SUCCESSFUL MUSLIM ENTREPRENEURS’ PERSONALITY AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS: A STUDY IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT
The success of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and his companions in entrepreneurship which is not only measured in terms of worldly success but also in the Hereafter, are due to their personalities and the attitude within themselves. The personality and professionalism shown by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH towards his customers and those who dealt with him had boosted a high level of confidence of the society to do business with him without having any single doubts. Thus, this study will be focusing on the relationship between the successful Muslim entrepreneurs’ personalities with their achievements in Malaysia by using Pearson’s Correlation Test. The study found significant relationships between their personalities and their achievements.

Keywords: Muslim, Entrepreneur, Personality, Success factor, Achievements, Malaysia.

I. INTRODUCTION
Every entrepreneur aims to be successful. There are two types of success in Islam i.e. the worldly affairs and the Hereafter. Even though, sometimes we are blessed in this world, it does not mean that we will be blessed in the Hereafter. This is because if we do not implement the Islamic values or transgress the Islamic principles in our daily doings especially in entrepreneurship dealings, we will not get Allah’s rewards. Indeed, success in the Hereafter is the most blessed as it is forever after.

One of the key attributes of a successful entrepreneur is having a great personality. There are a few great personalities of successful entrepreneur such as thoroughness, discipline, intelligence and emotional stability, creative and risk taking. According to Azlina Abu Bakar (2009), the word personality comes from a Latin word ‘persona’ which refers to someone’s exterior characteristics including their way of thinking, behavior and emotions. Meanwhile, according to Eysenck H.J. (1970), personality from the aspect of way of thinking proves that a person has the stability in their cognitive system. In addition to that, Abdul Aziz (2009) explains that personality from behavioral aspects shows that someone will have some sort of defense mechanism within his body system. Miftah Muhammad Abdul Aziz (1997) suggests that personality from the aspect of emotional strength is related to one’s emotional stability. The personality of an individual differs from one another due to many factors such as physiological, environmental, educational, cultural and family backgrounds.

According to Mohd Fadzillah Kamsah and Muhammad Zakaria (2008), an entrepreneur’s personality from Islamic perspective refers to the personality of a Muslim entrepreneur which influences his/her actions and his/her way of interacting with problems based on the Islamic values. This involves the tendency, the ambitions, intuition and preparation mentally, emotionally and physically to determine one’s behavior when interacting with his/her environment. The Islamic values such as ‘amar ma’ruf nahi mungkar” within a Muslim entrepreneur will allow him/her to be very detailed and disciplined in doing his/her work, able to
clearly plan for the future undertakings, capable of working hard, willing to take risks prudently, producing continuous business efforts and prepared for every responsibilities given to him/her. Thus, the characteristic which differentiates a Muslim entrepreneur and a non-Muslim entrepreneur is the personality that is based on Islamic values in the way of thinking, behavior and emotional, while non-Muslim entrepreneurs focus solely on their mental, emotional and physical strength.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW
Entrepreneurship is one of the many aspects in life which was discussed in the Al-Quran. There are evidences in the Quran which point out the importance of gaining wealth through entrepreneurship. Allah SWT has stated in the Quran: “And We have certainly established you upon the earth and made for you therein ways of livelihood. Little are you grateful.” (Al-A’raf: 10). It has also being mentioned in the Quran: “And out of His mercy He made for you the night and the day that you may rest therein and [by day] seek from His bounty and [that] perhaps you will be grateful.” (Al-Qasas: 73).

Both of these decrees from Allah SWT are evidences or reminders which call the mankind to work hard and search for benefits from all the sources provided by Allah in this world. Entrepreneurship is one example of doing this and at the same time is an ‘ibadah’ (religious rituals) to Allah if they are carried out honestly and for the right reason. In the context of being successful in this particular field, a Muslim entrepreneur has to possess an Islamic-based personality. This is what distinguished Muslim entrepreneurs with non-Muslim entrepreneurs. Some examples of personality of Muslim entrepreneurs are as follows:

A. Thoroughness/Detail Oriented
Entrepreneurs’ thoroughness according to Costa (1992) is the tendency of the entrepreneurs to achieve success in their business including the usage of higher standards and strive to achieve goals. Stewart, G.L. (1999) suggested that a detailed oriented entrepreneur is his tendency to apply the structure and environment of his career, such as being someone who is well organized, likes to plan, thorough, detailed, careful and structured and he is also dependable, trustworthy and responsible. According to Ashton (2001), thoroughness/detail oriented is the tendency of the entrepreneurs in considering the risks before taking something into action. It is an opposite of being hasty which is the tendency of taking risks and reacting without considering any consequences from the actions.

A study by Murphy (1989) on 215 medical firm sales representatives shows a certain relationship: ‘the more thorough the entrepreneurs, the more sales they will make’. This is because careful individuals tend to have a higher energy level, always give their best to be successful and responsible. Besides that, Hurtz and Donavan (2000) have carried out a research on a group of salesperson regarding the relationship between thoroughness and their work performance. It is suggested that the more thorough the salesperson, they will work harder and more dedicated. A study done by Mount (1994) also found that thoroughness has a positive relationship with work performance. This is because someone who is very detailed and well-organized is usually very hard working, dependable, trustworthy, disciplined, careful and very structured.

However, the result from another study by Roberton and Kinder (1993) on 437 managers in the United Kingdom shows that there is no relationship between thoroughness and work performance. This might due to thoroughness is not considered as a crucial part in management tasks. Other characteristics such as innovative, creative, able to manage conflicts, and leadership are said to be more important than thoroughness.

Thoroughness means careful and cautious (Dewan Bahasa, 2001). Thoroughness in business from Islamic point of view is careful in doing a business as long as not it is against the Islamic principles and values. In Islam, the benefit from this activity is not only counted in this world but also calculated in the Hereafter. As Allah SWT has stated in the Quran: “O ye who believe! Fear Allah and let every soul look to what
(provision), he has sent forth the tomorrow. Yea, fear Allah: For Allah is well-acquainted with (all) that ye do.” (al-Hasr:18).

The decrees from Allah SWT explain that all Muslims who are involved in their business must be careful and thoroughness in doing their activities to meet the Shari’a or Islamic law principles. According to Wan Sabri (2005), thoroughness in business by Muslim business entrepreneurs has a significant relationship with the business achievements. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between the personality of thoroughness and the achievements of successful Muslim entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

B. Disciplined
Bernhardt (1984) suggested that discipline refers to the willingness to work or do something in order, respect other people’s right, do good deeds, respect each other and the will to work with others and to improve the current condition through some efforts with the society. Meanwhile, according to Muhammad bin Jusoh (1982), discipline is rules and legislations that are set and followed with continuous effort to achieve excellence in anything you do. Some examples of the work discipline that must be followed by entrepreneurs are:

(i) managing time very well and able to plan things properly,
(ii) visualize the goals, prioritize the tasks and do not procrastinate
(iii) completing their work on time
(iv) spending their money accordingly and do not abuse company’s money for personal reasons.

Research findings by Wan Sabri Wan Husin (2001) show that disciplined Muslim entrepreneurs will be more likeable by those who are dealing with them. They will do the planning properly and are careful to avoid undesirable things from happening. Discipline in business will boost some confidence in the entrepreneurs to gain some intrinsic and extrinsic rewards such as appreciation and financial rewards. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between the personality of disciplined and the achievements of successful Muslim entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

C. Intelligence and Emotional Stability
According to Kelvin et al. (1965), being intelligent and stable emotionally is a main trait in becoming an excellent entrepreneur. Based on the studies done around the year of 1940’s, excellent students are those who have clever minds and stable emotions. Through these traits, they are able to give suggestions, evaluate and have their own way of thinking. According to Goleman (1999), intelligence and emotional stability are required by a person who wants to be successful in their career such as doing business. It is also closely related to the impact on the individual’s work performance. Besides that, they also realize their special skills and talents. This allows them to use their potential to produce something which is more creative. Furthermore, Wittn and Lehman (1927) suggested that individuals with intelligent minds are those with the ability of general intellectual, specific academic intellectual, creative and productive minds and possess special talents. They also have very high self-values of themselves and to the society.

Intelligence and emotional stability in Islamic perspective refer to the concept of cleansing the heart and soul. This is one of the important ways to be a successful entrepreneur from Islamic perspective. With good and clean heart and soul, then intelligence and emotional stability will be gained. As Prophet (PBUH) said: “Truly in the body there is a morsel of flesh which, if it be whole, all the body is whole and which, if it be diseased, all of it is diseased. Truly it is the heart.” (Sahih Bukhari :1997:35). This Prophet’s saying (hadith) proves that intelligence and spiritual associated with the Muslim entrepreneur will lead them taking care of their relationship with God and other fellow human beings. As Allah stated: “And its inspiration as to its wrong and its right, Truly he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts it” (al-Shams 8-10). Thus, it is hypothesized that:
Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between the personality of intelligence and emotional stability and the achievements of successful Muslim entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

D. Creative

According to Kuratko and Hodgetts (1995), creativity is an idea generator that can lead to an improvement in the efficiency and the effectiveness of a certain system. There are two key aspects in creativity which are process and human. The process is the goal which is created to achieve solutions to the problems. Human is the source to solve the problem with different approaches. A study by Hull (1990) states that individuals who own businesses are more creative than those who do not own any business. This is because creative entrepreneurs can quickly identify the problems in the business as compared to the entrepreneurs who are less creative. These findings are supported by a study by Robinson (1991) who claims creativity is the most significant factor in determining the personality of an entrepreneur to obtain higher business performance.

Islam calls upon their followers especially the entrepreneurs to give some priorities to creativity in fulfilling the necessary activities of entrepreneurs. Allah SWT has provided a lot of sources for mankind’s necessities. That is why the entrepreneurs must think creatively on how to utilize the sources provided for the betterment of the Muslim society and the entire human race. An example of the sources provided by Allah is said in the decree from the Quran: “It is He who made the earth tame for you - so walk among its slopes and eat of His provision - and to Him is the resurrection.” (Al-Mulk: 15)

Allah SWT orders His servants to strive in order to gain benefit from all sources provided. As Muslim entrepreneurs, they have to be alert and creative and thus; allowing them to fulfill the need and demands of the society based on the ‘syaria’ values. Moreover, Muslim entrepreneurs have to think outside of the box and think ahead to create something new that can benefit the Islamic society. Hence, research and development (R&D) must be carried out regularly to accommodate the need of other Muslims. Besides that, Abdul Aziz Yusoff (2010) sees creativity as an effort to improve the values of certain products and give values to some products which are initially have no values. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between the personality of being creative and the achievements of successful Muslim entrepreneurs in Malaysia

E. Risk Taking

Ashadi Zain (2008) defines risk as incidents or things that might occur and potentially causes negative effects to the business. According to Koh (1996), risk-taking is taking chances and making decisions at something which is uncertain. The willingness to take risks is an example of courage which must be possessed by entrepreneurs and it is considered as an important asset to be successful in the business. This risk-taking attitude must be based on the rational consideration and knowledge. Meanwhile, Caird (1991) claimed that rational consideration towards the risks will allow the entrepreneurs to handle such risks with the knowledge and skills in order to achieve a realistic goal. According to Birds (1989), the types of risk that will be faced by entrepreneurs in the development and failure of the business are financial, social, physical, emotional risks. Saat (2010) stated that risk-taking is a nature in the business world. He stated that getting into the entrepreneurship is like fighting in a war where courage is necessary to overcome some challenges that come from different types of business risks.

According to Md Salleh (1992), there is a relationship between risk taking and entrepreneur achievements. Entrepreneurs are individuals who look for risks as compared to the individuals who are not in the entrepreneurship field that are considered as avoiding risks. This study conflicted with another study by Broukhaus (1980) that claimed there is a negative relationship between entrepreneurs and risk-taking attitude.

However, Abd Aziz Yusof (2010) mentions that as Muslim entrepreneurs, they must surrender and give total recumbence to Allah SWT. This allows them to be braver to take risks compared to the non-Muslim
entrepreneurs. Ashandi Zain (2008) proves Siti Khadijah, wife of the Prophet SAW and also a famous and successful entrepreneur at her time also encountered lots of risks in her business, for instance:

(i) The marketing risks - she had to face some reduction in her investment due to marketing factor
(ii) The debt risks – there were some customers who were not able to settle their debts
(iii) The operational risks – she faced some problems in the products and human resources
(iv) The commodity risks – she could not expect how much the price of the product will change in the future
(v) The liquidity risks – she faced problems of not getting cash because there are no buyers.

In order to overcome the risks, Siti Khadijah took a few steps such as identifying the risks, analyzing the risks, controlling the risks management process, observing the risks and last but not least, controlling the risks. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

**Hypothesis 5:** There is a relationship between the personality of risk-taking and the achievements of successful Muslim entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

### III. METHODOLOGY

A field study was conducted on 250 Muslim entrepreneurs in Malaysia. The purpose of this study is to verify the findings of the hypotheses. This study focuses on successful Muslim entrepreneurs in Malaysia as we aim to study the types of personality that are linked to successful entrepreneurs which made them obtained high achievements in their businesses. According to Chea Peou (2009), entrepreneur is considered successful if he has some characteristics of successful business such as managing their business for more than five years, increase of workforce; share capital; fixed assets and net assets.

The dependent variable of the study i.e. the achievements of entrepreneur is measured through six items that requires the entrepreneurs to answer in a five point scale. Each scale refers to respondent's answers of being "Strongly Disagree" (value 1) to "Strongly Agree" (value 5). According to Chea Peou (2009), the items pertaining to this variable are increasing revenue; assets ownership; profitability; sales of its products and/or services, growth of savings and size of business expansion. The Cronbach alpha value of this variable is 0.9. This shows that the variable has a high reliability value.

However, the independent variable in this hypothesis is the personality of the entrepreneur from Islamic perspective. The personality on entrepreneurs from Islamic perspective is related thoroughness, disciplined, high level of intelligence and emotional stability, creativity and being able to take risks. The Cronbach alpha value for this variable is 0.89. There are seven items for thoroughness, five items for disciplined, five items for high level of intelligence and emotional stability, four items for creativity and nine items for taking risk. This shows that this variable also has a high reliability value.

The hypotheses were tested by using Pearson correlation coefficient test. Pearson correlation test was conducted to understand the degree of relationship of successful Muslim personalities with their achievements. The correlation can indicate the direction and strength of the relationship that exists between successful Muslim entrepreneurs’ personalities and their achievements in Malaysia.

### TABLE 1: General Interpretation Of Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The correlation coefficients</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 0.20</td>
<td>A very weak correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.20 to 0.40</td>
<td>A weak correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.41 to 0.70</td>
<td>A moderate correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.71 to 0.90</td>
<td>A high correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.91 to 1.00</td>
<td>A very high correlation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Guilford, J.P, 1956
Table 1 shows the general interpretation of the correlation. For example, the correlation that approaches the value of 1.0 indicates there is a very high positive correlation, while a value between 0.1 to 0.3 indicates that there is a positive, but weak correlation. Positive correlation coefficients indicate that there is a direct relationship between independent and dependent variables. However, if the correlation coefficient shows a negative value, then the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is known as having inverting relationship.

IV. FINDINGS
About 183 of completed questionnaire forms were collected which consisted of 130 males and 53 females. Thus, the rate of response is amounted to 73.2%. Most successful entrepreneurs are aged 30 years and they made up 80% of the study. At least 12% holds a diploma, 43% possesses a Degree, and those with Master or PhD are at 16%. A total of 78% started their business with a capital of below RM100,000, 19% opened their business with a capital of RM100,000 to RM500,000 and the rest started their business capital above RM500,000. 60% of successful Muslim entrepreneurs are able to earn less than RM50,000 month while 40% managed to make over RM50,000 per month. 40% of the respondents holds a degree in Islamic education, 21% completed secondary schools while 18% studied religious study only in primary school. The summary of the respondents’ profile are as in table 2 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Details</th>
<th>Majority</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>71.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>30 years old</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest qualification</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education specialization</td>
<td>Islamic education</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business capital</td>
<td>&lt;RM100,000</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly income</td>
<td>&lt;RM50,000</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of business</td>
<td>More than one business</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meanwhile, the findings of the relationships between the personalities of entrepreneurs and Muslim entrepreneurial achievements are as follows:

**Hypothesis 1:**
There is a relationship between detailed-oriented personality and the achievements of successful Muslim entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detailed oriented Personality</th>
<th>Entrepreneurs’ Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.342**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the analysis of the first hypothesis (Table 3), the coefficient given is 0.342. This shows that the relationship between the detailed-oriented personality and the achievements of successful Muslim entrepreneurs is positive but weak. Since both end of the variables for this hypothesis is 0, the hypothesis is accepted because of the significant relationship between these two variables. The result of this study supports another study done by Mount (1994) and Hurtz (2000) which proposed that thoroughness is positively related to the working performance. This is because someone who is very detailed and careful is usually very hardworking, dependable, trustworthy, disciplined, focused and able to plan ahead and very strategic.
According to Chea Peou (2009), thoroughness in management is one of the variables that showed positive relationship with business achievements.

**Hypothesis 2:**
There is a relationship between personality of being disciplined and the achievements of successful Muslim entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

**TABLE 4: Relationship Between Being Disciplined And The Achievements Of Successful Of Muslim Entrepreneurs In Malaysia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciplined</th>
<th>Entrepreneurs’ Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.289**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For the analysis of the second hypothesis (Table 4), the coefficient value given is 0.289. This shows that the variable of the personality of being disciplined and the achievements of successful Muslim entrepreneurs has a positive but weak relationship. Since both end of the variables for this hypothesis is 0, this hypothesis can be accepted because of the significant relationship between these two variables. The result of this study supports the study done by Md Salleh Hj Din (1992) who found that discipline is positively related with business achievements. According to him, disciplined entrepreneurs will be more likeable by those who are dealing with them. They will plan carefully to avoid unwanted things from happening. Discipline in doing business will give more confidence to the entrepreneurs to gain more intrinsic and extrinsic rewards such as appreciation and financial rewards.

**Hypothesis 3:**
There is a relationship between personality of having intelligence and emotional stability and the achievements of successful Muslim entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

**TABLE 5: Relationship Between The Personality Of Having Intelligence And Emotional Stability And The Achievements Of Successful Muslim Entrepreneurs In Malaysia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intelligence and emotional stability</th>
<th>Entrepreneurs’ Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.293**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the analysis of the third hypothesis (Table 5), the coefficient value is 0.293. This shows a positive but weak relationship between the variables of the personality of being intelligent and having stable emotions and the achievements of successful Muslim entrepreneurs’. Since the significant value of both end of the variables is 0, thus; the hypothesis can be accepted because of the significant relationship between these two variables. This result has supported the study done by Kelvin (1965), Witty (1927) and Joseph Renzulli (1978) that suggested excellent students are those with the intelligent minds and stable emotions. According to Abdul Aziz Yusoff (2010), this phenomenon is quite similar to those who are doing a business which means to be a successful entrepreneur you must have the intelligence and emotional stability to counter with the challenges that you face.

**Hypothesis 4**
There is a relationship between the personality of being creative and the achievements of successful Muslim entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

**TABLE 6: Relationship Between The Personality Of Being Creative And The Achievements Of Successful Muslim Entrepreneurs In Malaysia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creativity</th>
<th>Entrepreneurs’ Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Correlation | .298**
---|---
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For the analysis of the fourth hypothesis (Table 6), the coefficient value given is 0.298. This proves that the variable has a positive but weak relationship. Since the value of both end of the hypothesis is 0, thus; the hypothesis is accepted because there is a significant relationship between the two variables. This supports a study by Hull (1990) and Robinson (1991) who found that creativity is a significant factor in to entrepreneurs’ achievements. According to Wan Sabri (2001), as a Muslim entrepreneur, the creativity in managing the entrepreneurship activities is necessary to fulfill the public demands based on the Islamic values. Thus, they have to be creative by designing something new in order to meet the expectation and provide some help for the Muslim society.

**Hypothesis 5**
There is a relationship between the personality of risk-taking and the achievements of successful Muslim entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

| TABLE 7: Relationship Between The Personality Of Risk-Taking And The Achievements Of Successful Muslim Entrepreneurs In Malaysia |
|---|---|
| Risk-taking | Entrepreneurs’ Achievements |
| Correlation | .300** |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For the analysis of the fifth hypothesis (Table 7), the coefficient value given is 0.3. This proves that the variables have a positive but weak relationship. Since the value of both end of the hypothesis is 0, thus the hypothesis is accepted because there is a significant relationship between the two variables. This study is conflicted with a study by Broukhaus (1980) who found a negative relationship with entrepreneurs who are daring to take risks. According to Abdul Aziz Yusof (2010), Muslim successful entrepreneurs will be more daring to take risks if they depend on Allah SWT totally and treat their fortune as Allah’s and He will give it to those who have faith and render full submission to Allah SWT.

V. CONCLUSION
In conclusion, there are significant relationships between the personality of entrepreneurs and their accomplishments and this proves that all hypotheses proposed in this study can be accepted. This is because the personality of Muslim entrepreneurs is an important asset to gain some achievements in the field of entrepreneurship. Muslim personality is something which is closely related to the relationship with Allah and also the relationship with other people. They have to think creatively, able to focus on the details and are intelligent with a stable emotional level in order to keep building and expanding their business. Besides that, an entrepreneur must be disciplined. This will provide some satisfaction and comfort to those who deal with these entrepreneurs. Generally, it can be concluded that the personality of entrepreneurs studied in this research is a dynamic foundation for an individual relationship between the entrepreneurs with both Allah and other people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
We would like to thank RG129/11SBS for funding this research.

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