

Research Article

Religiousness Differences and Associations of Beliefs and Practices: Muslims in Religious and Non-Religious Work Environments

Nur Amali Aminnuddin^{*a}

[a] Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Centre for Islamic Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei.

Abstract

This study addressed the following four questions: Does the influence of Islam is highly prevalent in the life of Malay Muslims in Brunei? Is the level of religiousness high? Are their religious beliefs associated with their religious practices? Are there any differences in religiousness between employees in religious work environment (RWE) and non-religious work environment (NRWE)? Using responses from 370 Malay Muslim employees, several measures of religiousness were analyzed. Analyses were done to determine descriptive statistics, correlations, and group differences. Findings showed that the influence of Islam was highly prevalent at all levels. They reported influence of Islam not only at personal level, but also at both upbringing and organizational levels. Religiousness was high, while beliefs and practices were interrelated. Malay Muslim employees in RWE were observed to have higher Islamic religiousness relative to those in NRWE. These findings highlight that in a theistic society where religiousness is already high, the nature of work environment can still potentially play a role in making a difference.

Keywords: Islam; religiousness; religious beliefs; religious practices; work environment.

Table of Contents

Research Questions
Method
Results
Discussion
References

Psychological Thought, 2022, Vol. 15(2), 168-186, <https://doi.org/10.37708/psyct.v15i2.635>

Received: 2021-06-29. Accepted: 2022-05-16. Published (VoR): 2022-10-31.

Handling Editor: Marius Drugaș, University of Oradea, Romania. *Corresponding author at: Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Centre for Islamic Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei. E-mail: aminnuddin.na@gmail.com



This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Religions have been empirically examined for decades (Hood et al., 2009; Main, 2008). The discipline of psychology of religion is growing exponentially. In the past, the dominant trend was on Christianity (Belzen, 2000). Review research had found the discipline was based primarily on studies concerning Protestant Christians (see Gorsuch, 1988). A few decades later, this was no longer the case; other religions were also of interest (see Emmons & Paloutzian, 2003). Today, the number of empirical studies under the discipline of psychology of Islam is also rising (Abu-Raiya, 2013).

Presently, on the one hand, in the context of the population of Brunei there is limited quantitative literature concerning Islam and religiousness. On the other hand, Islam in Brunei had been discussed extensively through historical, sociological, and anthropological perspectives (e.g., Ibrahim, 2003; Mail, 2011; Tinkong, 2009), leaning toward being more qualitative in nature. In contextualizing the present research, this paper will provide a background on existing literature that had argued on the role of Islam and how the religion has changed the culture in Brunei, as well as how it has influenced individuals, society, and governance. Following this, it is arguably apparent there are several problems or gaps in knowledge. For instance, quantitatively, it is not known how religious the population in Brunei is. A paucity in literature concerning assessments of religious beliefs and practices has also been observed; even though it is claimed that religion influences the way of life of the population (Ibrahim, 2003). Even today, Brunei is seen as an Islamic country due to the integration of the Shari'a. The people are Muslims in the majority context. However, with quantitative approach in mind, does this mean that the influence of Islam is highly prevalent and the level of Islamic religiousness among the population is high? Are their religious beliefs associated with religious practices? What about differences between groups? For example, are there any differences in Islamic religiousness between Malay Muslim employees in religious work environment (RWE) and non-religious work environment (NRWE)? At this point, it is challenging for prior studies to provide answers to these questions.

Qualitative perspective is valuable in providing narratives on the influence of Islam in Brunei (see [Gin, 2015](#); [King & Druce, 2020](#)). Yet, it is necessary to determine the current state of Islamic religiousness among the population through a quantitative approach. Given how religion is being seen as important and frequently hailed as a factor that influences individuals, society, and governance in Brunei, it is astonishing not much attempt has been done to quantitatively assess the prevalence of Islam's influence, the level of Islamic religiousness, the association of religious beliefs and practices, and the differences between groups. Thus, this present study aims to explore these issues.

Islam in Brunei

The early sources for the history of Brunei are riddled with a mixture of legends and facts, making it difficult to determine the country's historical reality ([Ibrahim, 2003](#)). There is a source concerning the founding of the sultanate, being an oral tradition in the form of an epic poem titled *Syair Awang Semaun* (see [de Vienne, 2015](#); [Saunders, 2013](#)). However, most of the content are mythical in nature and cannot be treated directly as facts. An alternative is to examine documents from China, as well as royal tombstones within and beyond the sultanate, in identifying the country's history and estimating roughly the earliest period of the existence of the kingdom. For example, Brunei had been claimed to be mentioned as early as the 6th century by Chinese sources during the Liang dynasty ([Da-Sheng, 1992](#)).

Officially, in the context of the monarchy, Islam in Brunei can be traced back to the 14th century ([Ibrahim, 2003](#)). The first sultan in the official genealogy of the monarchy was Awang Alak Betatar ([de Vienne, 2015](#); [Saunders, 2013](#)). He had taken up the name Sultan Muhammad Shah after he became a Muslim. Several Chinese sources had mentioned that in 1371, envoys from China came to Poni, and later on in the same year a delegation brought tributes to China from King Ma-he-mo-sha or Ma-mo-sha of Poni ([Da-Sheng, 1992](#)). The name mentioned is believed referring to Sultan Muhammad Shah, while Poni was the ancient name of Brunei ([Da-Sheng, 1992](#)).

Many of these sources focused on prominent figures such as the rulers and people in authoritative positions, instead of the general population. However, evidence does suggest they were Muslims. Hence, it can be argued that with the ruling figures being Muslims, the public was inclined to embrace the same religion ([Ibrahim, 2003](#)). Today, Islam continues to have an impact on the country, its legal system and social practices and norms. Previous traditions that were based on animism, Buddhism, and Hinduism were replaced with Arab practices that were already influenced by Islam ([Tinkong, 2009](#)). Some were abolished outrightly, while others were adapted to be in line with the religion ([Ibrahim, 2003](#); [Tinkong,](#)

2009). Arguably, once a religion has a strong link with a specific ethnicity, it then becomes associated as part of an ethnic identity.

The culture and values in Brunei revolve around the national philosophy *Melayu Islam Beraja* or Malay Islamic Monarchy (Ibrahim, 2003). The concepts of *Melayu* (Malay), Islam, and *Beraja* (Monarchy) are embodied in the 1959 Constitution of Brunei Darussalam. In the constitution, Article 82(1) affirms the official language to be the Malay language; Article 3(1) affirms the official religion to be Islam and specifically the Shafi'i school of thought; and Article 4(1) affirms the supreme executive authority is hold by the monarch. *Melayu Islam Beraja* as the national philosophy creates a national culture, and it shapes shared values in the society, and influences development, behavior, and even policies. This can be seen throughout the history of Brunei. Islam not only influences the population and society (Tinkong, 2009), but it also guides governance and administration (Mail, 2011). Therefore, the national philosophy is appropriately defined as “a Bruneian way of life, exhibits a firm consolidation in thought and action (with the practicabilities) based upon the extolled values and characteristics of Malay life, guided by Islamic faith and ethics while upholding the Malay culture and loyalty to the monarch and his government” (Ibrahim, 2003, p. 103).

Out of the three concepts, Islam is proposed to play a dominant role. Any cultural practices or policies, if it goes against the Islamic doctrine, then they will be abolished or adapted in accordance with the religion. In the Bruneian Malay culture, there were several practices with elements based on Hinduism that existed before Islam came to the country (Tinkong, 2009). As an example, *Malam Berinai* is a custom for the groom and the bride to draw on body parts using henna. This practice started to be adapted in a way that it does not contradict Islamic doctrine. The material used must be of halal origin; it is not allowed to draw animals or idols. Even governance was affected by Islamic influence (Mail, 2011). Religious practices, for example fasting, are to be respected and taken into consideration. It is a government policy to reduce working hours to promote religious practices during the fasting month. Another practice is prayer recitation to mark the start and end of events, being a common practice. Hence, Islam has always been hailed as a religion that cannot be separated from the people and the society in Brunei.

Religiousness

There is no consensus on the definition of religion. Geertz (1973, p. 90) defined religion as “a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing those conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations

seem uniquely realistic.” In contrast, [Dollahite \(1998, p. 5\)](#) explained religion as “a covenant of faith community with teachings and narratives that enhance the search for the sacred and encourage morality.” Meanwhile, [Pargament \(1996, p. 216\)](#) viewed religion as “a search for significance in ways related to the sacred.”

Being a latent construct, religiosity or religiousness can be an observable phenomenon through beliefs, behaviors, and practices ([Miller & Thoresen, 2003](#)). Being highly religious can be operationalized as “high levels of traditional religious belief; frequent involvement in religious institutions such as churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples; and engagement in religious practices such as reading scripture, worship, and prayer” ([McCullough & Willoughby, 2009, p. 69](#)). Religiousness can also be categorized into two dimensions: belief (internal) and behavior (external) ([Steiner et al., 2010](#)). The former is the “belief in God and a trusting acceptance of God’s will” and the latter is “all observable activities, which are undertaken in a religious context” ([Steiner et al., 2010, p. 16](#)).

Presently, the nature of religiousness is still a highly debated topic. Rather than merely being a unidimensional construct, it can be multidimensional where religiousness is a psychological construct with various facets ([Abu-Raiya et al., 2008](#)). Similarly, spirituality is also multidimensional, although the concept of religion or God may or may not be present ([Fisher, 2011](#)). Studies have also shown that a person can be religious but not spiritual ([Da Silva et al., 2020](#)) or be spiritual but not religious ([Ammerman, 2013](#); [Saucier & Skrzypińska, 2006](#)). The distinction between religiousness and spirituality can be observed through the two constructs’ links with locus of control. Locus of control in life is negatively associated with religiousness; in contrast, it is positively associated with spirituality ([Da Silva et al., 2020](#)) indicating the two are highly different constructs.

Putting aside the issue of religiousness and its nature, from a historical perspective, religion cannot be separated from men as it has been a powerful force since the beginning of mankind ([Albright & Ashbrook, 2001](#)). Not only countless times in history it acted as a strong social force, but it was also a domineering psychological force capable of influencing individuals. It acts as a mechanism for self-regulation and self-control ([McCullough & Willoughby, 2009](#)). It affects a person’s attitude and behavior at the individual level, as well as groups at the societal level ([Gorsuch, 1988](#)). It is not exaggerating to say the association of religiousness with numerous outcomes in human lives is “both provocative and puzzling” ([McCullough & Willoughby, 2009, p. 69](#)).

Religiousness has been observed to have a positive relationship with life satisfaction, happiness, and subjective mental and physical health among adolescents ([Abdel-Khalek,](#)

2009). In dealing with struggle and trauma, religious-based positive coping style can play a beneficial role (Ai et al., 2003). A person's religiousness is also associated with anxiety and depression (Khan & Watson, 2006), as well as post-traumatic stress disorder (Aflakseir & Coleman, 2009). Hence, intervention can also be done through a religious-based approach (Kadafi et al., 2021; Rassool, 2021).

Additionally, religiousness may also vary according to individual differences. Many researchers focused on individual differences such as gender (e.g., Hoffmann, 2019) and race (e.g., Cotton et al., 2006). However, the debate between the two still remain highly contentious (Bradshaw & Ellison, 2009). Furthermore, few went beyond gender and race. One study examined the differences between those in the rural areas and those in the urban area, observing higher religiousness among those in the former (Krauss et al., 2006). Another research had observed religiousness being affected by age, varying within a person's life (Bengtson et al., 2015).

Research Questions

Current literature suggests the influence of Islam in the Malay society in Brunei is significant. However, most of these studies used qualitative research design in examining Islam and the people. Few studies were done using a quantitative approach involving Islamic religiousness in the country. There is limited information of quantitative nature concerning religiousness, particularly beliefs and practices, as well as environmental differences. By determining these, this study will provide a clearer insight with quantitative findings, complementing existing qualitative literature. Therefore, overall, this study aimed to examine Islam in Brunei, specifically Islamic religiousness—beliefs and practices—through a quantitative approach, including making a group comparison within the population based on environmental differences in the workplace context.

Four research questions were proposed:

- Research question 1: What is the prevalence of Islam's influence among the population in Brunei?
- Research question 2: What is the level of Islamic religiousness of the population?
- Research question 3: Is there any association between religious beliefs and religious practices?
- Research question 4: Are there any differences in Islamic religiousness between Malay Muslim employees in religious work environment (RWE) and non-religious work environment (NRWE)?

Method

Research Design and Data Set

The research design was based on an existing dataset (Aminuddin, 2020). All the necessary approvals had been granted. This paper examined four instruments to reflect Islamic religiousness. To assess differences in Islamic religiousness, groups from two different types of work environment were examined: Malay Muslim employees in RWE and in NRWE. The sample was drawn from a specific profession, i.e., teachers. Considering the focal aspect of this paper was to make a comparison, respondents sampled from religious schools—representing RWE—and mainstream schools—representing NRWE—were deemed to be appropriate as both systems were within public school jurisdiction. The respondents were also of the same profession. In this way, differences in Islamic religiousness could be assessed while minimizing other variances.

Sample Population

The demographic details of the sample population were analyzed (Table 1). The number of respondents in the dataset was 370 Malay Muslim teachers. For demographic items, the responses ranged between 366 and 368 for each variable. Items assessing Islamic religiousness had no missing value.

Table 1.
Participants.

		RWE (n=152)		NRWE (n=218)		Total (N=370)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender	Male	34	20.74%	45	22.52%	79	21.47%
	Female	117	79.26%	172	77.48%	289	78.53%
		151		217		368	
Age	21-25	2	3.69%	8	1.33%	10	2.72%
	26-30	28	14.29%	31	18.67%	59	16.08%
	31-35	39	27.19%	59	26.00%	98	26.70%
	36-40	34	27.27%	51	24.46%	85	26.07%
	41-50	43	24.42%	53	28.67%	96	26.16%
	50 and above	4	6.91%	15	2.67%	19	5.18%
		150		217		367	
Do you consider yourself religious?	No	0	.92%	2	.00%	2	.54%
	Neutral	10	13.30%	29	6.71%	39	10.63%
	Yes	139	85.78%	187	93.29%	326	88.83%
		149		218		367	
Do you consider yourself growing up in an environment influenced by religion?	No	1	2.29%	5	.67%	6	1.63%
	Neutral	20	13.30%	29	13.42%	49	13.35%
	Yes	128	84.40%	184	85.91%	312	85.01%
		149		218		367	
Do you consider your current work environment influenced by religion?	No	2	3.69%	8	1.34%	10	2.73%
	Neutral	4	20.74%	45	2.68%	49	13.39%
	Yes	143	75.58%	164	95.97%	307	83.88%
		149		217		366	

Instruments

The dataset contained data based on several instruments from the Psychological Measures of Islamic Religiosity (see [Abu-Raiya et al., 2008](#)). Each instrument would represent a different dimension or factor concerning Islamic religiousness. The dimensions analyzed in this paper were: (1) Islamic Ethical Principles, (2) Islamic Universality, (3) Global Religiousness, and (4) Islamic Duty. The first three instruments would represent religious beliefs, while the fourth instrument would reflect religious practices.

The first instrument, Islamic Ethical Principles, evaluated the extent of beliefs, whether agreeing or disagreeing on recommended and prohibited behaviors based on Islamic doctrine. Using 10 items, they were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Items included statements such as “Because of Islam, I strive to be a humble person,” “Because of Islam, I try to be a tolerant person,” and “Because of Islam, I refrain from having sex before marriage or outside of marriage.”

The second instrument evaluated Islamic Universality with four items. It measured a respondent's stance on universal principles in Islam, which were commonly shared by Muslims. The items were statements to be rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Some of the statements were “I consider every Muslim in the world as my brother or sister” and “I empathize with the suffering of every Muslim in the world.”

Global Religiousness was the third instrument, having only two items, which evaluated a Muslim's perception concerning their level of Islamic religiousness and spirituality. The items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from very low to very high. The two items were: “How do you describe your religiousness?” and “How do you describe your spirituality?”

The fourth instrument, Islamic Duty, assessed the frequency of ritualistic behaviors of a Muslim. This instrument consisted of five items being rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale between 0 and 5, with 0 representing never. The provided choices on the scales varied in wording, with a higher number on the scale indicating a higher frequency. Among the ritualistic behaviors assessed were prayer, fasting, and going to the mosque.

Statistical Analyses

To assess the prevalence of Islam's influence among the sample population, representativeness was calculated using an online sample size calculator (see [Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018](#)). Following this, all analyses were done using SPSS version 26.

Descriptive analysis was conducted on Islamic religiousness measures. Items within each measure were then summed up to create a composite index of the measure. A Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was done. All these analyses would address the first three research questions. For the fourth research question, it was to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in Islamic religiousness between groups. An independent *t*-test was conducted with all religiousness instruments using these two groups: Malay Muslims employees in RWE and NRWE. Significance level was set at $p \leq .05$ with a confidence interval level of 95%. First, a Levene's test assessed homogeneity or equality of variance. Secondly, an independent *t*-test assessed equality of mean difference. However, a *t*-test could only be done with the assumption of having homogeneity of variance across the sample population. Therefore, if the Levene's test indicated a statistically significant difference in variance, or in other words, a violation of homogeneity, then a second test without assuming homogeneity of variance—Mann-Whitney *U* test—was to be conducted.

Results

Prevalence of the Influence of Islam

The figures on the approximation of population representativeness on the perceived influence of Islam were presented (Table 2): at individual level, upbringing level, and organizational level. The values had been calculated using the number of respondents, the total number of teachers in public schools, and the proportion of responses. Figures for the total number of teachers in 2016 were taken from Brunei Darussalam Education Statistics 2016 ([Education Statistics Section, 2017](#)). There were 6,978 teaching employees in public schools at the level of Primary, Secondary, and Sixth Form.

Table 2.

Prevalence of the influence of Islam in Brunei.

	<i>N</i>	Yes (%)	CI	SE	RSE
Consider self as religious	367	88.83	0.03	0.02	1.8
Growing up in an environment influenced by religion	367	85.01	0.04	0.02	2.14
Work environment influenced by religion	366	83.88	0.04	0.02	2.23

Confidence level = 95%; CI = Confidence interval; SE = Standard error; RSE = Relative standard error.

The sample population and responses were analyzed together using the figure of 6,978 teaching employees. In 95% of the time, when the same question was asked to another group of similar demographics to the sample population, between 85.83 and 91.83 teaching employees in every 100 would claim that they consider themselves as religious. For simplicity purpose, the numbers were changed to reflect the number of people for every 10 people and then rounded up to 1 decimal place. Therefore, representative of the population, for every 10 employees, between 8.6 and 9.2 employees will give the response that they consider themselves as religious. For every 10 employees, between 8.1 and 8.9 employees will say that they grow up in an environment influenced by religion. Finally, for every 10 employees, between 8 and 8.8 employees will say that religion influences their current work environment.

Descriptive Statistics, Reliability, and Correlation

The mean, standard deviation, and reliability of all four instruments were presented: Islamic Ethical Principles consisting of 10 items ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 0.41$, Cronbach's alpha = .91), Islamic Universality with four items ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 0.53$, Cronbach's alpha = .81), Global Religiousness with two items ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.80$, Cronbach's alpha = .89), and Islamic Duty being assessed with five items ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.64$, Cronbach's alpha = .67). All instruments were highly reliable, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging between .67 and .91. A Pearson correlation test was then conducted on all four instruments that had been summed up, creating a composite index representing each Islamic religiousness dimension (Table 3). The first three instruments represented religious beliefs, while the fourth instrument represented religious practices.

Table 3.
Correlation of religiousness variables.

	Islamic Ethical Principles	Islamic Universality	Global Religiousness	Islamic Duty
Islamic Ethical Principles	1			
Islamic Universality	.71**	1		
Global Religiousness	.39**	.37**	1	
Islamic Duty	.36**	.39**	.36**	1

** $p < .01$ (2-tailed)

All four instruments were found to be correlated ($p \leq 0.01$). The largest correlation observed was between Islamic Ethical Principles and Islamic Universality with a value of .71. The aim of the correlation analysis was to test the association between religious beliefs and religious practices. Islamic Duty was found to be correlated with Islamic Ethical Principles, Islamic

Universality, and Global Religiousness with a correlation value of .36, .39, and .36, respectively.

Islamic Religiousness Differences

A Levene's test was conducted on all four Islamic religiousness instruments. The results for Islamic Ethical Principles showed no evidence that there was any violation of homogeneity. Therefore, an independent *t*-test was conducted on the instrument. Results showed the following: $t(368) = 2.52, p < .01$) with the mean value of Islamic Ethical Principles for respondents in RWE being 0.11 greater than respondents in NRWE.

However, concerning homogeneity, the opposite was noted for Islamic Universality, Global Religiousness, and Islamic Duty. There was a violation of homogeneity for each instrument. Hence, a Mann-Whitney *U* test was done on the three instruments (Table 4). Results indicated that each Islamic religiousness instrument had a higher mean rank for respondents in RWE than those in NRWE ($p < .01$).

Table 4.
Mann-Whitney U test.

		<i>N</i>	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney <i>U</i>
Islamic Universality	RWE	152	204.07	31018.50	
	NRWE	218	172.55	37616.50	
	Total	370			13745.50
Global Religiousness	RWE	152	212.17	32249.50	
	NRWE	218	166.91	36385.50	
	Total	370			12514.50
Islamic Duty	RWE	152	223.96	34041.50	
	NRWE	218	158.69	34593.50	
	Total	370			10722.50

Note: All results were found to be significant at $p \leq .01$.

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the influence of Islam in Brunei, albeit being a preliminary assessment. The motivation of this research was to determine whether Islam plays a significant role toward individuals in the society. Several research questions had been posed to guide the trajectory of this research.

Firstly, this study asked the following question: What is the prevalence of Islam's influence among the population in Brunei? Results showed that the influence of Islam was highly

prevalent among the Malay Muslims in Brunei, specifically teachers. There was a high prevalence rate of considering themselves as being religious, growing in an environment influenced by religion, and claiming their current work environment was influenced by religion. The second research question asked regarding the level of Islamic religiousness of the population. Following analyses, all measures showed that Islamic religiousness among Malay Muslim employees were leaning on the side of being high. Both findings are supported by past studies. Religion can be a strong force to the extent it overlaps with social norm. In the context of Brunei, it has been argued that religion is inseparable from the population (Ibrahim, 2003; Tinkong, 2009). Furthermore, this is common in societies where religion is deeply rooted (Stam et al., 2013).

The third research question examined whether there was any association between religious beliefs and religious practices. Consequent analyses found that there was an association. The result also showed that although two out of the three measures of religious beliefs were highly correlated with one another, the third measure—Global Religiousness—was only moderately associated with the former two measures. This indicates the measure may be less suitable as a reflection of religious beliefs. Hence, the association between religious beliefs and religious practices, in answering the third research question, is determined here with the exclusion of Global Religiousness, which may be more of a measure for religiousness in the general sense.

The debates on beliefs and practices are still ongoing. For example, theory of planned behavior looked at how beliefs can influence intention and behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Madden, 1986; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Even so, the link between intention and behavior is not yet fully understood (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). In the theory, perceived behavioral control—instead of intention—can and may even be a better predictor of behavior. In contrast, within the context of this present study, the findings suggest that there is a relationship between religious beliefs and practices. Aside from the determined correlation values, with high prevalence rate of the influence of Islam in the society, coupled with high degree of Islamic religiousness, all these build up support in establishing the link between religious beliefs and religious practices.

Finally, the fourth research question asked the following: Are there any differences in Islamic religiousness between Malay Muslim employees in RWE and NRWE? The mean for Islamic Ethical Principles was higher among employees in RWE than those in NRWE, and this was statistically significant. For the other three religiousness instruments—Islamic Universality, Global Religiousness, and Islamic Duty—it was also observed that Islamic religiousness

among employees in RWE was statistically significantly higher than in NRWE, this time being indicated by the mean rank. Therefore, to answer the fourth research question, there were differences in Islamic religiousness between Malay Muslim employees in RWE and in NRWE, with the former having higher level of Islamic religiousness.

This present study found differences on Islamic religiousness with regards to groups based on work environment. This further adds into current literature that had found group differences such as based on age (Bengtson et al., 2015), gender (Hoffmann, 2019), race (Cotton et al., 2006), and urban/rural environment (Krauss et al., 2006). A novel finding of this study is that it is the first that investigated the level of Islamic religiousness in tandem with making a comparison between groups within the same profession but from two different work environments. Evaluating between RWE and NRWE may seem trivial. However, comparing between the two groups can provide an ideal context for comparison, due to the nature of this society where this study had observed a high prevalent rate of the influence of religion. If work environment can further be a possible group differences factor, then in a society where religion is already dominant, a work environment that is religious in nature or RWE will still hypothetically show a higher degree of the group's Islamic religiousness, even if only slightly, relative to its counterpart that is NRWE. The present study has proved this point.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

Several limitations are acknowledged in this study. The results are not representative of the total population of Malay Muslim employees in Brunei. It is only representative of people within the same profession, specifically teachers. Due to the research design being cross-sectional, causal inference cannot be made. Another limitation is that the data was obtained through self-report questionnaires. This may create a bias, resulting from social desirability. Furthermore, one measure assessing global religiousness did not properly make a distinction between religiousness and spirituality. Each construct was measured separately, and together they reflect global religiousness. This approach may not be appropriate in studies where distinction between the two is necessary or clearly defined.

As a recommendation for future studies, researchers can collect data from people of other demographic profiles. The research framework can also be designed for the data to represent the total population of Brunei, making the findings be more generalizable. Doing this can further confirm the influence of Islam among the population in the country, as well as generational differences. Similarly, another recommendation is to include other variables in

relation to Islamic religiousness, such as mental and physical health, as well as other behavioral and organizational variables. Furthermore, while the present study focused on religiousness, due to the theistic nature of the society, there is possibility that instead of personal or individual religiousness being the primary construct as a driving force to act in a certain way, the Islamic way of life as practiced by individuals as part of a society may be the necessary context that can explain the result. This is also potentially due to policies at the national level that further strengthen the Islamic way of life. Therefore, one possible construct that researchers can examine for future studies is theistic adherence at both the individual level and the societal level.

Conclusion

The influence of Islam pervades various aspects of life among the population in Brunei. It is highly prevalent among Malay Muslims in Brunei, specifically in the teaching profession. This can be observed at personal level, upbringing level, and organizational level. Religious beliefs are also associated with religious practices. However, although Islamic religiousness is already high, a difference can be seen when work environment is taken into consideration. Malay Muslims working in RWE have higher Islamic religiousness when compared to those working in NRWE. Islamic religiousness can still be affected further by work environment. All these add to the body of knowledge through a quantitative approach in analyzing Islam and its influence, and Islamic religiousness among Malay Muslims in Brunei within a specific population.

Funding/Financial Support

The author has no funding to report

Other Support/Acknowledgement

The author has no support to report.

Competing Interests

The author has declared that no competing interests exist.

References

- Abdel-Khalek, A. M. (2009). Religiosity, subjective well-being, and depression in Saudi children and adolescents. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 12(8), 803–815. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674670903006755>
- Abu-Raiya, H. (2013). The psychology of Islam: Current empirically based knowledge, potential challenges, and directions for future research. In K. I. Pargament, J. J. Exline, & J. W. Jones (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality (Vol 1): Context, theory, and research* (pp. 681–695). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1037/14045-038>
- Abu-Raiya, H., Pargament, K. I., Mahoney, A., & Stein, C. (2008). A Psychological Measure of Islamic Religiousness: Development and evidence for reliability and validity. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 18(4), 291–315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508610802229270>
- Aflakseir, A., & Coleman, P. (2009). The influence of religious coping on the mental health of disabled Iranian war veterans. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 12(2), 175–190. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674670802428563>
- Ai, A. L., Peterson, C., & Huang, B. (2003). The effect of religious-spiritual coping on positive attitudes of adult Muslim refugees from Kosovo and Bosnia. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 13(1), 29–47. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327582IJPR1301_04
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)
- Ajzen, I., & Madden, T. J. (1986). Prediction of goal-directed behavior: Attitudes, intentions, and perceived behavioral control. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 22(5), 453–474. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-1031\(86\)90045-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-1031(86)90045-4)
- Albright, C. R., & Ashbrook, J. B. (2001). *Where God lives in the human brain*. Sourcebooks.
- Aminnuddin, N. A. (2020). Dataset on Islamic ethical work behavior among Bruneian Malay Muslim teachers with measures concerning religiosity and theory of planned behavior. *Data in Brief*, 29, 105157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dib.2020.105157>
- Ammerman, N. T. (2013). Spiritual but not religious? Beyond binary choices in the study of religion. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 52(2), 258–278. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12024>
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2018). Sample size calculator. Retrieved December 25, 2018, from <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Sample+Size+Calculator>

- Belzen, J. A. (2000). The future of psychology of religion. *Pastoral Psychology*, 49(1), 3–12. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1004638314047>
- Bengtson, V. L., Silverstein, M., Putney, N. M., & Harris, S. C. (2015). Does religiousness increase with age? Age changes and generational differences over 35 years. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 54(2), 363–379. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12183>
- Bradshaw, M., & Ellison, C. G. (2009). The nature-nurture debate is over, and both sides lost! Implications for understanding gender differences in religiosity. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 48(2), 241–251. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01443.x>
- Cotton, S., Tsevat, J., Szaflarski, M., Kudel, I., Sherman, S. N., Feinberg, J., ... Holmes, W. C. (2006). Changes in religiousness and spirituality attributed to HIV/AIDS. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 21(S5), S14–S20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1525-1497.2006.00641.x>
- Da-Sheng, C. (1992). A Brunei Sultan in the early 14th century: Study of an Arabic gravestone. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 23(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463400011267>
- Da Silva, J. P., Pereira, A. M. S., & Monteiro, S. O. M. (2020). Development and psychometric properties of a scale of non-theistic spirituality: Contributions of spirituality to the locus of control. *Psychological Thought*, 13(2), 410–438. <https://doi.org/10.37708/psyct.v13i2.473>
- Da Silva, J. P., Pereira, A. M. S., Monteiro, S. O. M., & Bartolo, A. (2020). Comparing measures of religiosity and spirituality in the experience of emotions – Development and validation of a scale of non-spiritual religiosity. *Polish Psychological Bulletin*, 51(1), 51–61. <https://doi.org/10.24425/ppb.2020.132651>
- de Vienne, M.-S. (2015). *Brunei: From the age of commerce to the 21st century*. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1qv2xt>
- Dollahite, D. (1998). Fathering, faith, and spirituality. *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 7(1), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.3149/jms.0701.3>
- Education Statistics Section. (2017). *Brunei Darussalam education statistics 2016*. Berakas, Brunei.
- Emmons, R. A., & Paloutzian, R. F. (2003). The psychology of religion. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54(1), 377–402. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.54.101601.145024>
- Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: An introduction to theory and research*. Addison-Wesley.
- Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (2010). *Predicting and changing behavior: The reasoned action approach*. Psychology Press.

- Fisher, J. (2011). The Four Domains Model: Connecting spirituality, health and well-being. *Religions*, 2(1), 17–28. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel2010017>
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. New York, Basic Books.
- Gin, O. K. (Ed.). (2015). *Brunei – History, Islam, society and contemporary issues*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315766287>
- Gorsuch, R. L. (1988). Psychology of religion. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 39(1), 201–221. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.ps.39.020188.001221>
- Hoffmann, J. P. (2019). Risk preference theory and gender differences in religiousness: A replication and extension. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 58(1), 210–230. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12578>
- Hood, R. W., Hill, P. C., & Spilka, B. (2009). *The psychology of religion: An empirical approach* (4th ed.). Guilford Press.
- Ibrahim, A. L. (2003). *Issues in Brunei studies*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam: Akademi Pengajian Brunei, Universiti Brunei Darussalam.
- Kadafi, A., Alfaiz, A., Ramli, M., Asri, D. N., & Finayanti, J. (2021). The impact of Islamic counseling intervention towards students' mindfulness and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal*, 4(1), 55–66. <https://doi.org/10.25217/igcj.v4i1.1018>
- Khan, Z. H., & Watson, P. J. (2006). Construction of the Pakistani Religious Coping Practices Scale: Correlations with religious coping, religious orientation, and reactions to stress among Muslim university students. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 16(2), 101–112. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327582ijpr1602_2
- King, V. T., & Druce, S. C. (Eds.). (2020). *Origins, history and social structure in Brunei Darussalam*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003096573>
- Krauss, S. E., Hamzah, A. H., Suandi, T., Noah, S. M., Juhari, R., & Manap, J. H. (2006). Exploring regional differences in religiosity among Muslim youth in Malaysia. *Review of Religious Research*, 47(3), 238–252.
- Mail, A. (2011). *Kesultanan Melayu Brunei abad ke-19: Politik dan struktur pentadbiran [The Brunei Malay Sultanate in the 19th century: Politics and administrative structure]*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Brunei.
- Main, R. (2008). Psychology of religion: An overview of its history and current status. *Religion Compass*, 2(4), 708–733. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8171.2008.00089.x>



- McCullough, M. E., & Willoughby, B. L. B. (2009). Religion, self-regulation, and self-control: Associations, explanations, and implications. *Psychological Bulletin*, *135*(1), 69–93. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014213>
- Miller, W. R., & Thoresen, C. E. (2003). Spirituality, religion, and health: An emerging research field. *American Psychologist*, *58*(1), 24–35. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.58.1.24>
- Pargament, K. I. (1996). Religious methods of coping: Resources for the conservation and transformation of significance. In E. P. Shafranske (Ed.), *Religion and the clinical practice of psychology* (pp. 215–239). <https://doi.org/10.1037/10199-008>
- Rassool, G. H. (2021). Re-examining the anatomy of Islamic psychotherapy and counselling: Envisioned and enacted practices. *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal*, *4*(2), 133–143. <https://doi.org/10.25217/igcj.v4i2.1840>
- Saucier, G., & Skrzypińska, K. (2006). Spiritual but not religious? Evidence for two independent dispositions. *Journal of Personality*, *74*(5), 1257–1292. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2006.00409.x>
- Saunders, G. (2013). *A History of Brunei*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315029573>
- Stam, K., Verbakel, E., & De Graaf, P. M. (2013). Explaining variation in work ethic in Europe. *European Societies*, *15*(2), 268–289. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2012.726734>
- Steiner, L., Leinert, L., & Frey, B. S. (2010). Economics, religion and happiness. *Zeitschrift Für Wirtschafts- Und Unternehmensethik*, *11*(1), 9–24. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.5167/uzh-44521>
- Tinkong, R. (2009). *The socio-cultural change of Brunei Malays*. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Brunei.

About the Author

Nur Amali Aminnuddin is a Lecturer at Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Centre for Islamic Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei. Having a wide range of interests, he holds a bachelor's degree in political science, a master's degree in industrial and organizational psychology, and a Ph.D. in Brunei Studies. He published in the areas of work ethics in organizations, discrimination, education, personality, and behavior. His research interests revolve around psychology of religion, social psychology, and behavioral sciences in general. Religion, specifically Islam, is a common theme in his research. His current research focuses on Muslims, religiosity, and society.

Corresponding Author`s Address [\[TOP\]](#)

Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Centre for Islamic Studies,
Universiti Brunei Darussalam,
Jalan Tungku Link, Gadong, BE1410,
Brunei Darussalam.

Email: aminnuddin.na@gmail.com