Does Religiosity Matter in Personal Knowledge Management and Job Performance? A Case of Employees in Public Sector in Malaysia

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Abstract

Malaysia is currently in the phase of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) in which organizations have to deal with Big Data and the value of the technology becomes essential in this respect. In preparing for that, in the current time, our way of life will have to be altered according to the developments that will emerge from this revolution. Based on the 4IR, personal knowledge management becomes the best approach to access Big Data. This is because, during this revolution, employees are no longer able to store and retrieve information via the previous traditional database management system. The revolution of big data in Malaysia also gives a huge impact on employees in the public sector, as they are the backbone of the country and the Big Data is believed to be able to sustain all developments. In this line of discussion comes the purpose of this study which is to examine the relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance in the selected public organization sector in Shah Alam. Additionally, religiosity takes the role of moderation variable in fulfilling the objectives of the study. The quantitative survey is used to collect the data with a convenient sampling technique being used to collect data from 200 respondents. The finding of this study informed that personal knowledge management is significantly associated with employee performance. Interestingly, the finding also revealed that religiosity moderates the relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance. The findings suggested that as Islam is governed by the Shariah laws, Muslims are expected to be responsible and careful with everything that they do. As this involves workplace employment too, consequently, work performance in the organization can improve in terms of personal knowledge management whereby they are wise in using the enriched knowledge from big data for their career achievement and more importantly for the success and prosperity of the organization they work in.

Keywords: Personal Knowledge Management, Religiosity, Employee Performance

Introduction

Employee performance is a topical issue in organizational management. However, it is not something that is always emphasized in the public sector. This has prompted this study to concentrate on public sector employees in Malaysia. The public sector is considered the backbone of Malaysia and attempts have to be made to sustain their development(s).

Historically, as early as the 1980s, the Malaysian government has implemented various administrative reforms to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services (Siddiquee, 2014). However, despite the changes, the performance of public sector organizations in Malaysia generally is lagging.

Moreover, Malaysia is currently in the phase of 4IR and Big Data. Unfortunately, based on sources by Malaysia Computer Emergency Response Team (MyCERT), there have been many reports concerning the misuse of information or knowledge among Malaysian employees. The range of problems reported includes content-related issues, cyber harassment, denial of service, fraud, intrusion attempts, malicious codes, spam, and vulnerabilities (Malaysia Computer Emergency Response Team, n.d.). These occurrences revealed that Malaysian employees do not know how important personal knowledge management is while carrying out their duties. In this condition, it is obvious that they will be unable to cope with the big data revolution.

Most of the previous researchers are not aware of personal knowledge management, what more it has been one of the important factors that can encourage employee performance. Many consider job stress as a factor associated with employee performance (Shahid, Latif, Sohail, & Ashraf, 2011), motivation (Bao & Nizam, 2015), communication (Fem, 2014), or organizational culture (Paschal & Nizam, 2016), leadership style (Basit, Sebastian, & Hassan, 2017), income (Gunawan & Amalia, 2015) or other factors other than personal knowledge management. Besides that, since knowledge management was not known as a factor that could cause a decline in performance, the government may never find the best solution to solve the problem. In the big data revolution, individual employees play an important role in managing their information. Unfortunately, research on personal knowledge management is scarce. Should there be any, the closest would be researched on knowledge management. Personal knowledge management is the one that is actually important in this Big Data era. If the employees are considered lacking in terms of information management, they will fail to make good decisions. This is supported by Zhen, Song, and He (2012) who agree that information overload affects knowledge worker's productivity and decision making.

This shows that personal knowledge management is a crucial factor that can deal with the Big Data revolution. This prompts the conduct of this study. The gap arises as only a few researchers have carried out detailed research even on knowledge management, while others carry out only correlation research. Researchers who conducted correlation research were Darvish, Ahmadnia, and Qryshyan (2013), Jafari, Akhavan, and Nikookar (2013), Cheong and Tsui (2011), Cheng E. C., et al., (2015), Hosseingholizadeh, Sharif, and Kouhsari (2018). Besides that, the results from previous researches have consistently shown a positive relationship between knowledge management and employee performance. It should be noted that the strength of knowledge management in influencing performance is different than with personal knowledge management. This has suggested an intervening variable or factor that can mediate or moderate the relationship. From the literature review, one of the best factors identified to moderate the relationship is religiosity. Rahim and Omar (2017) who conducted a study on job performance and religiosity as moderators, found that religiosity has a moderating effect on employee performance. Hence, proposing religiosity as the moderator for personal knowledge management can improve the performance of employees in the public sector. Religiosity is believed to be one of the factors that can help improve the performance of employees.

Literature Review
Employee Performance
Employee performance has always been a challenge to face in the management of an organization. According to Amanah, et al., (2018), employee performance is something of

human nature, more specifically concerning attitude. The action reflects the attitude and each action is affected by different factors either from an internal source (e.g. personal to the employee concerned) or external source (e.g. working environment). From the perspective of Islamic work ethics, employee performance is also a kind of worship, performing it to please the creator who is Allah. As such the achievement should be beautiful if carried out insincerity. The work carried out should embed in it acts of kindness to earn Allah's blessing. Therefore, according to Sharabi (2012), in Islam, work is not performed to achieve material gains only, what is more, important is, work is a form of worship to obtain Allah's blessing. In another elaboration, Muslim employees are expected to perform their job diligently despite facing hardships. With regards to Islamic religiosity, every Muslim when doing anything must show; reflect; and practice all the teachings of Islam that are written in the Hadiths and the Qur'an. Only by doing such would good attitude and behavior follow.

Personal Knowledge Management
Knowledge management (KM) is a system that helps to understand how and why something is happening in a specific organization. KM can help employees to become more effective in selecting and implementing the most suitable decision (Lokman, Naser, & Raica, 2019). On the other hand, personal knowledge management (PKM) is the process of interpreting and transferring knowledge by individuals. Consequently, this knowledge that they have acquired will make it easier for them to implement and apply this valuable knowledge in day-to-day organizational situations (Zumitzawan, 2014). According to Sondari (2013), personal knowledge management (PKM) is the sub-domain of knowledge management that focuses on the critical role of individuals in the process of knowledge management. Especially when PKM is multidisciplinary, it aims to equip people with skills and survival skills to cope with changing social and organizational environments Swigon (2013).

Additionally, PKM is according to Tohiye and Garfield (2017), it is the process of creating, sharing, and storing the knowledge gained by the employee for the sake of improving employees' ability of problem-solving, decision making, competency, and innovation. With the power of PKM, individuals will have no problem handling significant amounts of information in a short period and also be able to obtain the required knowledge they need quickly and efficiently. The knowledge they have obtained will help to improve work efficiency and ability (Liu, Wang, & Lin, 2017).

Religiosity
Religiosity concentrates on the substance of the noble values of religion, so powerful that can lead to change in the person. According to Imran, Hamid, & Aziz, (2017), religiosity is a construct that has two dimensions, namely extrinsic religiosity; and intrinsic religiosity. Besides that, a researcher from a previous study viewed religiosity as the degree to which beliefs and ideals of specific religious values are held and practiced by an individual to an extent that religiosity can influence both human behavior and attitude (Ariffin, Ismail, & Shah, 2016). In addition, according to Nor Diana, Noraini, Mariam Adawiah, & Nazariah (2016), religiosity is a broad sociological term as it is about religious activity, devotion, and belief (Nor Diana, et.al (2016). Additionally, according to Mariman, Djoko, Sukisno, & Sugeng (2015), religiosity is an individual's awareness of true knowledge and hence willingness to accept the teachings of his belief, until it becomes his personal belief, internal belief, and begins to internalize them in his everyday activities. Furthermore, according to Asraf, (2014), religiosity is one's attitude towards religion in general and this attitude can intensify one to become religious.

Relationship Between Personal Knowledge Management and Employee Performance and Religiosity as Moderator

The idea of personal knowledge management is to gain and organize personal knowledge. Alamen and Tasir (2015) conducted a study whereby they investigated to what level secondary school teachers manage their knowledge in Malaysia. This is because teachers' knowledge is dispersed or scattered unless it is properly managed. The problem has led to difficulty in finding new knowledge and applying it. The results of the study suggested that the lack of PKM is a barrier to the good practice of ICT integration in the classroom. The researchers stressed that PKM's best practice is to ensure a high level of individual performance.

This study adopts the idea of previous researchers whereby they constructed a curriculum framework for developing teachers' PKM competencies. This task required of teachers then was facilitated by adopting Dorsey's PKM model. This paper proposes a similar manner by constructing a curriculum framework for the pre-service teachers' training program as a means to develop the teachers' PKM competency. The challenge of this study is to support the sustainable development of teachers as they are considered professionals in the knowledge-based society. When PKM skills are taught, acquired, and used throughout the curriculum regardless of discipline, pre-service teachers can systematically organize, integrate and transform random pieces of information to generate and use them as personal knowledge. The expected result would be the adoption of a genuine learning environment conducive to developing the PKM skills so that pre-service teachers would achieve effective learning (Cheng, et al., 2015).

Next, another study by Uzunboylu and Cavusoglu (2014) attempted to determine the approaches of academic staff towards PKM in a developing university in Northern Cyprus. The study focused on four PKM strategies and techniques that could obtain, save, use and share knowledge, and which of these the employees had used. The findings informed that the general attitude of the staff towards PKM strategies was positive as they wanted to develop the university. This shows that the academic staff of the university had used the PKM model effectively.

Next, Darvish, Ahmadnia, and Qryshyan (2013) examined the profile of Personal Knowledge Management at Payame Noor University. It involved the administrators of Tehran PNU Universities. The tool of this research was a self-assessment questionnaire of personal knowledge management that had been developed in 2003 by Dorsey. The results of this study showed the evaluation of information and ideas reached the highest level which was 5 and the average was 4.04. Meanwhile, the cooperation with others in the information and ideas dropped to the lowest level and the average was 3.56. The assessment involved seven components of personal knowledge management skills.

Additionally, PKM was also carried out among students. This shows that PKM was not only for employees but can also be exercised by all levels of people with regards to handling knowledge. This was supported by a researcher who used the PKM study tools to develop personal knowledge management skills among students in the universities. This research focused on how PKM tools could support PKM skills in academia. The objective of this study was to investigate how PKM tools supported students in the development of personal knowledge management skills them. The PKM skills included accessing information and ideas, evaluating information and ideas, organizing information and ideas, analyzing information and ideas, conveying information and ideas, collaborating on information and ideas, and securing information and ideas. The results showed that there was a significant relationship between seven PKM skills and the use of PKM tools. Besides that, some previous researchers argued about the PKM skill. Specifically, Rob (2011) argued about the use of PKM that could improve the productivity of the knowledge worker (Hosseingholizadeh, Sharif, &

Kouhsari, 2018). Based on the previous researchers, the results showed that personal knowledge management had a significant relationship with employee performance. Based on the above result, the first hypothesis was constructed for this paper.

Next, Zahrah, Hamid, Ranib, and Kamil (2016) studied the relationship between Islamic religiosity, Islamic work ethics, and job performance. The researchers mentioned the lack of study when investigating the impact of awareness from Islamic religiosity at work. According to the researchers, in the context then, the awareness of Islamic religiosity in working life means that a Muslim should act as worship to God. In support, reference was made to Surah Adh- Dhāriyāt verse 56 in the Quran, interpreted to mean:

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me".

This implies that one of the purposes of human creation is to make human beings realize the importance of intention before any kind of activity begins and ends, that is, to worship God and perform all tasks for the sake of His blessings. This awareness encourages every Muslim to carry out his or her tasks effectively. This implies quality work of the tasks is assured. The results of the study by Zahrah, Hamid, Ranib, and Kamil (2016) indicated that there was a significant relationship between Islamic religiosity and job performance, and between Islamic work ethics and work performance. According to the findings, many types of research have shown that people with higher religiosity and Islamic work ethics are more likely to function properly (Ahmad, Rofie, & Oweyemi, 2013).

Lastly concerns a study by Osman-Gani, Hashim, and Ismail (2013) about establishing linkages between religiosity and spirituality and employee performance. The study examined the impact of religiosity and religious beliefs, whether they could result in a significant difference in employee behaviour and performance (providing a frame of reference by which to guide decision making, particularly in multicultural, multireligious environments; and spirituality on employee performance in multi-cultural and multi-religious organisations). The result of this study showed that religiosity and spirituality have a significant positive relationship with employee performance.

However, there were contradictory results from the other researchers who found that religiosity did not affect the performance of employees. For example, in a study by Wening and Choerudin (2015), they examined the influence of religiosity on organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and personal performance. The respondents were education staff in private and public universities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The results the researchers received after analyzing the data using regression analysis was the religiosity variable (belief dimension) did not influence organizational commitment. Thus, religiosity did not influence individual commitment in the organization. This means that religiosity does not affect direct relationships-but can give an effect as a moderator variable. For this study, the researcher brings in religiosity as a moderator variable. From the results of the above study, the second hypothesis was developed and chose religiosity as a moderator variable. Thus, for the current study, it is hypothesized that religiosity moderates the relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance. Figure 1 illustrates the research framework for the present study.

Based on Figure 1, personal knowledge management consists of seven skills, namely retrieving information; evaluating information; organizing information; collaborating around information; analysing information; presenting information; securing information. The dependent variable of this study is employee performance. The existing framework of PKM was proposed by Darvish, Ahmadnia, and Qryshyan, (2013) who studied personal knowledge management and employee performance had applied the skills developed by Dorsey in 2000.

In this present study, religiosity was tested as a moderating variable as proposed by Nurul Aisyah Awanis Ab. Rahim and Hadijah Binti Omar (2017) and Rahim and Omar (2017).
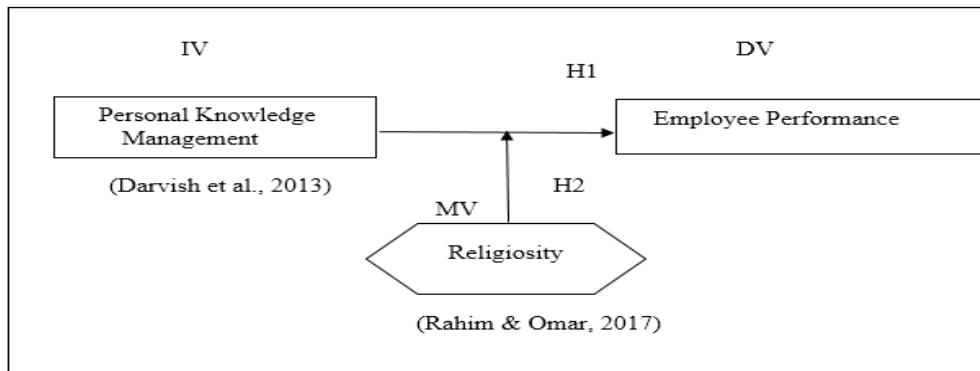
Figure 1: The conceptual framework of this study

Methodology

Cross-sectional causal research is applied to measure the extent of religiosity in moderating the relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance in selected public sector organizations in Shah Alam. The target population of public sector employees in Shah Alam was selected because there are about 62 public sector organizations in this area (among the largest population of public sector organizations in Klang Valley). The information was extracted from the Portal of Pejabat Setiausaha Negeri Selangor. However, there is no specific size of population provided. Therefore, the sampling technique used was convenience sampling. The researcher divided the population of 62 public sector organizations in Shah Alam based on their respective areas. After dividing the organizations into their respective areas, the researcher determines the population based on the size of organisation because large organizations tend to deal with big data and personal knowledge management is required. The selected public sector organization are as follows:

1. Majlis Bandaraya Shah Alam (MBSA)
2. Pejabat Setiausaha Kerajaan Negeri Selangor (SUK)
3. Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor (JAIS)
4. Perbadanan Kemajuan Negeri Selangor (PKNS)

To calculate the sample size, G* Power 3.1.9.4 was employed (Faul, Erdfelder, & Lang, 2007). For this study, the settings for this software were as follows; $f2=0.15$, $\alpha=0.05$, and the number of predictors=4 (PKM, religiosity, employees' performance, PKM x Religiosity) and the power was set at 95%. With the settings, the sample size identified by the software was 129. The unit of analysis of this study is individual employees in selected public sector organizations in Shah Alam.

Instrumentation

The instrument that is used in this study is the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into four sections, namely, section A; section B; section C; and section D. Section A enquires about demographic information such as gender, race, age, education level, years of service, and job classification. Next, section B focuses on questions related to the independent variable, that is, personal knowledge management. In section B, all 21 items are adopted from Cheng et.al (2015). Section C is about the dependent variable, that is, employee performance. The items under section C are adapted from Pradhan & Jena (2017). Lastly, Section D focuses

on the moderating variable, that is, religiosity (adapted from Alam et *al*. (2011). The items under section D are adapted from Masood and Haball (2018). The questionnaire is structured using the 5-point Likert scale: 5: Strongly Agree, 4: Agree, 3: Neutral, 2: Disagree and 1: Strongly Disagree. A pilot study was conducted by the researcher before the actual distribution of the questionnaire to the respondents. From the readings of Cronbach Alpha, personal knowledge management was .894 which indicates good, religiosity was acceptable at 0.745, and lastly employee performance was also acceptable at 0.789. If the alpha value is higher than 0.6, the research instruments are deemed reliable for the study (George & Mallery, 2003).

Results and discussion
Demographic profile
For this study, the researcher distributed 300 questionnaires to the respondents in selected public sector organizations in Shah Alam. Only 230 questionnaires were returned equivalent to a response rate of only 76.67% but it was larger than the sample size identified by G-power (129). A majority of the respondents were female (n=118) with a percentage of 59.0. The remaining 41.0 % was male (n=82) respondents. All 230 respondents (100.0%) were Malays. Most of the respondents have ages in the range of 21-30 years, equivalent to 89 respondents. A majority of the respondents were degree holders, that was, about 76 of them (38.0%). Length of service in terms of employment was in the range of 1-5 years, equivalent to 58 respondents (29.0%). A majority of the respondents were support staff totaling 104 respondents (52.0%).

Hypotheses results
The first hypothesis was tested by using linear regression analysis to determine if it should be accepted or rejected. The research hypothesis or H1 was: "There is a significant relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance in selected public sector organizations in Shah Alam". The results indicate that there is a significant, positive relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance (β=.680, $p<0.05$). The R^2 of .462 indicates that any change in employee performance is explained by personal knowledge management by as much as 46%. This also means that another 53.8% of the variance in employee performance is explained by other variables that were not investigated throughout this research. In addition, the F-value of 170.247 which was more than 1 indicates the high reliability of the model in predicting employee performance. The result thus confirmed the significant relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance.

Table 1: The result of linear regression analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	β	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	.896	.249	
Personal Knowledge Management	.780**	.060	.680**
	R square	.462	
	F value	170.24	
	Sig.	7	
		.000	

*Dependent variable= employee's performance. *p-value <.05, **pvalue<.01*

Next, hypothesis 2 was tested by using hierarchical regression analysis to test whether the hypothesis should be accepted or rejected. The research hypothesis or H2 was: "Religiosity moderates the relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance in selected public sector organizations in Shah Alam".

The regression model shows a considerable percentage of variance in the dependent variable or employee performance is explained by religiosity. Based on the finding, R^2 in Model 1 indicates that the factor accounts for 46.2% of the variance in employee performance. This also means that the remaining 53.8% is explained by other factors (s) that are not investigated in this study. Model 2 indicates that the relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance is moderately high when the relationship has been moderated by religiosity. Model 3 explains that the interaction of personal knowledge management and religiosity has accounted for 22.2% of the variance in employee performance. Consequently, there is a significant change in R^2 indicating an effect brought about by the moderating variable on the relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance. The results have shown that personal knowledge management and employee performance are positive and significant (β=.521, p= .000). Based on the result, religiosity has a positive relationship and is significant (β=.222, p=.000). This means that employees with a high level of religiosity tend to apply personal knowledge management when performing their work.

Table 2: Result of hierarchical regression analysis

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Independent variable	Std Beta Coefficients	Std Beta Coefficients	Std Beta Coefficients
Personal knowledge management			
	.680**	.616**	.521**
Moderating variable			
Religiosity		.155**	.296**
Interaction Terms			
PKMxReligiosity			.222**
R	.680	.694	.717
R^2	.462	.482	.514
Adjusted R Square	.460	.477	.506
R^2 Change	.462	.020	.032
Sig	.000	.000	.000
Durbin-Watson	1.833		

*. *p-value <.05, **p-value<.01*

Discussion

The results have confirmed that there is a significant relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance. The research objective: "R01: To examine the relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance in selected public sector organizations in Shah Alam" is supported.

Based on the findings, we have been informed that personal knowledge management has a significant relationship with employee performance. The results have supported the findings of Alamen and Tasir, (2015) and Swigon (2013a). Alamen and Tasir (2015) claimed that the positive practice of personal knowledge management will surely lead to a high level of individual job performance. This was supported by Swigon, (2013a) who mentioned that PKM

is the achievement of organisational goals and key performance indicators for employees. Besides that, employees can also improve their personality through the development of related skills and personal knowledge management capabilities. In addition, Ismail and Ahmad (2012) believed that if employees are unable to manage their personal knowledge well, it is possible that they may not be able to achieve their personal goal or Key Performance Indicator (KPI). Consequently, the organisational goal will be in jeopardy. Based on the above support cases, the results of the analysis that defined personal knowledge management as having a significant relationship with employee performance were accepted.

On the other hand, based on the results of hierarchical regression, it is confirmed that the moderating variable of religiosity has a significant relationship with personal knowledge management and employee performance. The research objective RO2 is thus supported.

RO2: "To measure the extent of religiosity in moderating the relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance in selected public sector organizations in Shah Alam."

The results of the interaction term have shown that religiosity has a positive and significant effect on personal knowledge management and employee performance. It is also proven that religiosity is the right moderator to measure Muslim employee performance because Muslims' behavior is always influenced by the level of their faith. These findings supported what has been claimed by Nurul Aisyah Awanis and Khatijah, (2017) that as a Muslim majority country, people with high involvement in religion Islam are expected to be more committed to performing their responsibilities more efficiently. This kind of trait or personality will guide the employees to perform their very best for every responsibility and task assigned to them. Apart from that, Osman-Gani, M, Hashim, Yusof, and Ismail (2013) also explained that religiosity from the Islamic perspective is measurable, but one's true religiosity level is known only by Allah. Thus, the religiosity variable is the right variable to explain personal knowledge management and employee performance. This study has suggested that religious values should be applied in the everyday life as a useful guideline to control one's behaviour.

Conclusion
Based on the 4IR revolution, personal knowledge management has become the best approach in managing big data because, in this revolution, employees are unable to store and retrieve information by continually applying the traditional database management system. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance in selected public sector organizations in Shah Alam and religiosity as the moderating variable. The quantitative survey was carried out to collect the data. The convenient sampling technique was used in which 200 respondents answered the questionnaire. The findings indicated that personal knowledge management has a significant association with employee performance. Interestingly, the researcher also found that religiosity moderates the influence about the relationship between personal knowledge management and employee performance. The results have fulfilled both of the research objectives. As such, the government should include religiosity elements in training knowledge management, or from time to time religious knowledge should be applied among civil servants because devotion to Allah S.W.T will make employees become very careful with the information obtained and have a high sense of responsibility to manage personal or organizational information. To impose the religiosity elements, the public sector organizations should encourage further learning and training of effective personal knowledge management (retrieving, evaluating, organizing, analyzing, collaborating, presenting, and securing information) so that there will be knowledge

transfer and skills transfer to the organization members. Besides that, public sector organizations should take action to know more about personal knowledge management; and in any training that will be conducted in any organization for the employees, the element of religiosity and its benefit must be included. This means that the understanding of Islamic principles or the right knowledge of Islam should be emphasized so that employees will be committed to doing any kind of work for the sake of Allah S.W.T.

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