

Religiosity and Work Values Orientation of Malaysian Malay Businesspersons

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This paper seeks to study religiosity and work values orientation of Malay businesspersons. Literature shows that religion plays a significant role in shaping values. Success in business is an outcome of values a businessperson placed in achieving desired social status, attitudes towards earnings, upward striving, activity preference, job involvement, and pride in work. This study uses Wollack et al's Work Values Survey to gauge the Malay businesspersons work values orientation. A total of 191 businesspersons responded to the questionnaires. The results showed respondents scored high on religiosity scale but moderate in most dimensions of work values scale. The correlations between religiosity and dimensions of work values were also discussed.

Keywords: Malays, businesspersons, religiosity, work values, attitudes

1. Introduction

Work, as part of human activities, finds man undertaking the activity with each and every individual having their own distinctive deduction of work and the need to work. A significant segment of the society works with the view of increasing their possessions and wealth and to acquire recognition and self-respect. Those with strong religious conviction in addition, work to gain lawful earnings with the sincerity to attain God's pleasure. Nonetheless, every individual undertakes work activity with a common goal of supporting themselves and their livelihood. In a wider context, the way a society values the need to work dominates individuals reasoning and this in turn is very much influenced by its culture – the values it places on the importance of work. These values help to enhance a society's economic activities and wealth. One of the critical elements that have helped to shape a society's values is religion.

2. Literature review

Development of work values – religion as a base

The principles of values have been described as synonymous to ethic (Hitt, 1990). In fact, any references to an individual's ethics would revolve around his or her values. Accordingly, it is the individual's value set that guides his or her life. Therefore, work values or work ethics can be made reference to what Cherrington (1980) referred as a

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positive attitude towards work. People who enjoy their work are considered to have a better work values than those who does not enjoy their work.

Undoubtedly, literatures have indicated that religion plays a pivotal role in the development of work values concept through the shaping of the culture of a society. According to Adler (2002), values are direct derivatives of the cultural background, and as such, they allow for explicit and implicit expression of what is wrong and what is right. An attitude expresses the value that one holds and a behavior is the direct result of the attitudes upheld by an individual or a social group. Under this condition, religion provides the basis values for the formation of culture.

The study on work values stemmed from the classic work of Weber (1958) who presented the concept of Protestant Ethic. According to Weber (1958), it was the Protestant, especially Calvinist and Puritan ethics that inspired the “spirit of capitalism” and facilitated the rise of industrial capitalism. These ethics were grounded on Calvinists’ belief of predestination; the belief that God has chosen and elected those HE wished to give eternal life, while all others are damned. A sign of being the chosen one is the person who has found success in this worldly life, especially in business. The Calvinists insisted that idleness and waste of time lead to certain condemnation, while hard work and frugality provide evidence that one is among the elected. Besides that, Calvinists also propagated that disciples should not be spending their earnings on personal matters, but be reinvested instead. To be the “chosen one,” everyone will eventually choose the occupation that can help a person to source the most possible earnings. These propagations helped to shape new attitudes and behaviors that were considered as favorable to economic development that led to the development of industrial capitalism. Thus, according to Ditz (1980), Weber’s theory identified the core of Protestant Ethic, for instance, “hard works and profit seeking”, “strict avoidance of any worldly pleasure”, and “avoiding idleness or waste of time.” Similar views were echoed by Wollack, Goodale, Wijting, and Smith (1971), Cherrington (1980), and Furnham (1984). Thus, work ethics have been conceptualized as an attitudinal construct related to work-oriented values.

According to Yousef (2001), while the Protestant work ethic as advocated by Max Weber has been considered as a universal value, the applicability of the model should be limited to Western society; specifically those societies professing Christianity. This is simply because the Protestant work ethic relies on Christianity as its source.

For Yousef (2001), countries of Muslim populace need to have a measurement of work ethic based on Islam. This is simply because Islam as *ad-din* has its own culture that has helped to shape Islamic society values on the need and importance of work. Islam views work as a noble activity which is aimed not only to enrich individuals but also to prosper a nation and society. While general understanding of work is referred to physical or mental activities aimed at accomplishing something; the concept of work in Islam is far broader and is termed as *amal* — the calling to undertake activities thus, the Muslims should not remain idle. According to Al-Tahawi, the Quran considers idleness or squandering of time in the pursuit of unproductive and non-beneficial work as the manifestation of lack of faith and of the non-believers (cited in IslamReligion.com,

2006). Islam has call upon man to utilize his “time” in his pursuit of work by declaring that God has made the day as the means of not only to seek livelihood but also God’s “bounty.” Yousef (2001) also provides a similar emphasis that the Quran is against laziness and waste of time. Islam forbids the “*ummah*” or society from remaining idle or engaging in an unproductive activity. However, the work which everyone seeks to perform must be “good” or “beneficial” (al-’amal al-salih). Despite of this no work is considered as trivial in Islam. Appropriate rewards or punishments were clearly spelt out both in this world and in the hereafter. Work, therefore, is regarded not only as a right but as a duty as well as an obligation. While Islam gives right to individual to choose the type of work he desires however this freedom comes with the obligation to consider the needs of the society as well as the selection of the type of work that is permitted by Shariah.

Wealth is the extrinsic rewards of work. Wealth is considered as important because it paves the way for man to achieve his ultimate objective. Islam refers to wealth as “good”, an object of delight and pleasure, and a support for the community (IslamReligion.com, 2006). The earning of wealth however must be qualified as a means for the achievement of man’s ultimate objective and not an end in itself. It must be earned through good, productive and beneficial work. The type of work must also be in accordance to Shariah not only in terms of the legality of the wealth-earning methods, but also in avoiding the forbidden economic activities. The Shariah Law in addition underlines the proper and improper practices within each profession. Unlawfully acquisition or accumulation of wealth for its own sake is condemned and considered as negative qualities of a Muslim, that is, greed.

Islam also encourages the wealth owner to consider the needs of the society. Therefore, lawfully earned wealth should be invested within the community (example, payment of tithe and giving alms) to improve its economic well-being. Wealth investment is not only measured by the monetary gain associated with it. It is also measured by the benefit that it brings to the society. Islam also regards the wealth owners as trustees. They must hold their wealth as trust on behalf of God and the community. Hence, the inability of Muslim individuals to use their wealth properly and wisely will provide a basis for the forfeiture of his right to his wealth. Extravagance way of life, money wasting, and general abuses of wealth are therefore considered sinful act.

The significant role of Islam in providing the bases of work values has led Ali (1988) and Yousef (2001) to propose the development of an Islamic Work Ethic scale based on the Qur’an and Sunnah. According to Ali (1992), akin to the Weberian Protestantism, Islam also provides the ideological foundation for a variety of personal attributes that promote economic development. In fact, Ali (2005) noted that the application of Islamic ethics have brought Muslims to its golden ages between the eighth and fourteenth century. Yousef (2001) also recognizes that both Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) and Protestant Work Ethic (PWE) rest upon a strong emphasize on hard work, commitment, dedication to work, work creativity, avoidance of unethical method of wealth accumulation, cooperation and competitiveness. The major difference however lies in terms of their focus, IWE for example, does not only focus on work as an obligatory activity and a

virtue but also emphasizes that success and progress on the job depends on hard work and commitment to one's job (Ali, 1988). IWE in a way also exceeds PWE since it also emphasizes on the value of cooperation in work, while consultation is seen as a way of overcoming obstacles and avoiding mistakes (Ali, 1988; Yousef, 2001).

Historical development has shown that the current conceptualization of work-oriented values originated from religions. Religion, as an important element of a culture has helped to shape individuals' value system, which in turn influenced their behaviors. Accordingly, Schein (1985) defined culture as a pattern of basic assumptions or values – invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. Religion provides for these basic assumptions or values either directly or indirectly. Directly, religion provides the framework a society requires through the rules and taboos it inspires (Harrell, 1986). Indirectly, religion contributes through classification of all phenomena, development of code of conduct, and establishment of priorities among these codes (Sood and Nasu 1995). When basic assumptions or values have worked well enough for the society, it will be considered as valid and it will then be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel. Once these assumptions have worked repeatedly and reliably, they are likely to be taken for granted and might be dropped out of awareness (Schein, 1985).

On the other hand, Hofstede (1980) claims that culture consist of two elements, norms and values. While norms are the visible manifestation that helps group members and outsiders to understand the group, values are the belief system upholds by the group and guides them as the correct way to perceive, think, feel and react to problems faced within the environments. Within this context, religion provides both; values and norms. All religion provides values that define right or wrong (Md Zabid & Ho, 2003), which in turn dictates how individuals perceive the form of behavior considered appropriate and effective in any given situation.

Even as Weber (1958) discussed the development of capitalism he took cognizance of the role played by religion in shaping western culture that helped inspired the “spirit of capitalism”. Weber (1958) finds the Protestant work ethic to a greater extend has helped to shape the western society value system which in turn influenced individual members' behaviors. Among the Protestant ethics identified by Weber that became the foundation of work ethics are;

- a. hard work and the shunning of leisure;
- b. avoidance of ostentation and unnecessary expenditure;
- c. delay of gratification i.e., the values of not to consume but to earn (This prudent approach to the making and spending of money leads to a sense of being independence and self-reliance. Individuals therefore will not rely on others to invest in their business. They instead use the money that they earned);

- d. constructive use of time (Waste of time is considered as a sin and loss of time can happen through sociability and idle talk. Even sleeping more than it is necessary for health is considered as immoral).

In proposing for the development of an Islamic work ethic scale, Ali (1988) and Yousef (2001) deemed Islam as a religion that provides work values which promote economic development. The Islam work values are based on the foundation of basic values of *Tawheed* or Unity of God and *Shariah* or the Islamic law, which provides a framework that shapes *Akhlaq* (the moral and ethical behavior of Muslims) — the conduct in all aspects of Muslims' life (Abd Halim, 1990).

Once these religious values are embedded deep within a society and upheld as societal values, individual members would strive for success and wealth. This is simply because these religious values (hard working, committed, dedicated to work, competitive and avoidance of unethical methods of wealth accumulation) will dictate society members to portray the expected behavior. Therefore, within the context of a society, these religious-based values help assist the society in determining the kind of values it wishes to place on the importance of work. According to Argyris (1976), once the religious tenets are deeply grounded and embedded into society culture; work values that developed from it would be strongly upheld and the values could not be confronted and debated. In fact, if culture is strongly held in a group, its members would find behaviors based on any other premise as inconceivable. Thus, individuals' behaviors are a reflection of the culture of their society and their religious beliefs.

Because religion is an effective shaping force for a set of cultural beliefs and practices, Weber (1958) hypothesized that it was the Protestant's ideas and beliefs or the "Protestant Work Ethic" of being hardworking, productive, self-disciplined, economical, and prudent that helped in the development of a capitalist society in Europe. Mayer and Sharp (1962) who supported Weber's hypothesis also found that Protestant values encourage hard work and diligence thus increasing the probability of its members to gain success. They also find successful individuals converted to Protestant sects after they have achieved success.

Weber (1958) also viewed the Protestant work ethics as universal values. Accordingly, it cannot be aligned with any one set of religious beliefs since all religion promotes similar positive work values. Ray (1982) also made similar conclusion that Protestant work ethics nowadays are shared universally regardless of religious orientations since all major religions are also stressing on the importance of work (Pascarella, 1984). Therefore, while the concept of work ethic originated from a religious context, it has become secularized, and universally shared rather than be used exclusively among the Protestants. In fact, Pascarella (1984) stated that what was conceived as a religious construct has now become secular and is best viewed as general work ethics instead of the Protestants'. This lead Ray (1982) to conclude that the Protestant work ethic is no longer exclusively confines to the Protestants. As such, members of any society who venture into businesses would work hard and lived frugally due to the cultural emphasis on the importance of

work for work's sake. In short, people would strive for success and wealth not because of religious values but societal values – the expected behaviors which are not aligned with any one set of religious beliefs (Weber, 1958). This argument strengthened the belief that work ethic is not a stand-in for religious orientation. In fact, Weber (1958) acknowledged that people who uphold the spirit of capitalism tends to be indifferent, if not hostile, to the Church simply because the thought of paradise has little attraction for their active natures. As such, Blau and Ryan (1997) pointed out that findings in a number of behavioral studies show that religious and moral belief factors have been clearly deemphasized.

However, there is evidence that contradicts to the notion that PWE is a universal work value. Findings have shown that PWE concept is still strongly exhibited by the Protestants especially for those who live in regions with considerable Protestant heritage. A study by Niles (1999) on the meaning of work in two different cultures which are Australian (Western/Protestant) and Sri Lankan (non-Western/non-Protestant) found that both groups have similar perceptions about work. However, the Australians agree more enthusiastically with the belief that hard work leads to success as compared to the Sri Lankan. Similarly, Arslan (2001) who assessed the belief in PWE values among Protestant British, Catholic Irish and Muslim Turkish managers also indicated that the level of PWE is the strongest among Protestants and the weakest among Muslims.

Reviews on the relationship between religiosity and work values have been mixed. In a study, Argyle (2000) found that there were no differences between Protestants and Catholics on work, work ethic, and achievement. MacDonald (1972) in his study nonetheless found positive correlations between PWE scores and church attendance, locus of control, authoritarianism and attitudes to the poor. Studies undertaken by Beit-Hallahmi (1979) and Ray (1982) also discovered that PWE scores significantly related to religious self-identification, with Protestants and Catholics scored higher than Jews and Agnostics. In a study among respondents from ten European countries, Giorgi and Marsh (1990) found that significant differences exist in which Protestants or Protestant countries scores higher on PWE than Catholics or Catholic countries.

Research on the relationship between work ethic and demographic factors also illustrate mixed findings. Findings of Furnham and Rajamanikam (1992), and Wentworth and Chell (1997) indicated that work ethic is declining with age whereas Aldag and Brief (1975) proved otherwise. On the other hand, a study by Furnham (1987) and MacDonald, (1972) found that work ethic is unrelated to age. In the context of the relationship between work ethic and education, Furnham (1987) and Tang and Tzeng (1992) reported a negative correlation while MacDonald (1972) and Ray (1982) found no correlation at all. Furnham (1987) however found that PWE is related to low education levels. Similarly, studies on the relationship between work ethic and gender also show mixed findings. Furnham and Rajamanikam's (1992) research indicated that women have stronger work ethic beliefs than men while Wentworth and Chell (1997) found the opposite. Mirels and Garrett (1971) however reported that the relationship was not significant.

Since work values or ethics are referred to as the positive attitude towards work (Cherrington, 1980) and because religion is an effective shaping force for a set of cultural values and norms thus playing a pivotal role in the development of work values concept through the shaping of society culture, this study hypothesized a significant relationship between religiosity and work values. This study was conducted among Malay businesspersons in Malaysia. The aimed was to look into the religiosity and work values of Malay businesspersons. This objective is achieved through the following questions:

1. Do Malay businesspersons have high orientation in religiosity?
2. Do Malay businesspersons have high orientation in work values?

The following hypothesis was also tested;

There is a correlation between religiosity and work values orientation among Malay businesspersons.

It is hoped that by understanding this relationship i.e., between religiosity and work values the Malaysian government could be assisted in developing methods on intervention and strategies in enhancing positive work values among Malay businesspersons.

3. Methodology

This study was conducted among business people in Malaysia specifically Malay businesspersons and was built on the theoretical and research foundations of religiosity and work values. Religiosity is the first construct and work value is the second construct of this study. This study was also designed to demonstrate a relationship between the construct of religiosity and work values. Two sets of self-administered questionnaires were used; one that measured religiosity while the other measured work values.

Religiosity and measures

Mookherjee (1993) defined religiosity in terms of public or participatory (based on church membership and the frequency of church attendance) and private or devotional religious behavior (based on the frequency of prayer, bible reading, and a cumulative score of devotional intensity). People therefore differ in their religiousness. While this definition helps to identify one's level of religiosity, within the context of Islamic faith however, it will depend on how closely a Muslim remains true to the natural religious disposition that Allah, in His mercy, has instilled in all human beings (Salih Ibrahim al-Sani, 2010). Therefore from an Islamic standpoint, a religious person is someone who is behaving in accordance with human nature and an irreligious person is behaving contrary to that nature (Salih Ibrahim al-Sani, 2010). In summary, Salih Ibrahim al-Sani (2010) defined "religiosity" as the degree to which an individual adheres to the beliefs and practical teachings of the faith. Accordingly, for a Muslim, these beliefs would include belief in Allah, His angels, His scriptures, His messengers, the Day of Judgment, and the

Divine Decree. The practical teachings would encompass various religious duties and prohibitions set forth by Islam.

For a long time, psychologists and sociologists of religion have been concerned with the measurement of religiosity and religious commitment because they are a difficult construct to measure (Scutte and Hosch, 1996). In fact, according to Roof (1979), for the last twenty years both psychologists and sociologists of religion have spent a considerable amount of time and energy to conceptualize and developed the measures of religious commitment. Nonetheless, the issue of dimensionality has remained as a persistent dilemma in the psychological analysis of religious beliefs, attitudes and behaviors (Wearing and Brown, 1972).

Clayton and Gladden (1974) argued that ‘religiosity’ is primarily a commitment to an ideology. Studies on religious commitment have indicated that religiosity is not a one-dimensional experience in individuals’ lives (Roof, 1979). This means religious orientation has various dimensions. Glock (1972) argued that religions can not be perceived as monolithic belief systems simply because this approach fails to appreciate varieties of religious experience and expressions of religious orientation. For Lenski (1961), religiosity involves individuals’ attitudes, beliefs, emotions, experiences and rituals. It is a multidimensional process consisting of; ‘*associational*’ aspect which includes frequency of religious involvement in worship and prayer services; ‘*communal*’ dimension which relates to the preference and frequency of one’s primary-type relations; ‘*doctrinal orthodoxy*’ which refers to the intellectual acceptance of the prescribed doctrines of the church; and ‘*devotionalism*’ which involves private or personal communion with God through prayers, meditation and religious behaviors.

Glock (1972) on the other hand proposed a five-dimensional model in differentiating commitment to religion. These five core dimensions of religiosity are: ‘*the experiential*’ – the experience of religious emotions in the form of exaltation, fear, humility, joyfulness and peace. Second, the ‘*ritualistic dimension*’ – which includes specific religious practices expected of religious followers which among other include prayer, worship and fasting. Third, the ‘*ideological dimension*’ – the expectation that a religious person must hold certain beliefs which followers are expected to adhere to. Fourth, the ‘*intellectual dimension*’ – the expectation that a religious person must have some knowledge about the basic tenets of his/her faith and its religious scriptures; and fifth the ‘*consequential dimension*’ – encompassing a man’s relation to other man which includes religious prescriptions that determine attitudes of adhering as a consequence of their religious belief.

Verbit (1970) however classified religion into six components which include, ‘ritual’, ‘doctrine’, ‘emotion’, ‘knowledge’, ‘ethics’ and ‘community’. These components are measured along four dimensions which are, ‘content’, ‘frequency’, ‘intensity’ and ‘centrality’. Caird (1987) on the other hand, identified only three different measures of religiosity which are: cognitive (focuses on religious attitudes or beliefs), behavioral (evaluation of church attendance or private prayer), and experiential (“mystical” experiences).

While all the theories and explanatory frameworks for the analysis of religious commitments are a useful means of measures, Glock (1972) however felt that the real challenge lies in the cross-cultural study of religious commitment. Almost all of the theoretical frameworks were developed after intense studies on predominantly Christian believers and manifestations of Christian religious experience. It is therefore questionable whether these methodological approaches can explain non-Christian religious experience in general and manifestations of Islamic orientation in particular (Glock, 1972). Glock's views is shared by Salih Ibrahim al-Sani (2010), where he noted that Muslim psychologists have not given the psychology of religion the attention that it deserves, and when they do attend to the matter it is done in dismay – sufficed with merely translating the standards and measurements developed by non-Muslim psychologists in the West and applying them without any critical consideration to Muslims living in the Muslim world.

Nonetheless, by considering the advances in studies on religiosity in western countries, a religiosity scale developed by Cutting (2007) was chosen to measure the level of religiosity among Malay businesspersons. Although the original scale was developed to measure religiosity among Christians, but because of its inclination towards universal values as uphold by other religions including Islam; the questionnaire was adopted. This questionnaire provides respondents with a choice of five answers for each item which range from “*not very important for me*” to “*very important for me*”. By considering remarks by Salih Ibrahim al-Sani (2010) and to further universalize the scale, a more rigorous process was adopted before the questionnaire is used. Since religiosity is an attitudinal measure comprising the dimensions of cognitive, affective, and behavioral; a face validity test was first carried out on the original scale which consists of 56 items. As a result, only 26 items were considered as suitable and selected as a measure of religiosity for this study. The 26 questions were further scrutinized and rephrased to suit the local respondents. Example of item that focuses on cognitive is “*Being knowledgeable about the religion*”, affective – “*Experiencing a personal relationship with God*”, and behavioral – “*Reading/studying/listening to religious material*”.

Work values and measures

According to Rokeach (1973), values represent a basic conviction that a specific mode of conduct or an end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or a converse mode of conduct or an end-state of existence. However, Williams (1979) noted that the term “values” has been used to refer to interests, pleasures, likes, preferences, duties, moral obligations, desires, wants, goals, needs, aversions, and affections—and many other kinds of selective orientations. In order to avoid such an excessive looseness in the definition, Dose (1997) stated a significant difference between values and the other concepts. Accordingly, values as opposed to attitudes do not correspond to a particular object or situation. Attitudes are in fact attached to specific objects. Rokeach (1968) argued that as opposed to attitudes, values can be understood as standards. Therefore, the core phenomenon of values is the presence of a criteria or a standard of preference. Williams (1979) on the other hand pointed out that through their powerful psychological presence; values of any individual will dominate the natural

predispositions of that individual and also govern the responses to the external stimuli. Rokeach (1968) added that more importantly, individuals have fewer values than attitudes, making values a more economical construct and that values occupy a more central position in the cognitive system and personality of individuals thus determining their attitudes.

Based on Rokeach (1973) definition of values, work values can be termed as the belief upon which a person acts by preference and since these preferences are made reference to attitudes therefore find Wollack, Goodale, Wijting and Smith (1971) to define work values as an index of a person's attitudes toward work in general, rather than his feelings about a specific job.

The most important aspect in studying work values is to come up with a measurement that has the ability to measure the construct (Miller, Woehr & Hudspeth, 2002). They then identified that there are seven measures; 1) Goldstein & Eichorn's Protestant Ethic Scale; 2) Blood's Pro-Protestant Ethic Scale; 3) Mirels & Garret's Protestant Work Ethic Scale; 4) Hammond & Williams' Spirit of Capitalism Scale; 5) Buchholz's Work and Leisure Ethic Scales; 6) Ray's Eclectic Protestant Ethic Scale; and, 7) Ho & Lloyd's Australian Work Ethic Scale (as cited in Miller, Woehr & Hudspeth, 2002, p. 456). Additionally, the most frequently cited measure out of this list is the Protestant Work Ethic Scale by Mirels and Garrett.

Miller, Woehr and Hudspeth (2002) however observed that all these seven measures (which were developed to measure Weber's work ethic construct) have common problems, with the most significant one is the issue of dimensionality. Although there are considerable evidences of multidimensionality in work ethic, nonetheless, these measures typically focus on the measurement of a one-dimensional construct.

Ali (1988) in emphasizing on the need to have an instrument that measures Muslims work values has developed the Islamic Work Ethic questionnaire. While its internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha) was reported as 0.89 (Ali, 1992) but liked other work values measures, this instrument too shares the common problems of focusing on the measurement of a one-dimensional construct.

According to Miller, Woehr and Hudspeth (2002), ignoring the multidimensionality of work ethic is troubling from an operational as well as a conceptual perspective. Treating work values as a one-dimensional construct (the use of an overall score), according to Carver and McHoskey may result in the loss of information with regards to the different components of work ethic as well as their relations to other construct (as cited in Miller, Woehr & Hudspeth, 2002, p. 456).

Nevertheless, apart from the seven measures Miller, Woehr and Hudspeth (2002) also observed that there are other measures specifically designed to assess various work-related attitudes and values ranging from constructs such as job involvement and organizational commitment to other more specific measures of "work values." One of the most interesting measures is the work values scale developed by Wollack et al. (1971).

According to Wollack et al. (1971), the Survey of Work Values (SWV) was developed to measure a person's attitude towards work in general, rather than his feelings about his specific job. Although it was developed specifically towards separate areas of values (intrinsic and extrinsic) within the construct of Protestant Work Ethic (where individualism, ascetics, and industriousness play a central role), it is a universal values shared by groups of difference cultures. The instrument measures common value patterns shared by a group of individuals which are considered as socially desirable among the group members. The followings are Wollack et al's (1971) explanation of the composition of the scale. Within the intrinsic dimension, there are three sub-dimensions namely:

- Pride in work. The satisfaction and enjoyment one gets from doing one's work well.
- Job involvement. The degree to which a worker is actively interested in co-workers and company functions and desires to contribute to job-related decisions.
- Activity preference. It refers to a preference by the worker to stay busy on his job.

Two subscales that evaluate an individual's values preference towards extrinsic rewards are:

- Attitude toward earnings. The value of making money on the job.
- Social status of the job. The effect of the job alone on a person's standing among his friends, co-workers and relatives.

According to Wollack et al (1971) there are two other dimensions within the work values scale (a mixture of intrinsic/extrinsic), namely:

- Upward striving. The continuous desire to seek a higher level job and a better standard of living.
- Responsibility to work. It refers to the belief that man has an obligation to work and that he must depend on himself rather than others for support.

After considering the internal validity of the dimensions and because of the lack of supporting evidences Wollack et al. (1971) then decided to omit the dimension of "responsibility to work." The final work values scale therefore consists of six sub-scales, which contains 54 items. Nonetheless, evaluation of an individual work values is not based on the overall total scores but reported based on scores of each of these six scales.

According to Miller, Woehr and Hudspeth (2002) Wollack et al's Survey of work values not only provides a multidimensional, secularized interpretation of work ethic but the dimensions assessed in general also represent a very broad interpretation of the work ethic construct. They concluded by characterizing Wollack et al's Survey of work values as a construct which: (a) is multidimensional; (b) pertains to work and work-related activity in general i.e., not specific to any particular job (can be generalized to domains other than work— e.g. school, hobbies, etc.); (c) is learned; (d) refers to attitudes and

beliefs (not necessarily behavior); (e) can be considered as a motivational construct reflected in behavior; and (f) is secular i.e., not necessarily tied to any one set of religious beliefs. Therefore this study anticipated that the aggregate scores of these six variables within Wollack et al's work values construct would be different for Malay businesspersons of different level of religiosity.

Pilot study

Although English is taught at both primary and secondary school levels, Malaysia is not an English speaking country. The national language is "*Bahasa Malaysia*" which is the Malay language. Therefore, in order to enhance respondents' understanding and respond; the administration of the final study was done using the Malay translated version of the religiosity scale and Wollack et al's work values scale. Every question in these scales is accompanied with its original English version.

The Malay versions of the scales were developed through careful translation and back-translation techniques as suggested by Brislin (1970) and McGorry (2000). By getting the assistance of bilingual experts, the 26-item Religiosity scale and 54-item Wollack et al's work values scale were first translated into Malay and then back-translated into English. This process minimizes the differences between the English and the Malay measurements. This is consistent with Berry's (1980) suggestions that the goal of translation is to obtain an instrument that draw responses which communicated similar meanings to members of various groups (i.e. "conceptual equivalence"). Accordingly, a literal translation of an instrument is not sufficient in conveying the equivalent of the original instrument in cross-cultural research and Phillips (1959) noted that a complete semantic equivalence in cross-cultural studies is a statistical fiction.

In ensuring the Malay version of Religiosity scale and Wollack et al's work values scale were reliable a pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents. A part-whole correlations test between individual items and the overall scale in each of the scales were carried out. This process determines whether individual item correlates with their respective overall scale. For the religiosity scales, all 26 items have correlation coefficient value of above 0.30 and it is considered to be correlated moderately with the overall scale (see Table 1). The result of the pilot study shows that except for item 1 and 16; all other individual items of the Malay version within the religiosity scales were significantly correlated with the overall scale. All items are accepted as measures of religiosity on the basis that the correlation values would have increased if used on a larger sample.

For Wollack et al's work values scale; except for the translated items number 3, 14, 16, 17, 18, 39, 54, 22, 28, 32, 33, 36, 37, 41, and 42, all other individual items have correlation coefficient value of above 0.30 thus correlating moderately with the overall scale (see Table 2). The low correlation values could be caused by the small sample size and misinterpretations that might occur in the translated version of the scale, thus causing biasness. Therefore the items in the translated version were further rephrased before it is used together with the original English version.

Table 1: Results of the part-whole correlations test of the *Malay* translated version of the Religiosity Scale (N = 30)

No	Items (Original English version)	Pearson Correlation
1	Reading/ studying/ listening to religious material	0.358
2	Being around others who share my faith (religion)	0.568**
3	Seeking to bring others to my faith/ religion	0.435*
4	Practicing values in my religion in everyday life	0.556**
5	Being knowledgeable about the religion	0.448*
6	Emulating the prophet in being of service to others	0.394*
7	Experiencing a personal relationship with God	0.599**
8	Not questioning the teachings of my religion	0.449*
9	Feeling connected to religious people	0.463**
10	Engaging in devotions at home	0.625**
11	Regularly spending time in prayers or meditations	0.512**
12	Participating regularly in activities at my place of worship	0.490**
13	Seeking to build a community of faith	0.735**
14	Supporting my place of worship financially	0.618**
15	Trying to live according to the values of the holy book rather than those of the world	0.373*
16	Believing in the God immortality	0.351
17	Accepting God as the Savior	0.548**
18	Seeking to be part of God's plan of creation - helping bring about the Reign (Kingdom) of God	0.560**
19	Having my faith provides meaning and purpose in my life.	0.752**
20	Believing that religion is the only savior for all people everywhere	0.687**
21	Believing that the holy book is the literal word of God	0.620**
22	Having my faith influences all aspects of my life	0.692**
23	Having a sense of God's presence in my daily life	0.551**
24	Believing in the hereafter	0.733**
25	Experiencing my faith as a source of strength and comfort	0.789**
26	Watching/listening to religious programs on the television/radio	0.563**

* significant at 95%

** significant at 99%

Table 2: Items with low score on part whole correlations test of the Malay translated version of Wollack et al's Work Value scale (N = 30)		
No	Items (Original English version)	Pearson Correlation
Social Status		
3	A job with prestige is not necessarily a better job than the one which does not have prestige	0.184
18	Prestige should not be a factor in choosing a job	0.108
Activity Preference		
39	A person would soon grow tired of loafing on a job and would probably be happier if he or she worked hard	0.285
54	If a worker keeps himself busy on the job, the working day passes more quickly than if the worker were loafing	0.204
Upward Striving		
22	If a person likes the job, the person should be satisfied with it and should not push for a promotion to other positions	0.133
28	The trouble with too many people is that when they find a job in which they are interested, they don't try to get a better job	0.247
42	One is better off if one is satisfied with one's own job and is not concerned about being promoted to another job	0.143
Attitude Towards Earnings		
41	When someone is looking for a job, money should not be the most important consideration	-0.123
Pride in Work		
16	There is nothing wrong with doing a poor job at work if one can get away with it	0.254
32	There is nothing as satisfying as doing the best job possible	0.198
36	One who feels no sense of pride in one's work is probably unhappy	0.072
Job Involvement		
14	One who has an idea about how to improve one's own job should drop a note in the company suggestion box.	0.278
17	A good worker is interested in helping a new worker learn his job	0.224
33	Once a week, after the work day is over, a company may have their workers get together in groups to discuss possible job changes. A good worker should remain after quitting time to participate in these discussions	0.014
37	If something is wrong with a job, a smart worker will mind his or her own business and let somebody else complain about it.	0.203

* significant at 95%

Reliability test which provides indicators of internal consistency for the two scales (religiosity and work values survey) were also carried out. For the religiosity scale the alpha value recorded was 0.89. As for the Wollack et al's work values scale, it has been

validated by many researchers and the alpha value has fallen between the range of between 0.80 and 0.88 (Tayyab and Tariqe, 2001). Since SWV has been validated by previous researchers and was found to be highly reliable, further analysis is therefore not necessary. According to Flynn et al. (1994), an empirically-validated scale can be used directly in other studies within the field for different populations and for longitudinal studies. Nonetheless, the Cronbach alpha value for Wollack et al's work values scale for this study is 0.77. Although this value is a little lower than findings made by other researchers (probably because problem of translation), Nunnally (1978) feels that an alpha value of 0.70 is sufficient for an exploratory research.

Data collection

Both religiosity and work values scales were the main measures of this research. The final questionnaire was prepared bilingually (Malay and English). It consisted of three parts; Section A – the respondents' demographic factors; Section B – religiosity scale; and Section C – work values scale. By using the convenience sampling technique, a total of 200 questionnaires were distributed. However, only 191 (96%) questionnaires were returned and were found suitable to be used in the final analysis.

The data were gathered from two states in Malaysia which are Perak and Johore. Within the state of Perak, the data was collected from among Malay entrepreneurs who are operating their businesses in the district of Perak Tengah while in Johore the respondent are coming from the district of Kota Tinggi. 72 respondents (36%) come from Perak and the rest of them (125 or 64%) come from Johore. Respondents are entrepreneurs who operate food stalls, restaurants, shops selling sundry goods, textile, hardware, electrical appliances, and stationeries. In terms of gender, 100 (53%) respondents were males and 91 (47%) females. The majority of the businesses are family-run businesses that are generally operated by teams which consist of husband and wife.

In term of the number of years in business, 109 (57%) respondents have been in business between 1 to 5 years, 48 (25%) between 6 – 10 years, 10 (5%) between 11- 15 years, and 11 (6%) between 16 – 19 years. In addition, 13 respondents (7%) have operated their businesses for more than 20 years. The high numbers of respondents who have been operating their businesses within 1-5 years could be attributed to the existing economy downturn in which many employees have been forced out of job when companies carried out their retrenchment program. Their involvement in businesses are also due to the government efforts in encouraging people to venture into business by providing micro and macro credits to those who wish to start small businesses.

In evaluating the items in religiosity scale, respondents were required to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not Very Important for Me) to 5 (Very Important for Me). This scale contains 26 items and the score were averaged to yield a summary score of between 26 and 130, hence reflecting respondents' level of religiosity. In order to determine the level of religious orientation the scores were divided into three. A score of between 26 and 61 is considered

as low religious orientation. Between 62 and 96 is moderate while between 97 and 130 is considered as high religious orientations.

For items in SWV instrument, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Since SWV were categorized into six dimensions and this study was designed to look into the level of respondents' orientation towards work values within each dimension, the average score for each dimension was tabulated separately. Since there are 9 items measuring each dimension, the averaged summary score for each dimension is between 9 and 45. In order to determine the level of work values orientation within each dimension the scores were divided into three. A score of between 9 and 21 is considered as low work values orientation on the particular dimension. Between 22 and 33 is moderate while between 34 and 45 is considered as high work values orientation on the particular dimension. The reporting of individual work values was based on scores of each of the six sub-scales and is not based on the overall total scores. Nonetheless, since Wollack et al's work values scale consists of 54 items, the overall score ranges between 54 and 270. In order to determine the level of work values orientation the score was divided into three. A score of between 54 and 126 is considered as low work values orientation. Between 127 and 198 is moderate while between 199 and 270 is considered as high work values orientation.

Respondents

Respondents of this study were Malay business people. Malaysian Constitution defines Malays as persons who habitually speaks the Malay language, follows Malay customs in their daily lives and professes the religion of Islam. This study further confined the respondents to Malay community living in west Malaysia who make up about 50% of the population of Malaysia (Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004). Although they are active economic agents (consuming and producing), they were also the bulk of the poor. After the racial incident of 1969 the government launched the New Economic Policy (NEP); an affirmative action policy aimed to eradicate poverty, irrespective of race and removed the identification of race with occupation. This policy was also aimed at helping the Malays (and other indigenous groups) to own a minimum of 30% of the "economic cake" by giving them special privileges to enter into business ventures (via licenses and permits), to enter institutions of higher learning, to own equity in listed companies, to own houses built by the private sector at discounted prices, and many other facilities. After twenty years of the NEP, the 30% equity aimed for the Malays was far from being achieved thus NEP was re-branded with a new name; the National Development Policy (NDP: 1991-2000). Despite the government efforts, the Malays seem to stay weak and unable to compete in the accumulation of wealth in the country (Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004). This research therefore aimed at understanding the Malay business people through their religious and work values orientation. In getting the respondents to participate voluntarily, their confidentiality were assured.

In analyzing research question 1 and 2; the overall mean score was used as a basis to determine religiosity and work values of Malay businesspersons. In testing the hypothesis on the relationship between religiosity and work values, a correlation test was utilized.

4. Results and Discussions

With regards to the religiosity scale, Malay businesspersons recorded a mean score of 115.48 (SD = 9.10). Based on the score range; the result shows Malay businesspersons score high on religious orientation or in other word, Malay businesspersons are very much religious.

Religious awareness, movements, and activities are strong in Malaysia. Even though the country's constitution dictates Islam as its official religion, the practice of other religions has never been prevented. In creating a harmony society, non-Muslims are allowed to profess their religions freely. They however, could not propagate their beliefs to Muslims. The government in addition has no hesitation to enforce proper laws against parties who try to create religious tension.

Though some view Malaysia as a secular state, the government shows a strong commitment towards spiritual values and religion. For example, mosques are built in almost all residential areas. Apart from that churches and temples could be found easily in this country. Furthermore, religious activities in Malaysia are conducted in a large scale through special holidays and national level celebrations. This provides an aura of festivities which in turn could be used to promote Malaysia as a tourist destination.

With Islam as the official religion, the Shariah law is also being enacted and enforced with the setting up of Shariah courts which run parallel with the civil courts. Muslims who fail to observe Friday prayers and to fast in the month of Ramadhan will be charged under the Islamic law. However, the Shariah law is only confined to Muslims family laws and to a lesser degree criminal (Note: Criminal law per se comes under the civil courts). Nonetheless, if one of the parties involved is a non-Muslim, than the civil court will have jurisdiction over it. In term of penalties, Taqzir is much preferred than Hudud. In addition, to a greater extend the decisions of the Shariah court cannot be checked or reviewed by the civil court.

Similarly, Malaysia also gives strong emphasis in religious education. In fact, Islamic education is embedded into the national school system and examination. To add to this, Islamic religious schools are also set-up. They are being funded by the states and run parallel with the national school. Moral education on the other hand is offered to the non-Muslims at the school level.

Culture also plays a significant role for Malay businesspersons to be high on religious orientation. This is due to the fact that religion helps to shape a particular culture, by providing the fundamental values and beliefs which guide a society's ways of life through the shaping of individuals' values system thus influencing individuals' behaviors. Once religious tenets are deeply grounded and embedded into society culture,

its members would find behavior based on any other premise inconceivable (Argyris, 1976). The belief system guides them as the correct way to perceive, think, feel and react to the environments (Hofstede, 1980). Therefore, in the process of checking the advance of secularism and western modern culture which Malaysians perceive as a cause of moral decay, they seek solace in religion. Religion thus provides the defense mechanism in preserving Asian values and norms. By holding strongly to religious convictions, Malaysian should be able to thwart the advances of modern western culture.

Overall, conducive environments that prevail in Malaysia justify Malay businesspersons to be high on religious orientation.

This study also found that Malay businesspersons recorded an overall mean score of 194.63 (SD = 27.48) on the work values scales (Table 3). Based on the score range, the result shows that Malay businesspersons score moderately on work values orientation. On individual dimensions, the mean score of Malay businesspersons on *social status* is 31.03 (SD = 5.86); *activity preference* is 30.40 (SD = 6.14); *upward striving* is 32.68 (SD = 5.17); *attitude towards earning* is 32.57 (SD = 5.29); *pride in work* is 34.74 (SD = 4.18); and on *job involvement* is 33.21 (SD = 4.46). Based on the score range, the findings showed Malay businesspersons score high on the dimension of *pride in work* and moderately on all other dimensions within the work values scale.

Scale	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social Status	31.03	5.86
Activity Preference	30.40	6.14
Upward Striving	32.68	5.17
Attitude Towards Earning	32.57	5.29
Pride in Work	34.74	4.18
Job Involvement	33.21	4.46
WORK VALUE	194.63	27.48

Going into business is not an easy task – one has to prepare his mind before he ventures into business, for business is not all about investing one's capital and the willingness to take risk. In general, business people need to be independent, have the right attitude, the commitment and the perseverance of having to endure long working hours (Kamarudin Mamat and Ramli Raya, 1990). The Malay respondents of this study may not have these characteristics. Their hesitation to venture into business can be associated with their individual self. Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob (2004) observed that what prevents the Malays from achieving their maximum potential is the enemy within them – the lack of focus, or lack of prioritization, lack of commitment and lack of inner drive or motivation. While Roff blames the Malays for the failure to specialized, acquired and realized the importance of capital other British colonial masters have put the blame on the Malays' "lazy lifestyle" for their predicament, which they believed might have originated from the

days when many worked as forced labor or even as slaves in which they will always wait for orders (as cited in Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004, p.6). These could explain the moderate orientation towards “activity preference scale”, that is, the preference to stay busy on his job. Nonetheless, the moderate scores showed that the Malays can no longer be associated with the label “lazy lifestyle.”

In understanding the Malay one has to understand their culture as literatures acknowledge the contribution of religion in providing basic values that help to shape the culture of the society. According to Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob (2004), long before the Malays embraced Islam, they were practicing animism and Hinduism, and have already developed their own culture and circles around the palace and chieftains. The Malays then were engaged in primary production — consuming most of what they produced and using whatever remained to pay homage to their chiefs or rulers. Upon embracing Islam, the culture continues. The trader class of that time was small and confined to those who lived near the ports of trade or closely connected to the palaces and chieftains. Roff observed that when the British arrived, the Malay cultivators were still at the base of the social system (as cited in Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004, p. 6). The British colonial masters also observed the Malays as people who have no initiative and according to Winstead, the British also took notice of the Malays attitude towards work — *“though a necessity but do not consider it a virtue”* (as cited in Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004, p. 8).

Such a simple lifestyle is a way of life of the Malays that it may explain for a moderate score in “attitude towards earnings” and “upward striving” of the respondents. In other word, the value of making money and the desire to seek a higher level and a better standard of living are not within one of the main objectives of the Malay businesspersons. They are very much contented with small business venture – which are deemed as enough to sustain their daily needs. Nonetheless the moderate score of this study also goes to show and a proof to skeptics that the days where the Malays were portrayed as leading a simple lives and having no initiative is of the yesteryear. The Malays now, are more sophisticated, motivated and hard working. In fact as observed by Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob (2004) the modern urban Malay are now living in expensive houses located in exclusive housing areas and they do have “penchant for celebration”.

The British have rule Malaysia for over 100 years and have since imposed the policy of “divide-and-rule”. Identification of races is based on economic activities. The Chinese were based in town and involved in commercial sectors, the Indians worked as laborers in estates owned by the British while the Malays lived in rural areas undertaking agricultures activities. In fact, the Malays were prevented to venture into the more lucrative agricultural sectors such as owning rubber plantation estates for the British feared that there would not be enough rice being produced if the Malays were to abandon rice cultivation (Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004). Even after Malaysia gained its independence, the status quo remained. A vast majority of Malays were still staying in rural areas and focused on agricultural activities such as rice plantation. The Chinese immigrants remained in commerce or mining sector and Indians in the plantation sector. The Chinese domination in businesses was very clear; they even owned retail shops in Malay populated areas. In order to help the Malays who formed the bulk of the poor,

New Economic Policy – an affirmative action policy was introduced by the government. However this policy further affirmed that the Malays were weak and unable to compete in the accumulation of wealth in the country (Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004). Furthermore, by this time, the Chinese were already established in commerce. In addition, with a better financial position and networking, they have control over the sector, which make it hard for the Malays to compete. These might also explain the moderate scores in both “attitude towards earnings” and “upward striving” of the Malay respondents, as they are contented with small businesses and earnings.

For obvious reasons, the Malays prefer to work for others and preferably in the government services rather than going into business. The preference to work with the “*kerajaan*” or the government services started way back during the reigned of the “sultanate.” “*Kerajaan*” comes from the root word “*raja*” which means “the king.” Serving the majesty, the king, or the palace is considered an honor and very well respected. Since the Malays are natives of Malaysia and due to the huge numbers of sultans and warlords, the British knew that to rule the country effectively they need the support of the Malays. They therefore continue the tradition of recruiting the Malays to work for the government (British) under the guise of preparing the Malays for their own administration one the country gains its independence. Mahathir Mohamed also listed other reasons for the Malays’ preference to work in the government services (as cited in Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004, p. 20). Firstly, they put a strong consideration for job security. Government jobs are “recession-proof” – government servants are seldom retrenched, even under an extreme economic situation. Furthermore, the guarantee of a continuous salary no matter how small it is will attract Malays to work in this service. Kuppusamy observed that whenever the government wanted to privatize any of its entities, the first question that cropped up in the minds of its employees is whether their livelihood or salary would be affected by the privatization (as cited in Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004, p. 20). Secondly, government jobs provide the pension-for-life scheme – something to look forward to after the workers have retired. Thirdly, government jobs provide fringe benefits like car and housing loans at low interest rates. Fourthly, the working hours are predictably (8:00 a.m. to 5.00pm) and they only need to work five days a week. These reasons could account for the moderate orientation towards dimensions of “*social status*” (the effect of doing small businesses on his/her standing among friends and relatives), and “*job involvement*” (the degree to which a Malay businessperson is actively interested in doing business). The Malays still have high regards working in government offices. The moderate score however is a sign of “mental revolution” and that the Malays now are showing more interest in doing businesses.

The finding of this study however showed respondents scored high on pride in work dimension, that is, the satisfaction and enjoyment one gets from doing one's work well. This finding showed the Malays are indeed sharing the universal value of “pride in work” liked in any other cultures. In fact, history showed that the Malays were known for their pride in work. They were known for their master craftsmanship—building houses and even ships without using nails but instead using locks and mortise to join the wooden parts. They were also very patient in attending to their job especially those involving intricate work and took pride in the quality and the fine craftsman of the finished goods.

As such westerners have come to Malaysia to have their boat built (Tuan Azam Tuan Johan, 2010). This might explain the high score in pride in work dimension that is, finding satisfaction and enjoyment in work well done. In business, performance is judged by the profits earned.

Overall, findings of this study go to prove that the general assumption “Malays are still being lazy” does not hold. In fact by scoring high in pride in work and moderately in all other dimensions go to show that the Malays are now holding more toward work values of hard work, committed, dedicated to work, work creativity, and competitive. The Malays have gone through the natural progression in becoming more competitive and advanced in their attitude and thinking. This “mental revolution” is very much a contribution of the Malaysian government. While the government continues with the affirmative actions, it has also relentlessly gives the Malays the wake up calls so as not to be complacence. In fact more and more Malays now agree that the government must cut off some of the privileges that have been given to the Malays (Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004). Through this strategy it will slowly encourage the Malays not to be too overly dependent on the government and in the long run learn to struggle and survive independently.

Relationship between Religiosity and dimensions in work values

It was thought that work values are the outcomes of religious values. According to Wollack et al. (1971) the scales developed were based on Weber’s literature on Protestant work ethics, therefore, it has been hypothesized that respondents which score highly on religious orientation will also score highly on work values orientations.

In assessing the relationship between religiosity and work values scale, correlations analyses were conducted on Religiosity scale and dimensions in Wollack et al’s work values scale. Table 4 shows the results of the analysis between the variables. Results of this study however found that there were negative, not significant relationship between religiosity and dimensions in work values. Overall, the results show that the relationship between religiosity and social status is negative and not significant ($r = -.09, p > .05$); between religiosity and activity preference is negative and not significant ($r = -.11, p > .05$); between religiosity and upward striving is negative and not significant ($r = -.07, p > .05$); between religiosity and attitude toward earnings is negative and not significant ($r = -.09, p > .05$); between religiosity and pride in work is negative and not significant ($r = -.08, p > .05$); and between religiosity and job involvement is also negative and not significant ($r = -.13, p > .05$). Since r values in all the relationship are negative, it goes to show that businesspersons high on religious orientation are low in work values orientation (“inverse” relationship). This however, does not mean being religious causes a person to have low orientation in work value. Nevertheless, since the r value is close to zero therefore, the correlations between religiosity and dimensions in work values are very minimal and almost not correlated; or simply put it, they do not have an apparent linear relationship. Nonetheless, this does not mean that religiosity and all the dimensions in work values are statistically independent of each other.

Overall, since the findings of this study showed that there were inverse and no significant relationship between religiosity and dimensions of work values (orientation toward social status, activity preference, upward striving, attitude toward earnings, pride in work, and job involvement), therefore findings of this study were not supportive of the research hypothesis being developed.

Variables	Pearson Correlation
Social status	-0.09
Activity preference	-0.11
Upward striving	-0.07
Attitude towards earnings	-0.09
Pride in work	-0.08
Job involvement	-0.13

* $p < 0.05$

Findings of this study may not go well with proponents of Protestant work ethic who have regarded it as a universal value. Nonetheless, Yousef (2001) have argued that the Protestant work ethic cannot be regarded as a universal value and that the applicability of the model must be confined to Christian Protestants of Western society. The findings of Niles (1999) and Arslan (2001) were also in support of Yousef (2001) argument. According to Yousef (2001), Muslim populace need to have a measurement of work ethic based on Islam because Islam as *ad-din* has its own culture that has helped to shape Islamic society values on the need and importance of work. Islam regarded work, not only as a right but a duty as well as an obligation. It is a noble activity aimed not only to enrich the individual but to prosper the nation and society. Thus, the concept of work in Islam is far broader and is termed as '*amal* — the calling to undertake activities, and Muslims must not remain idle. Appropriate rewards or punishments were also clearly spelt out in Islam – both in this world and in the hereafter. For Muslims, work therefore, is considered not only as a right and a duty but also an obligation. Since the respondents are Malay Muslims, this may account for the inversed relationship when religiosity was correlated with work values. Since Wollack et al's Work Values scale is based on Protestant work ethics; it may not be able to account for work values as upheld by the Muslims. Therefore, at least in the context of the Malay Muslim respondents, findings of this study do not support the proposition that work value as proposed by Wollack et al. (1971) (based on Protestant work ethic) is a universal value.

Findings of this study also do not support findings of MacDonald (1972); Beit-Hallahmi (1979); Ray (1982); and Giorgi and Marsh (1990) that there are positive correlations between religiosity and work values. In fact, findings of this study are in line with the findings of Argyle (2000) which indicated that there is no relationship between religiosity and work ethics. Again the possible reason why the results of this study shows that

religiosity do not correlate positively and significantly with work values may lay in the characteristics of the Malay respondents, that is, they are Muslims.

Another possible reason for the findings is that religion is not the only element that determines the basic values for culture – “shared values and norms of a particular society.” This may account for the inversed relationship between religiosity and dimensions in Wollack et al’s work values scale and that the relationship is also not significant. For Robbins (1996), founder leaders of a group also played a significant role in providing basic values that helped to shape and determine the culture of a society.

As earlier discussed, history showed that the Malays have been dominated by a culture of oppression, first by their leaders and later by the British conquerors. Long before the Malays embraced Islam they were practicing animism and Hinduism, and have already developed their own culture that circled around the palace and chieftains. The Malays then were farmers. They consumed what they produced and with whatever that were left with them; they pay homage to their chiefs or rulers. The arrival of Islam did not change much of their practices. The trader class then was small and confined to those who domiciled near the ports of trade or closely connected to the palaces and chieftains (Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004). According to Roff, when the British arrived, the Malay cultivators were still at the base of the social system, “owing loyalty and obedience to their local chief (as cited in Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004, p. 6). The British since then held an opinion that the Malays were people with no initiative and were simply obeying orders of their petty chiefs. Under the British rule, the Malays were further pushed into a culture of owing loyalty and obedience then to both their local chiefs and British conquerors. The British themselves were not willing to transform the Malays into a hard working society for the fear that there would be inadequate rice produced if the Malays were to abandon rice cultivation. Thus, the British prevented the Malays from venturing into the more lucrative agricultural sectors such as owning rubber plantation estates (Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004). Accordingly, the British continued to put the blame on the Malays’ “lazy life-style” for their predicament, which has originated from the days when many worked as forced labor or even as slaves and always waiting for orders (Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004). As a result of this situation, Islamic principles such as working hard and commitment to their job are never fully upheld by them even after they have embraced Islam. Thus, even when the government introduced the New Economic Policy – an affirmative action policy to help the Malays, they still remain weak and unable to compete in the accumulation of wealth in the country and continue to prefer to work for others (Ahmad Mahdzan Ayob, 2004) rather than going into businesses.

These explained for the inverse and no significant relationship between religiosity and work values orientation of social status, activity preference, upward striving, attitude toward earnings, pride in work, job involvement. Thus, findings of this study indicate that being more religious does not necessarily means Malay businesspersons are less;

- proud in their work i.e., in doing businesses and get less satisfaction and enjoyment from doing their work well;

- involved i.e., less active, interested, and desirous in undertaking business activities;
- preferred to stay active or busy on the job i.e., in their business;
- in positive attitude towards earnings i.e., their desire of making money or profit in business;
- socially recognize or find a standing among friends, and relatives;
- desirous in upward striving i.e., in seeking to expand his or business and a better standard of living.

5. Limitation

The results of this study should however be viewed with caution due to the limited generalisability of the findings of this study. Firstly, this study involved a small sample size of the Malay businesspersons' population and that the respondents were confined to only two small districts in the states of Johore and Perak. To this extent, this study could not become a representative of the whole Malay businesspersons' population. On the other hand, the results of this study are truly reflective of the level of religiosity and work values orientation of the respondents. Secondly, since the reported data came from a questionnaire, several other limitations are associated with it such as the general issues of questionnaire's understandability and readability, scaling issues, and measurement errors. Furthermore, there is no assurance that the respondents' responses are a true reflection of their ethical judgments for some of the respondents could have provided socially-desired answers.

6. Conclusion

The exploration of religiosity and work values orientation among Malay businesspersons in this research is intended only to show a general idea about their attitude towards religion and work, rather than to provide information about how they view their religion and work. This study indicates that respondents have high religious orientation but are moderate in work values orientation. The results also show that the relationship between religiosity and dimensions within work values were inversed and not significant. This study also proves that the claimed of Western researchers of Weber's advocacy that the Protestant work ethic is a universal value did not hold; at least for the Malay respondents. A part from that, while this study does not intent to formulate opinions on Malay businesspersons' orientation toward religion and work values, nevertheless, inferences can be made from the literatures. Nonetheless, this study has helped in understanding the psyche of Malay businesspersons. With unwavering efforts of the Malaysian government in encouraging and helping the Malays to venture into businesses, the findings of this study can assist in the development of strategies and affirmative actions. This is because good, viable idea is simply not enough. The Malays must also have the right skills, attitude and personality to make their enterprises succeed. This will go well with the

Malaysian government's effort in achieving vision 2020. Future research should also examine the Islamic work values among Malay businesspersons and use a larger and a more representative sample size to see whether the results of the current study hold.

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