perspective in career success has different notion from the western perspective. From the Islamic view, career success is more of one's intrinsic value and balance in worldly life and spirituality (Sulaiman et al., 2014).For the Muslim manager spirituality is one of the most important factors in career success (Zaman, Sulaiman, & Hashim, 2013), yet there is no precise definition of career success and the relationship between spirituality and career success remains blurred.

Research Objectives

Previous studies on career success have been mainly from the western perspective except for an attempt by Zaman et al (2013). Thus there is a need for such research since career success is defined in terms of the individual's own subjective criteria (Aryee et al, 1994). From the Islamic perspective, career success has not been given enough research focus in the literature. Therefore, this paper explores career success in Islamic perspective. Specifically this research has two objectives:
   a) To clearly understand the what Muslim managers view as career success,
   b) To identify what aspects of Islamic spirituality contribute to career success (if any).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Different scholars have defined career success in different ways. Gattiker & Larwood (1988) for example suggested that career success only exists in people's minds and has no clear boundaries. It is an internal and external dimension that may be evaluated and defined societally or individually according to one's own subjective criteria (Aryee et al., 1994). Later, the definition of career success was given by Ng, Eby, Sorensen & Feldman (2005) as the accumulated positive work and psychological outcomes that resulted from one's work experience.

Evaluation of career success should include both external and internal perspectives, which is often operationalized in these settings (Ng, et al, 2005; Gattiker & Larwood, 1988; Arthur, et al., 2005), and should be placed within the larger context of one's life. The external aspect of career success variables measures objective and extrinsic which includes salary and promotion achievements (Gutteridge, 1973) as well as position and time taken to achieve the position (Sulaiman, Ishak, & Shamuganathan, 2012) in one's career.

The internal aspect of career success is reflected in a multidimensional construct (Gattiker & Larwood, 1986) and the variables that measure subjective and intrinsic career success (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz Jr., 2005), include one's subjective judgment about career achievement and satisfaction (Burke, 2001; Judge et al., 1999).

In any study of subjective career success, the objective aspect should not be neglected, because the objective career success has influence on the subjective evaluation of one's career (Abele & Spurk, 2009) and it has influence on the initial and growth level of subjective success. Researchers argue that extrinsic (objective) career outcomes are conceptually differentiated from intrinsic (subjective) career success (Ng et al, 2005; Arthur, 2005). Age, salary and position can be the measures of objective career success (Sulaiman, Ishak, & Shamuganathan, 2012). The results of Sulaiman et al (2012) study shows that the objective measures correlated strongly with the subjective measure of satisfaction with career success. Subjective success may be said to influence objective success. Subjectively successful individuals are objectively more successful as well and it is desirable for both individuals and organizations (Abele & Spurk, 2009).

The intrinsic-origin view of spirituality originates from the inside of an individual, and there are different views on the meaning of spirituality, given that this concept is very personally driven (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). It is the way one thinks and takes decision deploying one's vision and beliefs. (Singh & Mishra, 2016). Spirituality from a particular religious perspective are those that are specific to that particular religion (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002).

Spirituality in the workplace is becoming more and more the researchers' interest (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002), (Graber & Johnson, 2001). It implies an inner search for meaning or fulfillment that may be undertaken by anyone regardless of religion (Graber & Johnson, 2001). But for the purposes of this paper 'spirituality' refers to Islamic spirituality, in other words the Islamic religion's followers' concept and closeness with Creator and the Prophet. Mohsen (2007) studied leaders (CEOs) as well as the strategic management teams of business organizations in Yemen found that those with high level of Taqwa (spirituality) in their daily routines would have strong team spirit and cooperation. Mohsen concluded that leaders with a strong Taqwa (Islamic piety) had led their organizations to be higher performing.

Encouragement of spirituality and to follow employees' own spiritual path will enhance their creativity, honesty, trust, personal fulfillment and commitment,

which will increase organizational performance towards it's goal (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). In developing leadership skills at workplace, spirituality plays an important rule (Singh & Mishra, 2016), and leaders as well as organizations are looking for meaning and higher purpose that brought spirituality, religion and faith in business world (Kouzes & Posner , 2002). Organized effort to promote spirituality can never replace in importance and the greatness of spontaneous acts of kindness and generosity by employees (Graber & Johnson, 2001). Study shows that "spirited workplace" have done better with respect to profitability (Thompson, 2000). Most studies were conducted from Judeo-Christian and Hinduism faiths (Kamil , Al-Kahtani, & Sulaiman, 2011) in regards to spirituality.

Kamil (2013) again tested Islamic spirituality measurements used by Mohsen (2007) on his study on the relationship between Islamic spirituality and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). Kamil also found that Islamic spirituality is divided into two components; Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility. Sulaiman, Sabudin & Ishak (2012) studying the relationship between Islamic spirituality and organizational citizenship behavior in one organization found a strong and significant relationship between spirituality and commitment to the organization. In other words the higher the spirituality of the employee the stronger his commitment to his organization. Sulaiman & Bhatti., (2013) in their study on the relationship between Islamic spirituality and deviance in the workplace found that organizations that have a policy of encouraging stronger belief and consistent Islamic rituals and social responsibility will help to reduce deviance behavior in the workplace and bring about common benefits to both employees and organization.

The Muslim's ultimate goal is to be rewarded by Allah with Paradise (*Jannah*) which can only gained through the pleasure of Allah. The belief in Allah (SWT) and Spirituality (*Taqwa*) is the core of Islamic belief and practices (Mohsen, 2007; Rulindo, Hidayat & Mardhatillah 2011). The spirit and meaning of life of the Muslim is found in Taqwa (Topbas, 2009). The core characteristics of Islamic spirituality and view of career success mainly consist of *Tawhid, Taqwa, Ibadah* and *Ukhuwwah* (Zaman, Sulaiman, & Hashim) and in the business organizational context is justified by four determinants: Rituals (*Ibada*), forgivingness/Repentance (*Al a'fw*), Belief (*Iman*) and Remembrance of Allah (*Dhikrullah*) (Kamil , Al-Kahtani, & Sulaiman, 2011). According to Mohsen (2007) who studied the relationship between Islamic spirituality and leadership effectiveness, Islamic spirituality is a notion that is embedded in Taqwa. Mohsen (2007) suggested that Islamic spirituality comprises two components; faith (*iman*) and rituals (*ibadah*) in one group and Islamic social responsibility in the other group reflecting the two relationships, one with God and the other with human beings. Religiosity from Islamic perspective is established in the concept of Taqwa (Kamil, Sulaiman, Osman-Gani & Ahmad, 2010)

Bhatti (2015) replicated the study of Mohsen on the aspect Islamic spirituality and found that Taqwa consists of two dimensions which are Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility (Bhatti, Alkahtani, Hassan, & Sulaiman, 2015).The origin of Taqwa is derived from Arabic word "*wiqaya*"which means to do what is required and stay away from what is prohibited in Islam (Ibn Kather, 2003). It is the state of maturity to protect and reserve, most importantly to do what Allah (SWT) has permitted and stay away from what He has forbidden to avoid His punishment (Al-Sharawi, 2004).

Beekun and Badawi (1999) defined *Taqwa* as one's duty towards Allah (SWT), the remembrance of Allah (SWT) with heart and tongue(Kamil , Al-Kahtani, & Sulaiman, 2011), which manifest through human behavior that consist of human

soul and body (Ibrahim, 1997). Continuously, Ali (1997) described it as fear of running counter to the will of Allah (SWT) and to do the right conduct. Taqwa is the fundamental of life, means being a true friend of Allah (SWT) and retaining a heart that recognizes and understands the Devine blessing of almighty (Topbas, 2009).As stated in the Quran, life of Taqwa is the most important and frequent characteristics Allah (SWT) directed its Messengers and believers, having *taqwa* at every stage of human life and in every breath we take are what Allah (SWT) wants from us and order us to do. Taqwa can be operationalized in contemporary business research (Kamil, Sulaiman, Osman-Gani, & Ahmad).

Careers are shaped by the cultural factors rooted and set in different national contexts (Ituma & Simpson, 2007). Although the concept of "career success" has been addressed repeatedly in the literature, it has been defined and interpreted in different meaning in western cultures from the rest (Kats, Emmerik, Blenkinsopp, & Khapova, 2010). Unlikely, even within the western cultures there is significant differences in the views of career success (Hennequin, 2007).

Career success in Islamic perspective is relatively different from other perspectives. Muslim employees tend to treasure intrinsic motivation and having balance both in this life as well as hereafter to achieve their desired career success. Muslim's main concern is more towards perusing the path that Allah has designed for human kind. This purpose of achieving success in the hereafter can only be attained through achieving success in this life (Sulaiman, Ahmad, Sbaih, & Kamil, 2014). Therefore, the notion of career success in Islamic view is different from the western life (Sulaiman et al., 2014; Kats et al., 2010)and other cultural context (Ituma & Simpson, 2007).

There have been challenges for organizational researchers to develop a complete career success models containing demographic, other organizational and industry variables (Arthur, 2005). Commonly used models in career outcomes are social capital theory, boundary less career theory and social exchange theory. Social capital is always viewed as very important model since its main motive is for achieving career success for individuals (Defillippi & Arthur, 1994; Coleman, 1990). It is mainly attained from individual's relationship with each other within and outside the organization such as the superior, managers as well as the colleagues (Grimland et al., 2012; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001).

METHODOLOGY
This study uses qualitative research through in-depth interviews to solicit respondents' views, their version of understanding and definition of career success from Islamic perspectives. This study includes focus group discussion through open ended questions (Charmaz, K. 2015). The respondents were managers with senior managerial position of small medium and large enterprises.

Research Participants
Data for the study was obtained through face to face interviews from managerial employees from small, medium and large enterprises in different sectors. Email and phone calls were made to selected candidates directly to make appointments according to their availability. For the purpose of the interview, managers were defined as someone who is in the managerial position having minimum of five subordinates under his/her supervision. Upon confirmation of the face to face interview appointment, interview questions were sent to those who requested them only. Others chose not to read the interview questions for the purpose of delivering

on-the-spot responses without any preparations. The objective of the interview was explained before the starting of the interview, whereby assurances of confidentiality of responses and anonymity of respondents were given.

There were 13 respondents participated to answer 9 interview questions. All respondents were free to express their views on the given questions without any interruption. Age, salary and position are objective measures, which can be replicated for future studies on career success (Sulaiman, Ishak, & Shamuganathan, 2012). The profile of the respondents (gender, age, highest education level, position and years of experience) is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents

No.	Gender	Age	Highest Education Level	Position	Experience (year)
1.	Male	60	Master's Degree	Business owner (CEO)	36
2.	Male	43	Master's Degree	Deputy Director (National Bank)	17
3.	Female	34	Bachelor's Degree PhD	General Manager	13
4.	Female	52	Advocate & Solicitor	Professor/ Dean	28
5.	Female	47	Master's Degree	Asst.Vice President (major bank)	22
6.	Female	44	Master's Degree	Deputy Director, Human Resource Development	18
7.	Male	39	Master's Degree	Business & Marketing Director	15
8.	Male	50	Master's Degree	Program Manager/ Project Manager	25
9.	Male	39	Master's Degree	Sector Manager	16
10.	Male	50	Master's Degree	Sales Manager	21
11.	Male	55	PhD	Asst. Professor, Corporate trainer,	20
12.	Male	35	Master's Degree	Administration Manager	13
13.	Male	42	Master's Degree	Operations Director	25

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the respondents. A list of questions is prepared for the interview. The question style from researcher started with essential questions, pursued by probing question if candidates did not answer the question, followed by throw-away questions based on the situation. The total duration of each interview lasted approximately between 40 – 60 minutes (without any break). Therefore, the total time spent for the thirteen interviews amounted to approximately thirteen hours. The questions were open ended which are derived from literature review and designed applying the principles of qualitative interview (Charmaz, K. 2015). All the interviews were recorded in audio tape, transcribed and integrated.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The stated objectives of the study are to explore the concept of career success as perceived by Muslim managers and to gauge whether in the experience of these managers Islamicity or Islamic spirituality contributes to their success. The issues

may be broken up as follows: a) the Muslim managers' understanding of career success from worldly and Islamic perspective, b) how they would define career success being a Muslim, c) what factors contribute to career success and, d) whether there is a relationship between Islamic spirituality and career success.

Understanding of Career Success

A number of different explanations were provided by the respondents to demonstrate their understanding of career success in general. The respondents held on to their set of definition of career success. They provided a range of definitions, but by and large they agreed that salary, promotions, achievements and position or titles are important indications of success. In elucidating the understanding of career success, respondents have the following to say:

Respondent 1 asserted that career success is a form of wealth accumulation and having enough reward from owning and running the business. This reflected the respondent's background who was a manager before he became entrepreneur. Respondent 2 affirmed that career success is the "ability to progress yourself, having intrinsic values along with having a balanced manner in life". Respondent 6 shared the view that having peaceful and contented life is a reflection of success. Respondent 13, however, went beyond this and defined career success as being successful not only in your job but also satisfying Allah and serving Him in all the matters.

According to Respondent 4 "career success is the achievement that would empower oneself to make changes in the organization and society, achieving and fulfilling personal dreams in life, ability to contribute to the community at home or at the office". Respondent 5 and 7 shared similar values like having self fulfillment and ability to fulfill the needs of others. Respondent 11 stated that career success is achieved when one's career becomes a passion and not regarded as work.

The majority of respondents view career success from both the worldly as well as the hereafter perspectives. The worldly perspective is associated with monetary gain like high salary, wealth accumulation, income, financial freedom, expanding business and position. A few believes that career success should span the practice of giving back to the society, getting people's respect and following in the footstep of Prophet Mohammed to gain the pleasure of Allah and be rewarded in the hereafter.

Factors contributing to career success

Ballout (2009) has identified many factors that contribute to career success. Among them are: competency, hard work, resourcefulness, work attitude, educational level, intelligence, self-confidence, discipline and other factors. The sample came up with some of those factors too.

Respondent 1 stated that, work attitude in the workplace has huge impact on one's career success. Apart from that, one has to be helpful, having a good relationship with others, and having high degree of education is essential. Respondent 2 highlighted that, one's intelligence and setting priority in life are the main factors contributing to success. But respondent 5 said above all, religion, belief system and having strong faith are the fundamentals of success.

Respondent 3 believes that self-confidence and the push factor within oneself are the biggest factors contributing to career success. Respondent 13 stated that having in-depth knowledge about Islam has contributed to his career success by providing full set of guidance and framework in his career. Constant Dua (supplication), faith in religion have huge impact on career success of three individuals (respondents 4, 5, 6).

The respondents expressed the views that many factors contribute to career success supporting Ballout (2009). Some of these factors are extrinsic (educational level, hard work, discipline, relationship with others, etc.) and equally important are intrinsic factors: religion, belief, prayers, supplication, giving to charity and others.

Understanding of Career Success from Islamic Perspective

The literature has indicated that Islamic spirituality has significant relationship with leadership effectiveness (Mohsen 2007) and organizational citizenship behavior Kamil (2013) and Zaman, et al (2013). This study attempts to extend those studies into the area of career success. The respondents have these to say.

Respondent 1 asserted that a Muslim can never be successful if his actions in running the business do not comply with Islamic principles. He has to get rid of negative elements such as avoiding what is haram (forbidden) and comply or abide by what is halal (permissible). Bribery, corruption, gambling, short on measurements, injustice and unfairness are haram. To pay zakat and contribute to charity such to orphanages, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) are encouraged. Respondent 5 shares similar view saying that a successful person should give back to the Ummah (society), contributing to others. He set Abdurahman Bin Auf and Abubakar As-Siddiq (two of the Prophet's closest companions) as role models of success. Further, respondents 3, 4 and 9 also expressed that having faith in Allah, contributing to the society and development of next generation would demonstrate success.

Respondents 2 and 6 stated that having self-satisfaction, sense of Shukr (gratitude) and Wasatiyyah (balance) are sign of success. Respondent 7 and 10 asserted that having good intention towards every act in life and that good intention is only derived from believing and practicing religion.

Respondent 8 stated that, one has to realize that ultimate success is not about money, "it is actually about the life in the hereafter that defines our real success as a Muslim". One can work hard and achieve his success in this life, but the real success is to work towards hereafter to be rewarded with Jannah (Paradise) which is the ultimate success. Respondent 11 views career success as, every single act in this life must be connected with the Quran and portraying oneself as a good Muslim by becoming an example to others. In the same vein respondent 13 stated that, career success is not only about operating a good business, it is about overall success in one's life. Real success is to be rewarded with Jannah (Paradise) in the hereafter. Being *Saleh* (pious), *Shahid* (witness), *Sadiq* (truthfulness)and *Waratha al – anbiya* (heirs of the Prophet) are the directions as mentioned in the *Quran*.

The Muslim managers agree that career success for the Muslim does not end with success in this world (salary, wealth, position), but it must extend to the next. That (success of attaining Paradise) would determine the real success for the Muslim.

Role of Religion in Career Success

The role of religion or spirituality in leadership effectiveness and organizational commitment has been established by the studies of Mohsen (2007 and Kamil (2013). The attempt to relate spirituality to career success was started by Zaman et al (2013), but was not carried through to empirical work. This present study is reigniting what was started by Zaman et al (2013). The respondents in this sample affirmed that religion played a very important part in their career success.

Respondent 1 said that religion provided him with a moral compass. "Good deeds will be rewarded and bad deeds punished. That's the rule of Islam. As a Muslim I firmly believe in this. Simply Islam demands that a Muslim obeys Allah's

commands and refrain from what is forbidden. That is the most important aspect of Taqwa."

Respondent 2 stated that Islam "commands you to be truthful, to tell no lies, to keep promises and breach no trust". These are very strong and noble values demonstrated by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and he is the most successful person.

Respondents 3 and 5 stated that "Rizk (Sustenance) is from Allah's will; if He gives plenty, you are expected to give back to the society. This would increase your Iman (faith)".

Respondent 4 mentioned, seeking pleasure of Allah and asking assistance (dua or supplication) in every act during good and hard times will bring about success.

Respondent 8 says, "Spirituality or trying to be close to God has shaped me to be a better person, in managing people, my work and time more efficiently and taught me how to behave and live my life in the society. I believe whatever I achieve is related to this."

Respondent 7 warned against being greedy in all aspects of life. "If one is greedy one tends to be over-ambitious and forget religious teachings. This could lead him to be corrupt or be unjust in dealings with people around him." Respondent 9 stated that, religion especially the Al-Quran has "prevented him from doing nasty things, like becoming greedy, play politics, back stabbing, do and talk evil, seeing everything in negative light". Respondent 10, 11 12 mentioned that "religion taught us Ilmu (knowledge), preservation of Adab (good manners), and belief that everything happens in accordance with Allah's will (Qadaq and Qadar). No one and nothing should be blamed". "A Muslim manager should portray himself as a good Muslim first and set example to the rest."

From the above responses it is clear that Muslim managers view the role of religion to be of utmost importance in their career success.

How does Islamic spirituality Contribute to Career Success

All the respondents have mentioned that, religion (Islam) has contributed to their career success in different ways. In order to delve deeper into this phenomenon the question was: "How does Islamic spirituality contribute to career success?" The literature and the respondents have mentioned that Islamic spirituality is founded on *Taqwa* which comprises *Iman* (Faith), *Ibadah* (Rituals) and Social Responsibility.

Respondent 1 mentioned that having faith (*iman*) in God helps him to overcome many challenges. His absolute trust in God had helped him through the worst of times. "Prayers and doa (supplication) will be answered if done in the correct way. Ibadah such as *solat fardu* (compulsory prayers) and *solat sunat* (voluntary prayers) inculcate discipline in the Muslim. Prayers have to be done at the right time and following strict rules. These require discipline. Zakat (tithes) have to be paid to the *asnaf* (the people who deserve to receive zakat). Fasting during Ramadhan would make one to be sympathetic with the less privileged. Performance of the *Hajj* and *umrah* made me feel closer to God. Islam teaches one to do good deeds and abstain from the forbidden. These are components of Taqwa. God promised that good deeds will be rewarded abundantly not only in the hereafter but also in this world."

Respondent 2 stated that *Dua* (supplication) is the most potent weapon in life. Total submission to Allah will help people deal with dead-end-lock situation."The notion of *Tawakkul* (trust in god's plan) is important too. "Religion is very important, and act of giving is part of attributes of a strong leader. When you sacrifice and give a lot, that will develop your intrinsic values. For example, Abubakar As-Siddiq (the Prophet's companion) had given everything for the struggle of Islam. When Prophet

Muhammed (pbuh) asked, "What is left for you?" His answer was "Allah". The message here is that if one has a vision, struggle hard and sincerely to achieve success, eventually one will succeed.

Respondent 3 stated, "It is a clean heart and clear intention that bring about self-confidence and the drive to work hard for success. Belief and faith in Allah and practice of Islamic tenets, give Sadaka (charity) and have emotional control will help one to achieve success."

Respondent 10 added that truthfulness, fulfilling one's promise bring success, patience and perseverance which are part of Islamic social responsibility principles in the relationship with people would contribute to career success.

Respondent 5 stated that having noble values taught by Islam such as integrity, justice, fairness and "do not harm others or take things from others illegally." This will help in career success. "Islam means peace and when you have that you have balanced the various roles you have in this life. Redha (acceptance of God's will) and strong faith, doing Ibadah (worship), obedient to Allah and help others will take you to success".

Respondent 7 stated, "*Kana'a* (feeling grateful), peace within yourself is the biggest contribution to success. Other than that, one has to make sure to have good relationship with Allah. This ensures he will have good relationship with everyone."

Respondent 8 stated that by following in the footsteps of Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) will bring people to ultimate success. "By practicing good behavior and personality, avoid doing and talking evil, bribery, nasty talk, playing politics is the biggest contribution to success."

Respondent 9, 11 and 13 stated that Jihad (struggle for the good) such as controlling one's desire from worldly pleasure but focusing on Islamic practices will bring you success. "Apart from that, deep satisfaction and contentment in heart, striving for knowledge and right goals are very important. *Keebr* (arrogance) should be eliminated from one's life in order to reach success."

All the respondents agreed that in their experience Islamic spirituality and its components have contributed tremendously in their career success.

Relationship between spirituality and career success

All respondents have pointed out that there is a profound and intense relationship between spirituality and career success. They generally believe that spirituality and success are highly related. Most were of the view that faith (*iman*), Islamic rituals of prayers, fasting, zakat, making *Dua* (supplication), reciting Quran, performing the *Hajj* and *umrah*, and Islamic social responsibility will strongly contribute to career success. Of course they have to work hard consistently. One saying states, "work as if you are going to live forever and pray as if you are going to die tomorrow".

Spirituality makes one work according to his belief, and Islamic faith only teaches one to do good deeds and abstain from forbidden ones such as bribery, stealing, cheating, back-stabbing, politicking and others. Spirituality will translate into doing the job well and will assist to manage one's work properly. Being spiritual makes one a successful Muslim, teaches one to deal with people and manage them, neglect worldly pleasure, finding purpose in life and brings satisfaction and contentment in heart. Praying for company and colleagues' success, plan according to Allah and striving for getting Iman. Spirituality makes one to take risk in life, Allah is the only one who can help people in anything, asking from Allah before anyone else. Therefore, if people have Allah, they have everything. Spirituality gives power and makes one stronger, helps to alleviate work stress and make one feel gratified when

he achieves success with the help of the Almighty. It strengthens one's Iman and reliance on God. Spirituality makes your heart and mind stronger which leads you to produce better results and be rewarded with career success.

CONCLUSION

To the best of our knowledge, research into concept of career success from Islamic perspective was first explored by Zaman, Sulaiman, & Hashim (2013). The results of the present study supports the conclusions of Zaman et al (2013) that Muslim managers view career success not just from the worldly perspective. For them career success must include success in the hereafter. Thus, the results supported Gattiker & Larwood (1988) construct of career success in that it only exists in people's minds and has no clear boundaries. Career success is defined differently in different contexts.

Career success for Muslim managers is to be successful both in this world as well as in the hereafter. Success in this world is reflected by high salary, wealth, position, honors, titles and other discernible criteria. Success in the hereafter cannot be gauged directly; it is to be obtained only after death or after Judgement Day. In this world the manifestation of the hereafter may be reflected by the feeling of peace of mind, or personal satisfaction and sense of pride. It is more intrinsic.

The sample have expressed that Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) has set the illustrious example for human kind to be successful in both in this world and the hereafter. True success in the hereafter is more important because it is everlasting. Upholding universal values and persistently seeking the truth, the Prophet provided guidelines for morals and ethics that can be applied everywhere, anytime and in any conditions (Dogan, 2015). Setting Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) as the reference point, Muslim managers have to follow his footsteps and demonstrate the strong universal values and at the same time espouse the spirit of Taqwa (Islamic piety). The combination of universal values and Taqwa will lead to the true definition of career success.

This study affirms that religion plays an important role in achieving career success for Muslim managers. Religion shapes individual's character to be more ethical, people-oriented, fair and just in their relationship with other people, work hard and use time more efficiently. In Islam one should achieve the act of complete submission to Allah (SWT), to seek the acceptance of Allah through Piety (Taqwa) such as, to have strong Iman (faith), regular prayers (solat), fasting in Ramadhan, pay the zakat, perform the Haj (pilgrimage) which are compulsory for every Muslim. These form the basis of relationship with God (hablumminallah). The other important aspect in the life of the Muslim is his relationship with other human beings (hablumminannas). This includes patience, emotional control, forgivingness, sadakah, integrity, fulfillment of promise, charity, guarding of chastity, sincerity and love of family. All the above attributes of Taqwa as proposed by Mohsen (2007) and Kamil et al (2011) shape a complete framework for Muslim managers to do the permissible and avoid the prohibited. They form the spirituality dimensions of the Muslim manager which can be used to explain career success.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There are a number of limitations inhibited by the study. Firstly, this is a qualitative study in which data collection is done by interviews. There are no proper measurements and as such no tests are possible. Secondly, the sample size is only 13 selected managers. They were predetermined; their views may be biased. Thirdly,

among the interviewed managers, four of them were still in their mid-thirties, which mean they have not reached the peak of their career success. The result might be different if all the managers have all reached the highest point in their career success. Finally, the data was collected mainly from Kuala Lumpur. Therefore, the applicability of study might be limited only to Muslim managers in Kuala Lumpur.

From this qualitative study a research model may be formulated relating Islamic spirituality to career success. Measurements of Islamic spirituality and career success from Islamic perspective have to be sought for formulating statements of hypotheses. Following that an empirical statistical data collection and analysis may be done to test the hypotheses for more definitive conclusions.

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