Islamic Values in Ethical Principles of Social Work

Nilai Islam Dalam Prinsip Etika Kerja Sosial

NUR SAADAH MOHAMAD AUN*, ZAENAL ABIDIN & NUR MADIHAH ILI IDRUS

ABSTRACT

Allah s.w.t. commands every human to help one another with righteousness and piety and forbids helping one another with sin and hostility. Similarly, in the profession of social work, which emphasizes the concept of helping and doing good deeds. As a profession, social workers also have the function of solving social problems based on values by fulfilling human needs and aspirations. Therefore, a study was conducted to understand social work and its connection with religious values, especially Islam. A qualitative study using in-depth interview techniques was conducted with four social workers at a government agency. The results of the study indicate that there are religious elements, namely Islamic values, in the principles of social work ethics. One of the Islamic values that is often associated with Islam is the giving of zakat, which is one of the Pillars of Islam. The obligation to pay zakat applies to those who can give to the poor as prescribed in Islam. This is in line with the social work principles of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), which aim to provide services to clients with the goal of helping them and identifying their problems. Based on this study, Islamic values are closely related to the social work profession, which adheres to principles and ethics in social work.

Keywords: Religion; Islam; Values; Ethics; Social Work

ABSTRAK

Allah s.w.t. memerintahkan setiap manusia untuk saling tolong-menolong di dalam kebajikan dan ketakwaan serta melarang dari saling tolong-menolong di dalam perbuatan dosa dan permusuhan. Begitu juga dalam profesion kerja sosial yang menekankan konsep membantu dan membuat kebajikan. Sebagai satu profesion, pekerja sosial juga mempunyai fungsi menyelesaikan masalah sosial berlandaskan nilai dengan memenuhi kehendak serta aspirasi manusia. Justeru, satu kajian telah dilakukan bagi memahami kerja sosial dan perkaitannya dengan nilai keagamaan terutamanya Islam. Kajian berbentuk kualitatif dengan menggunakan teknik temu bual mendalam telah dijalankan bersama-sama empat orang pekerja sosial di agensi kerajaan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa terdapatnya elemen agama iaitu nilai Islam dalam prinsip etika kerja sosial. Salah satu nilai Islam yang sering dikaitkan adalah menunaikan zakat yang merupakan salah satu daripada Rukun Islam. Kewajipan menunaikan zakat kepada golongan berkemampuan untuk diberi kepada golongan miskin seperti yang ditetapkan dalam Islam. Ini selari dengan prinsip kerja sosial oleh National Association of Social Workers (NASW) iaitu memberi perkhidmatan kepada klien dengan matlamat membantu klien serta mengenal pasti masalah klien. Berdasarkan kajian ini, nilai Islam adalah berkait rapat dengan profesion kerja sosial yang memegang kepada prinsip dan etika dalam kerja sosial.

Kata kunci: Agama; Islam; Nilai; Etika; Kerja Sosial

INTRODUCTION

There are no official statistics for social workers in Malaysia, but this profession has been practiced by many government agencies and non-governmental organizations (Daut, 2022) since 1912 with the establishment of social welfare programs to enhance migrants' well-being during British colonial (Abdul Razak, 2019).Social work is a practice-based profession and one of the helping professions that is blooming year by year in Malaysia. As for a counsellor, social worker also solves and handles various problems that involve humans and their surroundings. Its purpose is to enable individual, problematic families and groups to develop strength and new spirits in progressing through their lives. In other words, professional social work gives full commitment to solving one's problem and the surrounding changes that they experience.

Every social worker will uphold the social work ethical code of ethics in everyday practice. This code of ethics guides social workers in making decisions to intervene in clients' problems. In other words, ethical code is used as a source of inspiration and positive stimulation for the obligation towards the professional norms (Dubois & Miley, 1999).

The basis of practice in social work relates to the aspect of religion through multicultural and religious beliefs among society. However, after the profession of social work experienced the process of secularization in the mid-20th century, it brought some changes where the activity of social work no longer emphasizes religion and immediately stated that emphasis on religion is not relevant (Hook, Hugen & Aguilar, 2001). In 2007, Aguilar (2007) made an interesting statement in his research that social work practice has existed in the tradition of the Catholics that then pioneered the development of modern social work (Lessy, 2016). The spiritual approach in the profession of social work in the West and the East is inseparable in terms of beliefs that religion is the system of beliefs, ritual and practices that happened collectively (Lessy, 2016; Canada & Furman, 2010). Western researchers proved that there are years for religious values after trying to separate religion from the world of politics, social work is not exempt from trying to start integrating religion and social work as it needs spiritual healing for its clients (Lessy, 2016; Hook, Hugen & Aguilar, 2007; Gillian & Furness, 2006; Sheridan & Hemert, 1999). Whereas the religious element has a close relationship with social work, which is mentioned in the Quran (Holtzhausen, 2016). This clearly shows that there are relations in moral values in the aspect of social work practice towards the targeted group that is encouraged in the religion.

The International Association of School of Social Work (IASSW) has also come out with a statement where the religious aspect is important to study in the profession of social work to determine the uniqueness and variances of everyone; that is, the clients. However, formal education in terms of integrating the practice of professional social work with religion is still not given theoretically to the students of social work, even though the concept in Islam is advising and is very much interrelated with the values in social work, making the importance of religious values seen while delivering the practice of social work towards the client from various backgrounds. This is also emphasized by a few social work researchers that the religious and spiritual aspect is important in improving the education of the social work curriculum in the university. This is because, it's impossible in the practice of social work to divide individuals and groups from the religious values that they trust. (Lessy, 2016; Dudley, et.al.,1990; Miller, 2001; Hodge, 2008;).

THE ETHICAL CODE IN SOCIAL WORK

The principles and ethics of social work lie in the ethical codes of practice. The six ethical codes that have been established by the National Association of Social Work are service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity and competence. Each code is parallel with the ethical principles that have been the guideline for each social worker when practicing. Ethical codes in social work are important in guiding professionalism, protecting clients, addressing social injustice and enhancing clients well-being.

The first ethical code; service, emphasizes the main objective of the social worker to assist clients and recognize the social problems that are happening. Based on values, knowledge, and skills that they have, social workers need to help those that need help. In addition, social workers provide services voluntarily, using their professional skills without expecting any return.

The second code is social justice. The ethical principle emphasized in this value is that social workers need to challenge the social injustice that is happening. In this context, social workers need to keep abreast of the social changes that are happening to individuals or even societies. Social workers will focus on the main issues that are happening within society such as poverty, discrimination and other issues that involve injustice among society. It's a must for a social worker that works in a social welfare agency to understand the legal aspect and the court structure so they can testify, give justice and give reports to the court (Samir Muhazzab Amin, Mohd. Suhaimi Mohammad & Muhd. Dhamir Audi Azizul, 2020).

Ironically, unity leads us to a family of human beings, regardless of countries, different ethnicities on the globe, economics and ideologies, ethical acknowledgement and is for us to be interdependent in every human experience aspect, including family, society, community, and global dimension. Social workers must recognise the importance of relationships within society as a precise tool for effecting change. This is because social workers involve the society around them as a sharing partner in helping and working towards strengthening relationships among the society to enhance prosperity and well-being in every stage and layer of society.

The third ethical code is the importance of safeguarding dignity and self-worth. The dignity of a human is the ethical base of a moralized society. As a social worker, they need to respect the existence of human dignity and believe that every individual is unique and has dignity of their own. In other words, the social worker is the executing body that is free to solve the problem of domination, exploitation and discrimination involving individuals or groups regardless of if it involves any political parties. Social workers will try to respect the existence of dignity and self-worth in a person and will help the clients in recognizing the clients' capacity and their opportunity to change. The social worker will also try to look for ways of solutions between the clients' self-conflict with the society around them based on values, ethics and principles as what is stated in their profession.

Further, the fourth ethical code is the importance of human relationships. The ethical principle that the social worker needs to hold is that they must realize the importance of human relationships. In this matter, the social worker needs to understand that good relationships among humans could lead to change. In the process of helping, clients are seen as partners in looking for relationship strength between individuals, families, social groups, organization and communities.

The fifth code according to NASW is integrity. The ethical principle that the social worker needs to hold onto is always to hold on to its values, principles, and ethics together with the practice while working with the client. This principle is attached to the belief element or trust in Islam. Social workers must act with honesty and responsibility, promote the ethic of practice, and use it as a benchmark to guide their social lives (Kasim et al., 2020.) As a matter of that, social workers

should not have prejudice towards their clients because every client has their own humanity values and each social worker needs to consider some empathy in what each of their clients' needs to go through. The final ethic code is competency. In this context, social workers need to practice according to areas of competence that could together increase professional expertise that they own.

In summary, the ethical codes in social work are closely in line with Islamic teaching. This will be discussed further in terms of its relations with religious values especially Islamic values which have been the context of discussion in this paper.

ISLAMIC VALUES: ALMSGIVING, COURTESY AND EQUALITY

Man as a social creature, needs one another. Individual development needs interaction, guidance, experience, and safety. This self-concept becomes an individual survival, whether from the physical or psychological aspect, which depends on an individual's decision or act. Social work's ethical principles served as the foundation for recognising and thoroughly researching religious aspects. The basis of case study work, that is handling clients' cases that need help wholly, taking into consideration the background and its needs, also respecting its values and dignity, is an ethical principle in social work that focuses on the first and third ethical codes that are giving service and taking care of the clients' values and dignity. This concept is also reflected in the teachings of Islam. Every individual has the right to be helped and is compelled to be protected from disgrace. Holloway and Moss (2010) look at religious aspects and social work as a spiritual integration that needs to be absorbed by the social workers so that they could offer better social support to their clients.

1) Almsgiving

Giving out alms is the fourth Islamic pillar that has been stated to be just economic-wise, in a society. Almsgiving is defined as purity and cleanliness, which is also part of treasure and wealth which is justly given to the needy poor and those named as the *asnaf* (Ansur, 2017). Other than that, almsgiving is one of the ways to eradicate poverty and distribute income evenly through almsgiving (Ahmed, 2004; Kasri, 2016). The potential benefits of almsgiving or *zakat* for the people have a positive impact in terms of empowerment. Thus, it can also boost the poor's purchasing power, increasing consumption, spending, and aggregate demand (Muhammad Husni et al., 2023). Other than that, almsgiving is part of the Islamic economic system based on the teachings of Islam and it is aimed to develop the economy of the Islamic community, universal brotherhood and just income distribution. In other words, almsgiving is the pillar of the society's economy (Mohd Shairazi Akmal & Harunnizam Wahid, 2019). It is designed to build a community where each individual and group must be committed to social justice, equity and freedom. The Islamic economy system was designed not only to achieve social welfare but also to increase and establish faith and piety (Chapra, 2006).

This demonstrates how almsgiving fosters social welfare and upholds justice, as it mandates the equitable and just distribution of alms to those in need. The needy named are hardcore poor, poor, alms collectors, those hearts reconciled to Islam, slaves in freeing themselves, those with debt, those on God's cause and wayfarers. Islamic interest in caring for those who are weak (mustadh'afien), or in need of help, is an Islamic philanthropic-altruism tradition that has been the basis of the effort in freeing slavery. Noorkhmilah (2017) stated that Islam testifies to the effort to free the mustadh'afien as a form of considering global humanity rights, and this is mentioned in the Al-Quran as followings:

> "*And what is (the matter) with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah and (for) the oppressed among men, women, and children who say, "Our Lord, take us out of this city of oppressive people and appoint for us from Yourself a helper?"*
>
> (Quran 4:75)

The verse above conveys a message about a strict religious order that aims to free oppressed people who, due to their weakness, are unable to act on their own. In addition to individual efforts, they should also hope for divine assistance (Norkamilah, 2017; Badruzzaman, 2008). Similarly in social work, those who need to be helped are those who are in need, such as weak people, people with social dysfunction, minorities, the poor, the hardcore poor, the homeless, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Almsgiving could be used to pay off debt, helping those in need by providing facilities and various social responsibilities that are suitable with the needs and requests (Senturk, 2017). The obligation of almsgiving is briefly and clearly stated by Allah in the Quran which means:

> "*Indeed those who believe and do righteous deeds and establish prayer and give zakah will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.*"
>
> (Quran, 2:277)

Based on the Quran verse above, it is clear and specific that almsgiving is part of one's faith in guiding towards achieving pure faith and piety in the sight of God. The Quran clearly orders humans to compete in doing good and courteous deeds. The verse also promotes humans to do good deeds and among the good deeds are the social work aspect in general. Juliyana et al. (2023) explained that as an exemplary figure in Islam, Prophet Muhammad exercised the idea of social justice when he mentioned, *"Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which he has earned by working with his own hands"* (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith 2072). As a society leader, he really highlights the importance of labour in sustaining one's life. Islam strictly prohibits any form of oppression to other individuals, what more, to the weak as in religion, all Muslims are equal.

Even though undeniably, it really is referred to especially in the state of spirituality, where all the Muslims' souls are equal in God's eyes, not the material and social equality among humans, regardless of sex and ethnicity. Hence, the suggestion to do good and be courteous is a commendable attitude in religion. Courteousness is a deed that is essential to humans.

2) Courtesy (Ihsan)

Courteous is defined as portraying good deeds to the weak or in need of help (Hamid Rizal & Hanudin Amin, 2017). It shows that akhlaq is one of the ways to become a competent social worker especially in dealing with clients. According to Ruslan et al. (2020), the concept of akhlaq is not just about physical and behavioural aspects aspect, but it merges between internal and external values for students' personality development.

As mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah, Islam has expressed many moral values in its teachings including work ethics. For example, performing a promise is one of the elements of Islamic work ethics and this is clearly indicated under several verses in the Quran (Siti Suraya et al. 2022).

> "But those who break the covenant of Allah after contracting it and sever that which Allah has ordered to be joined and spread corruption on earth-for them is the curse, and they will have the worst home."
>
> (Quran, 13:25)

A competent social worker will look seriously at how to take care of human relationships, especially when they are handling a different client from a diverse background. The concept of Ihsan shows there are possibilities to develop awareness and self-drives the external behaviour towards words or actions if the person really understands the application of the concept. There are two parts regarding the concept of Ihsan. First, it is in the context of worshipping Allah. Second is to do good to fellow creatures such as parents, relatives, orphans, poor people, and neighbours (Harda et al., 2023; Nozira and Maryam, 2023).

Islam gives a universal value in the aspect of welfare by doing good deeds with sincere intention to do muamalah activities and build social relationship. Pious deeds have to start with sincere intention, as Allah will only reward those with pious deeds, that is:

> "*Whoever comes (on the Day of Judgement) with a good deed will have ten times the like thereof (to his credit)*"
>
> (Quran 6:160)

In terms of helping, Islam also emphasizes on sincere intention as Allah had said in Qudsy Hadith, Rasulullah SAW said:

> " *At the time when Allah SWT gathers the first group and the last group on the Day of Judgement, there is no doubt when one calls; Whoever associated themselves in any of their deeds to Allah, ask for reward from other than Allah, Allah is bounty in its allied federation.*"
>
> (Noorkamilah, 2017; Nawawi, 2003)

Social work practice itself holds to a principle of helping one another, which means helping society (individual, group, community) so that they can help their own selves. This is basically something inseparable. As a profession that encourages the value of cooperation, no wonder it needs to be done nicely. One's readiness to help others in need is the initial and main condition in doing social work right (Noorkamilah, 2017). Concurrently with what Zastrow (2004) defined as:

> '*the professional activity of helping individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities to enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and to create societal conditions favorable to their goals*"

It means social profession also encourages the basic value of cooperating with those in need nicely.

c) Equality

Apart from almsgiving and courtesy, Islam is strongly committed to equality. All humans need to be served and given equal rights for so long that it brings good. The concept of equal rights in Islam is a positive perception towards social just, fairness and not discriminating others (Syed, 2018). This is seen as really related to the principle and ethic of social work that is social justice. Islam not only asks its followers to do good within themselves but also to the non-Muslims. Al-Quran has stated that humans are naturally created in batches and different customs and respect are needed in this diversity as a law of nature. Allah's words have firmly stated the importance of equality among races and recognise humans' honour justly as Allah has stated this in the Quran, which means:

> "*O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you people and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is knowing and acquainted*".
>
> (Quran 49:13)

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed Allah is acquainted with what you do".

(Quran 5:8)

"...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression"

(Quran 5:2)

Ibn Kathir then gave an interpretation of this verse: 'helping you in doing kindness and piety to leave what is evil and do not cooperate in doing sins and violations' (Noorkamilah, 2017; Ar Rifa'I, 2008). In fact, Islam is a religion that is 'rahmatan lil'alamin,' which means good for all the activities within each fellow human and nature. Noorkamilah (2017) has given a real picture of how the authenticity of Islam comes into play when it comes to the values of the whole of Islam for kindness and happiness, not only for Muslims but for everyone in the world. This is shown in the Quran where "*We have not sent you, Muhammad, except as a mercy to the worlds*.". (Quran 21:107).

This verse is interpreted by Al Maraghi as, We have not sent to you this lesson and anything similar to it in the form of shariah and law that becomes the source of happiness in the world and hereafter, except that you become the blessings and guidance for humans in their worldly and the hereafter affairs, but in fact the Messenger was sent to bring a lesson for the goodness of the world and hereafter (Noorkamilah, 2017; Al Maraghi, 1989). So, the value in Islam is very well related to the principles and ethics in social work itself. We cannot deny the integration of religious aspects into social work and their instillation in social workers.

METHODOLOGY

The design of this study is qualitative by using an in-depth interview technique. This design and technique were used to gain a thorough understanding of social work ethical principles. The research informants were chosen from among the social worker practitioners around Kuala Lumpur. Selection of informants was done through purposive sampling using the criterion sampling technique. This sampling technique only includes individuals who meet the specific criteria for this study (Neuman, 2014; Emmel, 2013). Individuals selected as a sample have specific features to give information needed in this study (Rozmi, 2012). According to Reinard (2001), researchers should consider their own criteria when selecting the most suitable informant to fulfil the research objectives. Meanwhile, Creswell (2008) explained that selecting the research participants and research place that is suitable and easy to access is necessary to gain a deep research result.

The inclusion criteria encompass crucial characteristics that the subject must meet to participate in this research. Exclusion criteria pertain to features that the researchers deem unnecessary for the study subject. In this research, the researcher did not impose limits on the age or gender of the research informant. The criteria are as follows:

Inclusion Criteria		**Exclusion Criteria**	
i)	Muslim Social Worker	i)	Non-Muslim Social Worker
ii)	Minimum two years of experience as a social worker	ii)	Less than two years of experience as social worker
iii)	Academic background in social work	iii)	Have no academic background in social work
iv)	Can speak fluently either Malay or English	iv)	Cannot fluently speak Malay or English

Four social workers were interviewed using an interview protocol. Four social workers were sufficient for this study as Muelman et al. (2021) explain that four to six numbers of informants are recommended in qualitative design, as the data gathered can answer the research questions and reach data saturation. Every interview session lasted for a duration of 45 to 60 minutes. Verbatim transcription was done within 24 hours before being analysed Denzin and Lincoln (2003) noted that the interview method is a form of conversation that discusses specific phenomena directed toward the informant. The interview sessions with the informants continued until the data became saturated and no new information or themes emerged from the data. Overall, each informant would have at least three sessions. Thematic analysis approach was used in identifying and analysing data. Then, the data was manually arranged and organized as the researcher wanted to thoroughly understand and digest the case study that they were conducting (Nur Saadah & Rusyda Helma, 2016).

RESULTS OF STUDY AND DISCUSSION

INFORMANT'S PROFILE

Table 1 presents the profile of the informants that we have gathered. In order to respect the privacy of the informants and the confidentiality agreement outlined in the informed consent, real names were not used. Four informants were involved in this research, with two male and two female who have working experience in social work from 7 to 12 years. Backgrounds and working experiences are significantly important to enhancing the depth and relevance of the findings.

TABLE 1. Informant Profile

Informant	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Experience in working in the field of Social Work
1	Male	50	Married	8 years
2	Male	35	Not Married	12 years
3	Female	35	Married	7 years
4	Female	35	Married	10 years

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ISLAMIC VALUES AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN SOCIAL WORK

Based on the findings, it is proven that there is a relationship between Islamic values and ethical principles in social work. This relationship can be found in three themes that emerged: almsgiving, courtesy and equality. These themes are the values of Islam which have been explained earlier in this article.

Knowledge of Almsgiving, Courtesy and Equality is known by every Muslim. Even if they aren't aware of it, followers of Islam are likely familiar with it. In line with the research done by Mohd Azmir, Mohd Aizuddin and Mashitah (2009) on comparison between social work and Islam, they discovered that social work has generally existed in Islam since 1400 years ago, before the arrival of the knowledge of social work practice introduced by Westerners. Through interviews with the informants, they provided their views on the relationship between values of Islam (almsgiving, courtesy, and equality) and social work ethical principles.

1) Almsgiving

Researchers found that informants generally stated that the almsgiving is related to the ethical principles of social work, as in the statement of Informant 1:

> *"..the Islamic values as I see, is related with the principle of helping those in need.like in the service of social work.the aim is to offer service to those in need including people who are in trouble..similar to the concept of alms.alms is fulfilled by those who can afford to help those in need."*
>
> (Informant 1)

In this context, social workers are called to embody almsgiving in their practice, fostering environments of inclusivity and compassion. The integration of alms not only enriches the social work profession but also enhances the effectiveness of interventions aimed at uplifting community in need (Greason, Muise & Jardine 2024). By cultivating relationships grounded in respect and understanding, social workers can strengthen the collective human experience.

Researchers believe that almsgiving is related to the importance of human relationships is the ethical principle introduced by NASW and needs to be obeyed by the social workers in this profession. According to NASW, social workers need to understand that a good relationship among humans could bring change to an individual. This is because in the process of cooperating, the client is deemed as a partner in looking for strength in relationships among individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities. A good relationship will produce a positive impact towards the process of cooperation done. Islam clearly rejects discrimination based on colours, caste or position. The concept of brotherhood goes across all races, customs, or knowledge in the life of a Muslim society and proves that the religious values and social work are inseparable.

Islam has established a relationship between humans based on Tauhid in executing responsibilities as caliphs to prosper and govern this earth. The caliph concept relates to professional ethics. Özkeskin (2013) stated that individuals who are in a professional area must be respectful to nature and people in the element of right, defending the right in the face of injustice, and exhibiting behaviors (Ahmet, 2022). According to research by Siti Norlina and friends (2005), relationships among humans are one of the main features in forming an ideal Islamic community.

> *"..ermm the concept of alms is the same as social work as in Islam it is mentioned that if affordable, pay the alms as alms is used to help one another especially among Muslims. Rights of a Muslim to another Muslim..cooperation..so that is it.."*
>
> (Informant 2)

Indeed, one of the rights of a Muslim towards the other Muslim is to help each other when one of them is in trouble. A Muslim with another Muslim are also brothers in the religion, so when a muslim is stricken with a disaster, it is compulsory for another Muslim to lend help. Additionally, the manifestation of mahmudah character in an individual is a key component of akhlaq. According to al-Ghazali (2012) and al-Buraey (1986), the qualities that encourage humans

exhibit this positive behavior are by performing prayers, *zakat* and almsgiving, fasting, performing Hajj, reading the Quran, enjoining the good and forbidding the bad or practice the *amar makruf nahi mungkar* (Mohd Hidayat et al, 2023).

> *" A simile of a Believer in (weaving) love and affection among themselves are as one whole body, when there are parts of the body that is feeling pain, the whole body will feel the pain and couldn't sleep."*
>
> (HR Bukhari: 6011).

> *" A Muslim (with a complete Islam) is (when) a Muslimin (another) safe from (bad) its tongue and hands, whereas a Muhajir (those who move from a place to another) is someone who leaves all that is prohibited by Allah SWT."*
>
> (HR Bukhari: 6484)

2) Courtesy

As for the concept of courtesy or Ihsan, the informant stated that a social worker needs to help a client in need. A social worker must consistently demonstrate good and courteous deeds towards a client, transcending professional obligation to embrace a genuine commitment to their well-being with humanity. Commitment and humanity are related to principle and ethics in social work specifically integrity. Moreover, integrity is aligned with the concept of Ihsan. Informant 3 explained:

> *"Em..this concept of Ihsan is actually important and the social worker do imply it..we do help our clients out, for example we want to help them out from the B40 group, so we help them, give them capital to start a business or anything..we want to help them to live independently and not live in less anymore. We don't just let them be after we have helped them but monitor them,.we guide them. We need to take care of our relationship with humanity."*
>
> (Informant 3)

Integrity is closely associated with moral excellence and ethical behaviour. Abdullahi Maidugu and Abubakar Sadeeq (2024) highlighted that Ihsan in a contemporary context involves personal development and compassion, which are essential in the concept of integrity. In the current fast-paced world, where challenges, for instance poverty, discrimination, and social injustice, are prevalent, Albrithen (2023) explained that the integration of Ihsan into social work is not only beneficial but also essential. Social workers can more effectively serve their clients by fostering personal development, enabling them to cultivate resilience and compassion within themselves. This self-improvement not only improves their professional capabilities but also aligns with the Islamic principles of serving humanity and seeking excellence (Schmid & Sheikhzadegan 2022).

The same principles and ethics of social work require social workers to take care for relationships among humans and maintain integrity professionally. Encouragements or suggestions towards courteous deeds and relationships among humankind are emphasized by Prophet Muhammad and can be evidenced by several of his sayings, and among them are:

> *" A Muslim is a relative to the other Muslims, they can't wrong other people as how he won;t be wronged by other people. Whoever carries out a wish of their brother, Allah will give what they ask for. Whoever eases a Muslim, Allah SWT will ease off their problem on the day of judgement. Whoever covers up the disgrace of a Muslim, Allah SWT will cover their disgrace on the Day of Judgment."*
>
> *(HR Bukhari:2442)*

> *" The simile between a Believer with another Believer in loving each other is like a whole body. When one of the body parts that's enduring a pain, the whole body will be awake (unable to sleep) and will feel the heat (feeling the pain)".*
>
> (HR Bukhari: 6011)

According to these hadiths, we can clarify that Prophet Muhammad is genuinely concerned with shaping the ummah to have love and concern for each other as it could lead to tolerance and cooperation to complement the gaps and shortcomings of an individual. Prophet Muhammad also encourages every Muslim to cover disgrace (problems and shortcomings) of other Muslims to protect their dignity from those irresponsible. Thus, the social work profession is not merely a profession that is separated from religion as structured by secularism but realistically it is an important responsibility that needs to be practiced among humans. With this awareness, social work could enhance the social functionality of a society while decreasing the number of social problems that arise. This clearly coincides with The National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 2006) and the definition in Social Work Dictionary (Barker, 1999).

3) Equality

Equality is a cornerstone of social work, ensuring that everyone receives fair treatment and has equal access to resources and opportunities. Study by Wilson, Solomon and McLane-Davidson (2020) emphasized systematic inequalities, which is crucial for creating a more equitable and just society. This principle is vital for promoting social justice and addressing disparities in society. This is in line with the statement of Informant 4 in this study:

> *"In terms of the relation between the concept of equality with the principles of social work, the informant explains the the concept of equality in Islam is seen to have a relation with the principles and ethics of social work when the social worker needs to execute the social just and not at all allowed to suppress other people especially a group that needs or is feeble."*
>
> (Informant 4)

This is also consistent with the study by Ainul Basyirah Alias, Ermy Azziaty Rozali and Shamsul Azhar Yahya (2019) which explained that justice is the value that establishes the element of equality in society. This commitment to equity is not only an obligation, but it is a moral imperative that resonates profoundly with the teachings of Islam. The Quran affirms the importance of justice in Surah An-Nisa, verse no. 135:

> *"O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.*
>
> *(Quran 4:135)*

This verse reinforces the idea that social workers must act as advocates for those who are marginalised, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their ethnic background, religion, or socioeconomic status, receives the respect and assistance they deserve. Understanding and respecting the diverse backgrounds of clients is crucial in providing effective support. This notion is echoed in the teachings of Islam, which celebrate diversity as a sign of Allah's creativity and wisdom as stated in the Quran, Surah 49:13.

This perspective not only enriches social work practice but also promotes a culture of inclusivity that benefits society. By promoting and advocating for fair treatment and equality to resources, social workers can embody justice and create Rahmatan lil 'Alamin or a mercy society where everyone can flourish. In conlusion, based on the result and the discussion of this study, we could simply understand it as in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Relation of Islamic Values and Ethical Principles in Social Work

NO	Islamic Values	Ethics of Social Work by NASW
1	Order of Alms, defending the weaks, people in need and asnaf	Service, Social Justice
2	Ihsan, cooperation, Sincere Good Deeds, Covering Disgrace	importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence
3	Equality, Rahmatan lil 'Alamien	dignity and worth of the person, Social Justice

IMPLICATION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study finds that the Islamic values (Almsgiving, Ihsan and Equality) are related to the principles and ethics of social work that are helping those in need, taking care of relationships between humans, integrity and fighting for social justice. Informants also report not being exposed to formal knowledge of social work's relationship to spiritual or religious concepts. They only possess a limited understanding of what they know and learn, not fully comprehending it. However, the findings of this study show that most of the social workers have a sound religious faith and understand the values studied when in practice. This directly has a positive impact on their lives, enabling them to continue helping individuals in need within the guidelines stated in social work or Islam.

Many social workers express that their understanding is limited to their personal experiences and informal learning rather than a holistic view that integrates these vital connections. This lack of exposure can hinder the ability of social workers to fully leverage their religious beliefs in their professional practice, potentially limiting the depth of their engagement with clients from diverse backgrounds. The interplay between social work and Islamic values creates a framework that not only guides social workers in their daily interactions but also enriches their personal lives (Sahin 2022). The positive impact of integrating these principles allows social workers to navigate their roles with a sense of integrity and commitment, ultimately empowering them to better serve communities while remaining aligned with both their professional ethics and religious beliefs (Albrithen 2023; Qasqas, Graham, Abdirahman & Ali 2024). Hence, the study underlines the importance of recognizing and embracing the connection between social work and Islamic teachings, paving the way for more informed, compassionate, and effective practices in the field.

Besides, the documentation of this study aspires to serve as a comprehensive reference for social workers, counsellors, or JKM social welfare officers in increasing their knowledge of the relationship between Islam and social work. Through this study, the researcher also hopes to inspire others to seek the most effective ways to enhance their understanding. The outcome of this study could also be a general reference in the field of social research especially in the future when it relates religion and social work, which is also mirrored in Christianity and other beliefs (Albrithen, 2023; Campbell & Bauer, 2021; Graham, Coholic & Coates, 2006). This study also is to challenge social workers to reflect their practices and how the Islamic values can guide their efforts in fostering a more compassionate and just society. Islam is a religion that encourages good deeds to those in need. Together, we must explore the profound synergy between social work and Islamic values, nurturing a profession that not only alleviates suffering but also uplifts the dignity and humanity of every individual.

CONCLUSION

Islam plays a significant role in social work, as it provides spiritual guidance and motivation for social change. Understanding the Islamic teaching can empower social workers to connect more deeply with clients, fostering trust and respect. By integrating empathy, justice, the importance of human relationships, integrity and compassion, practitioners can develop a holistic approach that addresses both material and spiritual needs. This research aims to inform social workers' practitioners and policymakers about the importance of incorporating religious perspectives into social work and promoting culturally competent and spiritually sensitive practices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

Abdullahi Maidugu, U., & Abubakar Sadeeq, A. A. (2024). Islam and morality: the teachings of al-ihsan from the Qur'an and Hadith and its effects on muslim ummah. *Solo Universal Journal of Islamic Education and Multiculturalism*, *2*(03), 181–194. https://doi.org/10.61455/sujiem.v2i03.199

Abdul Razak, A., M. (2019). *Modul kerja sosial asas*. UUM Press.

Aguilar, M. (2007).Catholicism. In M. V. Hook, B. Hugen & M. Aguilar (Eds.), *Spirituality within religious traditions in social work practice* (pp.60-98). Brook/Cole.

Ahmed, H. (2004). *The role of zakah and awqaf in poverty alleviation.* Jeddah: Islamic Research and Training Institute.

Albrithen, A. (2023). The Islamic basis of social work in the modern world. *International Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, 20(1), 171-193. https://doi.org/10.55521/10-020-113

Al-Bukhari, M. I. I. (1982). *Sahih al-bukhari*. Al-Matba'ah Al-Salafiyyah Cairo.

Al-Maraghi, A M.(1989). *Terjemah tafsir al-maraghi juz 17.* Penerbit Toha Putra.

Al-Quran

Ansur, K. (1 1 February 2017). Understanding concept of social work in Islam. Retrieved from https://oracleopinions.com/2017/11/15/understanding-concept-social-work-islam/..

Ar-Rifa'i, Muhammad Nasib (2008) *Kemudahan dari Allah: ringkasan tafsir Ibnu Katsir.* Gema Insani

Badruzzaman Abad. (2008). *Teologi kaum tertindas: kajian tematik ayat-ayat Mustadh'afien dengan pendekatan keindonesiaan.* Pustaka Pelajar.

Barise, A. (2005). Social work with Muslims: insights from the teachings of Islam. *Critical Social Work, 6*(2): 1-10.

Barker, R.L. (1999). *The social work dictionary* (4th ed). Washington DC

Bauer, S. and Campbell, C. (2021). Christian faith and resilience: implications for social work practice. *Social Work & Christianity, 48*(1),28-51. https://doi.org/10.34043/swc.v48i1.212

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Canda, Edward R. and Furman, L.D. (2010). *Spiritual diversity in social work practice: the heart of helping*. Oxford University Press.

Chapra, M.U. (2006). *Islam and the economic challenge*. The Islamic Foundation.

Crabtree, S. A., Husain, F. & Spalek, B. (2017). *Islam and social work; culturally sensitive practice in a diverse world* (2nd ed.). Policy Press.

Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed). Pearson Education International

Daut, M. A. M. (2022). Profesionalisme kerja sosial di Malaysia dari sudut perundangan. *International Journal of Social Policy and Society*, 18,10-23.

Denzin, N.K., Lincoln, Y.S. (2003). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (2nd ed). Sage Publications.

Dubois, B. & Miley, K.K. (1999). *Social work: an empowering profession* (4th ed). Allyn and Bacon.

Dudly, J.R. et al.(1990) Exploring a place for spirituality in the social work curriculum. *Journal of Social Work Education,* 26(Fall), 287-294.

Emmel, N. (2013). *Sampling and choosing cases in qualitative research: a realist approach*. Sage Publications.

Gilligan, P. & Furness, S.(2006). The role of religion and spirituality in social work practice: views and experience of social workers and students. *The British Journal of Social Work, 36* (1), 617-637.

Graham, J. R., Coholic, D., & Coates, J. (2006). Spirituality as a guiding construct in the development of Canadian social work. *Critical Social Work, 7*(1). https://doi.org/10.22329/csw.v7i1.5774

Greason, M, Muise, A. & Jardine, A. (2024). Better equipping structural social workers: embodying social justice values in practice. *Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education, 27*(1): 3-16.

Hamid Rizal & Hanudin Amin. (2017). Perceived ihsan, Islamic egalitarianism and Islamic ieligiosity towards charitable giving of cash waqf. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, *8*(4): 669-685

Holloway, M. & Moss, B. (2010). *Spirituality and social work*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Holtzhausen, L. (2016). When values collide: finding common ground for social work education in the United Arab Emirates. *International social work, 54*(2), 191-208.

Hodge, D.R. et al. (2008). Postmodernism and spirituality: some pedagogical implications for teaching content on spirituality. *Journal of Social Work Education, 44*(1), 103-123.

Hook, M. V., Hugen, B. & Aguilar, M. (2001). *Spirituality within religious traditions in social work practice*. Brook/Cole Cengage Learning.

Hugen, B. (2007). Spirituality and religion in social work practice: a conceptual model, In M. V. Hook, B. Hugen & M. Aguilar (Eds.), *Spirituality within religious traditions in social work practice* (pp.31-44). Brook/Cole.

Juliyana Junaidi, Latifah Abdul Majid & Mohd Arif Nazri. (2023). Social justice in Islam: the perspective of Tjokroaminoto & Syed Hussein Alatas. *Journal of Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah*, 8(1), 10 – 20.

Kasim, A. C., Dien, M. I., Kasim, S. C., & Manap, J. (2020). The impact of amanah on individual manners and the society. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 10*(9), 629-640.

Kasri, R. A. (2016). Maqasid al-shariah and performance of zakah institutions. *Kyoto Bulletin Of Islamic Area Studies*, *9*, 19-41

Lessy, Z. (2016). Islam dan pekerjaan sosial. *Jurnal Sosiologi Reflektif*, *9*(2), 235-252.

Miller, D.W. (2001). Programs in social work embrace the teaching of spirituality. *The Chronicle of Higher Education, 47*(36), A12-A13.

Mohd Azmir, Mohammad Aizuddin & Mashitah Sulaiman. (24 Julai 2009). Asas kerja sosial: analisa kritikal perspektif Islam. Kertas Kerja Seminar Kebangsaan Kemahiran Insaniah dan Kerja Sosial 2009.

Mohd Hidayat Mahadi, Muhammad Hilmi Jalil, Ahmad Munawar Ismail & Shawal Sahid Hamid @ Hussain. (2023). Tingkah laku organisasi menurut perspektif Islam: kajian terhadap iklim etika, kepimpinan beretika dan tingkah laku positif. *Jurnal Hadhari: An International Journal, 15*(2): 219 - 244

Mohd Shairazi Akmal & Hairunnizam Wahid. (2019). Bayaran zakat fitrah mengikut harga beras yang dimakan dan peranan medium promosi: kajian di Lembaga Zakat Selangor (LZS Cawangan Kajang, Selangor). *Jurnal Pengurusan dan Penyelidikan Fatwa, 17*(2), 283-308.

Muellmann, S., Brand, T., Jürgens, D. *et al.* (2021). How many key informants are enough? analysing the validity of the community readiness assessment. *BMC Res Notes*, *14*, 85-91. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13104-021-05497-9

Muhammad Husni Thamrin, Faisal Eriza, Muhammad Faisal, Indra Kesuma Nasution, Afrizal, & Maulana Andinata Dalimunthe. (2023). Religiosity in paying zakat and tax compliance in Medan City. *Pharos Journal of Theology*, 1*04*(3), 1 – 12.

National Association of Social Workers. (1 Disember 2016). Code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. Retrieved from https://www.socialworkers. org/pubs/code/code.asp.

Nawawi, Imam & Al-Qasthalani. (2003) *Kumpulan Hadis Qudsi Beserta Penjelasannya*. Al-Manar.

Neuman, W.L. (2014). *Understanding research* (1st ed.) Pearson Education Limited.

Noorkamilah. (2017). Objektivikasi Islam dalam tema-tema pekerjaan sosial (Konkretisasi nilai-nilai Islam dalam praktik pekerjaan sosial). *Empati:Jurnal Ilmu Kesejahteraan Sosial*, *6*(1), 1-12.

Nozira Salleh & Maryam Zulaikha Ramlan. (2023). Kesan penghayatan ihsan terhadap pembentukan akhlak remaja Islam. *Islamiyyat*, *45*(2), 3 – 13.

Nur Ainul Basyirah Alias, Ermy Azziaty Rozali & Shamsul Azhar Yahya. (2019). Toleransi agama dan keadilan sosial di Bosnia - Herzegovina Era Penguasaan 'Uthmaniyyah abad ke-15 hingga abad ke-17M. *Jurnal Al-Tamaddun, 14* (2), 89-98.

Nur Saadah Mohamad Aun & Rusyda Helma Mohd. (2016). Informal caregiving: empowering social support programs by employers. *Akademika, 86* (1), 3-9.

Qasqas, M., Graham, J. R., Abdirahman, A. & Ali,S. (2024). What social workers need to know about Muslims: an analysis of the contemporary social work scholarship. *Social Work*, *69*(1), 17–24, https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swad049

Reinard, J. (2001). *Introduction to Communication Research*. McGraw Hill.

Rozmi Ismail. (2012). *Metodologi penyelidikan; teori dan praktis.* Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Ruslan Hassan, Farid Mat Zain, Kaseh Abu Bakar & Azmul Fahimi Kamaruzzaman. (2020). Kefahaman nilai etika dan moral pelajar di institusi pengajian tinggi: satu sorotan literatur. *Jurnal Pengajian Umum Asia Tenggara,* 21(2020), 126 – 141.

Sahin, A. (2022). Islam, Social Work and Common Good in the Muslim Minority Context of Europe: Rethinking Shariʿa as Relational Ethics. In H. Schmid, A. Sheikhzadegan (Eds) *Exploring Islamic Social Work. Muslims in Global Societies Series* (pp.179-200). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95880-0_11

Samir Muhazzab Amin, Mohd. Suhaimi Mohammad & Muhd. Dhamir Audi Azizul. (2020). Analisa Perspektif Kepentingan Akta Profesion Kerja Sosial Di Malaysia. *Journal Of Islamic Social Sciences and Humanities*, 23 (1): 196-212

Schmid, H., Sheikhzadegan, A. (2022). Increasing Spiritual Sensitivity and Faith-Based Service Provision: Pathways to Islamic Social Work. In H. Schmid, A. Sheikhzadegan (Eds) *Exploring Islamic Social Work. Muslims in Global Societies Series* (pp.1-23). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95880-0_11

Sheridan, M.J., dan Amato-Von Hemert, K.(1999). The role of religion and spirituality in social work education and practice: a survey of student views and experiences. *Journal of Social Work Education, 35*(1), 125-141.

Shafor, B.W. & Horejsi, C.R. (2003). *Techniques and guidelines for social work practice*. Pearson Education.

Siti Suraya Abd Razak, Siti Zaharah Jamaluddin & Faridah Hanim Jaffri. (2022). Integrating Islamic work ethics in work from home arrangement. *Akademika*, *92*(3), 187-197.

Siti Norlina et. al .(2005). *Budaya penyayang dalam kehidupan masyarakat Islam: teori dan praktis*. Penerbit Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

Wilson, D. B., Solomon, T. A., & McLane-Davison, D. (2020). Ethics and racial equity in social welfare policy: social work's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Social Work in Public Health*, *35*(7), 617–632. https://doi.org/10.1080/19371918.2020.1808145

Zastrow, C. (2014). *Introduction to social work and social* welfare: empowering people. (11th ed). Brooks/Cole-Cengage Learning.

Nur Saadah Mohamad Aun (Corresponding author)
Social Work Programme, Centre for Research in Psychology and Human Well-Being,
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia
Email: n_saadah@ukm.edu.my

Zaenal Abidin
Department of Social Welfare, Faculty of Social Science and Political Science,
Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang,
Jl. Raya Tlogomas No. 246 Malang 65144, Jawa Timur, Indonesia
Email: zenn_2112@umm.ac.id

Nur Madihah Ili Idrus
Social Work Programme, Centre for Research in Psychology and Human Well-Being,
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia
Email: nurmadihahidrus@gmail.com