The linkage of competence, professionalism and islamic work ethic: A literature review

Nurfahmiyati[1], Zainuddin Maliki[2], Sri Iswati[3], Rofi Rofaida[4], Harlina Meidiaswati[5]

Student of Doctoral Program (S3) of the Faculty of Economics and Business Universitas Airlangga at Surabaya, Indonesia[1]
Lecturer of the Faculty of Economics and Business Universitas Islam Bandung at Bandung, Indonesia[1]
Management Department, Universitas Airlangga at Surabaya, Indonesia[2]
Management Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah at Surabaya, Indonesia[3]
Faculty of Economics and Business Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia[4]
Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Kartini at Surabaya, Indonesia[5]

Abstract

This paper aims to encourage the relationship between competence, professionalism, and the concept of Islamic work ethics as a proxy. Through a literature review, the results of this study show that in general, the study of competence, professionalism, and the concept of Islamic work ethics can be divided into three major groups, namely conceptual or theoretical studies, empirical studies of the effect of Islamic work ethics on performance, and efforts to increase the role of Islamic work ethics. Based on the selected literature and supported by major references, it can be concluded that there is an agreement between the concept of competence and conventional professionalism with Islamic work ethic. However, this study also does not deny that the implementation of Islamic work ethics still faces several obstacles and needs to continue to find solutions.

Keywords: Islamic work ethics; competence; professionalism

Introduction

Humans tend to prioritize financial gain and ignore ethics and values in business practices; if this is continued, there will be disharmony in life (Ismaeel & Blaim, 2012; Luetge, 2015; Parboteeah & Cullen, 2013). Business actors will become subjects that bring down one another. In the business world, it is often found the phenomenon of many actions that deviate from work rules and ethics, such as fraud in financial institutions, falsification of data, and other non-ethical actions. Associated with organizational work culture, all of these phenomena are related to work ethics. In an organization based on sharia principles referred to as Islamic work ethics, the theoretical construction of Islamic work ethics dimensions derived from the Qur'an and Sunna (Aldulaimi, 2016; Rizk, 2008).

One important dimension in work ethics is professionalism. Professionalism is the commitment of professionals to their responsibilities, as shown by their pride and continuous effort to develop their professional competence. Professionalism is an absolute demand for individuals in carrying out every profession. The theory of professionalism has long been studied and experienced many developments adapted to various work fields. Referring to Islamic work ethics, the terminology of professionalism can be equated with prophetic characteristics, namely Sidiq, Amanah, Fathonah, and Tabligh. The nature of Amanah's contains several characteristics, namely: trustworthiness, high dedication to the profession, credible and responsible (Ahmad, 2011; Nawawi, 2012; Rokhman, 2010). The nature of Amanah is the main character of a sharia economic actor and all humanity. The nature of trustworthiness occupies a critical position in the business. One of the characteristics of trustworthiness is always developing competencies following the types of tasks or responsibilities mandated (Brown & Ferrill, 2009; Ozar, 2012).

Competence in the personal context relates to fathanah (intelligence), related to knowing and understanding the scope of work, being aware of the importance of position and function, clearly knowing

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1E-mail: fyatie03@yahoo.com

the targets and responsibilities, and personal and overall targets. A person with a high level of competence will tend to behave more professionally. Such a person will be better able to act in line with Islamic work ethics. The nature of fathanah in the professional application is all activities in management through the use of intelligence. Optimization of all the potential that existing minds have to achieve goals. If a Muslim only has the character of honesty, truth, and responsibility, then these three things are still not sufficient in managing managerial professionally. Practitioners must also have a smart, astute, and prudent nature to increase their competence and professionalism (Mansyur, 2013; Prasetyo & Pratiwi, 2016; Rafsanjan, 2017).

The comprehensive study of competence and professionalism with Islamic work ethics as a proxy is still fragmented to the best of our knowledge. Also, no recent study comprehensively measures how this study has developed in the Islamic academic world. In fact, this is very important for the development of academic studies and practical implementation in the future. Therefore, this paper begins by examining the top 30 documents on Google Scholar that are related to Islamic work ethics, competence, and professionalism. This study aims to look at trends and developments in Islamic work ethics research, starting from its theoretical roots, implementation to evaluation. Furthermore, this study also classify the relationship between Islamic work ethics, competence, and professionalism based on the sample literature.

This study contributes to the mapping of research development on Islamic work ethics so that further research can be more measurable and he/she can also consider topics or sub-topics that need to be deepened theoretically and empirically by academics and practitioners.

Research Method

Knowledge production in the research field of Islamic work ethics is accelerating while at the same time, remaining fragmented and interdisciplinary. This makes it difficult to keep up with the latest developments and be at the forefront of research and assess collective evidence in specific areas of business research. This is why literature review as a research method is relevant for this study. Traditional literature reviews are often less thorough and rigorous and are conducted on an ad hoc basis, rather than following a specific methodology. The literature review method in this study refers to Snyder (2019). To support the interpretation of research results, descriptive writing techniques are were used. This technique is also proper and support the explanation and discussion based on the research approach.

This study begins by discussing Professionalism and Competence and Islamic work ethics based on in-depth studies of major literature which are often used as the main basis for scholars. This study also took the top 30 manuscripts from google scholar with Islamic work ethics keywords, competence, and professionalism. After the curation stage, there were 14 manuscripts, which we finally did an in-depth analysis. The 14 manuscripts' selection was based on the suitability of focus and scope and the publisher's credibility.

Result and Discussion

We find at least three major themes discussed in literatures. First, scholars talk about theoretical foundations, basic concepts, and some noble propositions about Islamic work ethics that can be implemented in professional world. Second, theme is empirical on the relationship between Islamic work ethics and performance in general. This second theme can be divided into two segments, namely: a) the results of studies that show that Islamic work ethics has the potential or is even proven to be able to improve performance in general; and b) findings that show that Islamic work ethics is still not optimal due to various things ranging from implementation constraints, lack of knowledge, causing sharia-based institutions to lose competitiveness with conventional institutions. Facing many weaknesses and challenges, there is a third theme as a solution to overcome obstacles and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Islamic work ethics implementation. Mapping results are represented in the form of a presentation, as shown in Table 1.

Based on reviews of literatures, it is seen that Islamic work ethics positively influences competence and professionalism—still, obstacles such as individuals and organizations to be less able to optimize Islamic work ethics. Eraut's (2002) findings indicate that due to the lack of knowledge. Also, there is still a view that Islamic work ethics is against the conventional concept of professionalism (Alqahtani & Altamimi, 2016; Haj Ali & Abu-Saad, 2020). This is exacerbated by still being existed perceptions that show conventional employees better than sharia (Kamarudin & Kassim, 2020). Therefore, it is important for academics and practitioners in the world of sharia economics to really implement Islamic work ethics to change people's perceptions and increase public confidence in the sharia system. Some findings, for example, N. A. M. Ali et al. (2015); Haj Ali & Abu-Saad (2020); and Suryanto & Ridwansyah (2016) initiated these steps, but comprehensive research is needed.

Table 1. Research themes cluster

No	Clasification	Ammount	Percentage (%)
1	Theoretical or conceptual basis	3	21.42
2	a. Positive influence	5	35.71
	b. Negative (restriction) influence		
	- Dilemma (1)	3	21.42
	- Lack of knowledge (1)		
	- Lose competitiveness (1)		
3	Improvement Efforts	3	21.42
	Total	14	100

Professionalism and Competence

There are various definitions of professionalism. In the English dictionary, this word originates from a profession which means "A vocation or occupation requiring advanced training in some liberal art or science and involvement rather than manual work, as teaching engineering, writing, etc."(Merriam-Webster, 2008). Hensey (2000) states that professionalism is a matter of attitude and not related to a set of competencies. Professionalism is a concept that aspires that certain work activities in society should be carried out with high expertise and based on a sense of calling - as well as a pledge to accept the call with the spirit of dedication always to be ready to give help to others who are in the midst of difficulties darkness of life. Simultaneously, professionalism is behavior, expertise, or quality, and someone professional (Auditors, 2014; Danasasmita, 2015; Rofika et al., 2015).

In the general sense, a person is said to be a professional if he meets three criteria, namely having the expertise to carry out duties in his field, carrying out a task or profession by setting basic standards in the relevant professional field, and carrying out his professional duties by adhering to established professional ethics (United Nation, 2011). At the same time, professionalism is an important individual attribute without seeing a job as a profession or not (Lekatompessy, 2003). According to (Kurniawan, 2006) professionalism is "A person's abilities and skills in doing work according to their respective fields and levels." Based on these opinions, a professional does work based on expertise, abilities, and special skills in the field of work. Professionalism is related to the competencies possessed to carry out certain jobs.

Measurement of work professionalism, according to (Suratno et al., 2016) can be done on five dimensions of professionalism. The five dimensions include dedication, social obligation, independence, confidence in professional regulations, and relationships with fellow professions. Professionalism is the use of knowledge and skills possessed (dedication) to provide benefits to the community (social obligations) through various actions and or self-decision making without pressure from other parties (independence). This role is carried out by referring to professional regulations and cooperating with fellow professions.

The competencies of a person determine the level of professionalism. Competency refers to the basic characteristics of individuals associated with effective and/or superior performance standards. These characteristics can be in the form of knowledge and skills needed to make them able to perform tasks and responsibilities effectively to improve the quality of the effort that has been done (Campion et al., 2011; Hoffmann, 1999; Iannuzzi, 2000). Competency is relatively stable because it is formed from synergies of character, self-concept, internal motivation, and capacity of contextual knowledge. There are main characteristics of competencies that will affect an individual's performance or effort: motives, traits, self-concept, knowledge, and skills (Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

Motives are everything that individuals consistently think about so that they encourage individuals to do things. Such consistency can be in thoughts, emotions, desires, and behaviors that can trigger action. Traits (personal characteristics) are physical and non-physical characteristics of an individual dealing with certain situations or events. Personal characteristics are innate to individuals from birth, so they cannot be changed. Self Concept is an individual's view, the individual's values, and the individual's self-image. Self-concept is different for each individual, influenced by experience, knowledge, and information obtained by the individual. Motives, personal characteristics, and self-concepts supported by knowledge and skills will shape an individual's competencies.
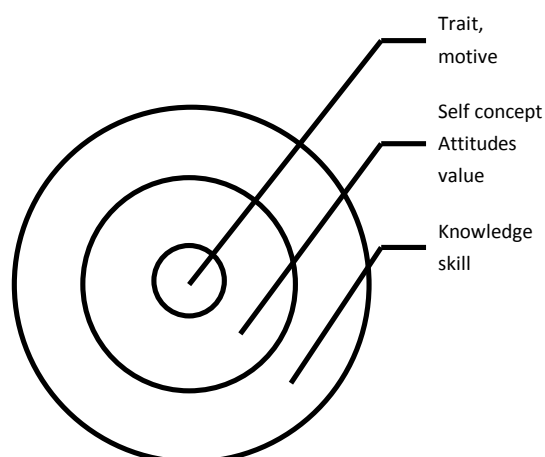
Trait, motive

Self concept
Attitudes value

Knowledge skill

Figure 1. Model of Competency

The Fig 1 explains that motive and trait are types of characteristics called "Hidden Competency." This can be seen from the existence of motive and trait in the inner circle which means that these two characteristics are challenging to assess and develop. The existence of knowledge and skills is more visible, namely in the outer circle, so that it is included in the type of "Visible Competency." This shows that knowledge and skills tend to be easier to develop through training and development. Self-concept is in the middle of the circle so that it is included in the characteristics between hidden competency and visible competency. This shows that self-concept is very influenced by motive, trait, knowledge, and skill. Attitudes, values, and self-values can be changed through training and psychotherapy or positive development experiences, even if they require a long period of time.

According to Spencer & Spencer (1993) competence consists of achievement and action competency, helping, human service competency, influence competency, managerial competency, cognitive competency, and personal effectiveness competency. Achievement and action competency is the ability to achieve. This competency is formed from the synergy between character, motives, self-concept, knowledge, and skills shown by the form of attitudes or behaviors in doing work. Individuals with high achievement and action competency will have an achievement orientation, quality, thoroughness, initiative, and always seek information to improve competency.

Service competency is the ability to provide the best assistance and services to customers. Lead competency is a person's ability to influence and convince others. Managing competency is the ability to give orders/instructions and manage others' development to enhance collaboration. Thinking competency is expertise and ability in analytical, conceptual, and technical thinking. Self-efficacy competency is an ability in self-control, confidence, and organizational commitment.

Islamic Work Ethics

The principle of Islamic work ethics focuses on the relationship between humans and Allah SWT. This Islamic work ethic contains instructions for organizations by practicing them in order to sustain success and quality on an ongoing basis. Islam has also provided guidelines for creating a healthy and harmonious work ethic, to form good cooperation between superiors and employees and among colleagues at work (Aldulaimi, 2016). The existence of work ethics in an institution cannot always be implemented properly. There is the potential for the occurrence of work ethic deviations. Ethics functions as a theory of good and bad deeds (ethics or ilm al-akhlaq) and moral (akhlaq) is the practice. The concept of Islamic work ethics originating from the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. The Qur'an instructs the believers to maintain involvement and commitment to work, and not just dreaming. The Prophet Muhammad also states that work is the highest form of worshiping Allah SWT. The Prophet Muhammad also taught that work will not be sanctioned if it is not done with one's best ability (Salahudin et al., 2016; Shukri Ahmad & Musa Yusuf Owoyemi, 2012).

The Islamic work ethic provides a set of guidelines on how to work and do business honestly and openly to create trust and there must be equal treatment for employees, meaning that there is no discrimination (Aldulaimi, 2016; Rizk, 2008; Shukri Ahmad & Musa Yusuf Owoyemi, 2012). The concept of work ethics is built on four main concepts, namely effort, competition, transparency and morally

responsible (Rizk, 2008; Shukri Ahmad & Musa Yusuf Owoyemi, 2012). Mohammad et al. (2015) argue Islamic work ethics explaining halal and haram based on Islamic law, calculating intentions and results, having definite and clear rules and principles for men and women who will look for work, recognizing relationships between superiors and employees, not just relationships between leaders and followers. The Islamic work ethic also guarantees the application of Islamic law to the problem of sexual harassment that occurs inside and outside the workplace.

The Qur'an instructs Muslims to be involved and committed to work, better to work than to dream. That allows people to realize their goals. The Qur'an states that a human being can manifest his desires with what they seek (An-Najm (53): 39) and Allah SWT allows trade and forbids usury (Al-Baqarah (2): 275). The Prophet Muhammad states that hard work causes sins to be forgiven and that "there is no better food than one consumes from his work". Islamic work ethics sees work as a means for further economic, social and psychological interests, and for maintaining social prestige, advancing people's welfare and reaffirming faith. There are five characteristics of Islamic ethics: a) Islam sided with the theory of ethics that is of the nature of Fitri, meaning that all human beings are in essence good; b) both Muslims and non-Muslims have good knowledge of good and bad. Morality in Islam is based on justice, which is putting everything in its portion. Ibn Miskawaih and Al Ghazali put it on the middle road; c) this ethical action, be believed, at its peak will produce happiness for the culprit; d) As mentioned, ethical actions are rational. Islam strongly believes in rationality as a tool in getting the truth; e) Islamic ethics is based on religious principles. Ethics with religion is closely related to humans. In Islamic thought, faith determines actions and beliefs governing behavior (Abdullah, 1991).

The Islamic work ethic is closely related to the characteristics of the Prophet. Islamic work ethics can be explained based on the characteristics of the Prophet, namely Siddiq, Amanah, Tabligh, and Fathonah. Siddiq means honesty (Aldulaimi, 2016; A. J. Ali & Al-Kazemi, 2007; A. J. Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008; Hayati & Caniago, 2012; Rokhman, 2010). Amanah means trustworthy, professional, credible and responsible. Trustworthiness is the main character of a sharia economic actor and all humanity. The nature of trustworthiness occupies the most important position in the economy. Without trustworthiness, economic and business activities will definitely fail to doom. Every Islamic economic actor must be a professional and responsible person, so he is trusted by the community. For example, in the current sharia financial institutions, the nature of trust is the key to the success of Islamic economics in the future. If the current sharia economic actors harm the Islamic economic movement with non-trustful practices (such as unprofessional, irresponsible and not credible). Then, the entire community will lose confidence in the institution called "sharia".

Tabligh means communicative and transparent. Sharia economic actors must have reliable communication skills in marketing Islamic economics. In managing the company, management must uphold the principle of transparency. Similarly, in conducting marketing, socialization and education must be continuous. It is better not only to prioritize the fulfillment of sharia principles, but also to be able to educate the public about the benefits for sharia institutional service users. Tabligh also means that the management of funds and their benefits must be carried out transparently within boundaries that do not interfere with the secrecy of the institution. Fathonah means relating to intelligence and intellect. Fathonah requires that economic activities be based on knowledge, skills, honesty, credibility and responsibility. Economic actors must be smart and rich in insight so that businesses run effectively and efficiently and can win the competition and not become victims of fraud. In economic activities, the nature of fathonah ensures that the management of financial institutions must be smart and competitive, so as to produce maximum profits at optimal risk levels.

Conclusions

The concept of Islamic work ethics that refers to the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad ordered the believers to sustain their involvement and commitment to work with their best abilities. The demands of working professionally also cannot be separated from the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad because working well is the highest form of worshiping Allah SWT. By imitating the characteristics of the Prophet: Siddiq, Amanah, Tabligh, and Fathonah, a person will indirectly fulfill the main characteristics of competence, namely: traits, motives, self-concepts, attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills. This paper states that theoretically, there is a harmony between the concept of competence and conventional professionalism related to Islamic work ethics. However, several empirical studies also show that there are still several challenges and obstacles that need to be found for solutions to optimize the application of Islamic work ethics.

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Appendix

1. Selected literature from Top 30 on google scholar database

No	Title	Clasification	Sources (Journal)
1	Islamic work ethics in zakat institution in indonesia: how does it affect customer loyalty?	Positive influence	International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology (IJCIET)
2	Code of Ethics and Professionalism in Light of Cultural Competency: A Guideline for Saudi Psychologists, Supervisors, and Trainees	Negative influence (dilemma)	Psychological Studies
3	Developing Spiritual Competence in Practice	Negative influence (lack of knowledge)	Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work
4	Islamic Values and Principles in the Organization: A Review of Literature	Theoretical or conceptual basis	Asian Social Science (ASS)
5	Four steps to improve religious/spiritual cultural competence in professional psychology.	Improvement	Spirituality in Clinical Practice
6	Back to basics: an Islamic perspective on business and work ethics	Theoretical or conceptual basis	Social Responsibility Journal
7	Qur'anic Work Ethics	Theoretical or conceptual basis	Journal of Usuluddin
8	The Shariah Financial Accounting Standards: How they Prevent Fraud in Islamic Banking	Positive influence	European Research Studies Journal
9	Competency of shariah auditor in malaysia	Improvement	Journal of Islamic Finance (JIF)
10	Reprint of: Working with religious and spiritual athletes: Ethical considerations for sport psychologists	Improvement	
11	The quest for morally competent future Muslim accountants	Positive influence	Psychology of Sport and Exercise
12	Islamic work ethics in an ethnically and culturally diverse context: The case of Arab high school teachers in Israel	Positive influence	Journal of Educational Research and Reviews
13	Measuring and validating Islamic work value constructs: An empirical exploration using Malaysian samples	Theoretical or conceptual basis	Journal of Business Research
14	An analysis of customer satisfaction on employee professionalism: a comparison between Islamic and conventional banks in Malaysia	Negative influence	Journal of Islamic Marketing