Psychometric Analysis of the Factors Modeling Islamic Moderation among Malaysian University Students

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ABSTRACT

This study is investigating the psychometric properties of the five componential factors of Islamic Moderation Instrumentation (IMI) among students of Malaysian Higher Learning Institutions (MHLI). The five componential factors of IMI is a newly constructed instrument to measure the Islamic moderation theory within the practices of students within MHLI. The data for this study were collected by using the random sampling from six public universities in Klang Valley, Malaysia. The questionnaire was the primary tool for the data gathering. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling technique using AMOS 23 version software. The findings showed that the five componential factors of Islamic Moderation's Instrumentation (IMI) are positively significant and correlated with each variable. The psychometric data suggest that the five factors modeling Islamic moderations are the cycle of IM-MHLI between balance and moderate.

Keywords: Islamic moderation, wasatiyyah, cognitive understanding, practices effectiveness, operational functionality, attitudinal paradigm, representation personality.

I INTRODUCTION

The term Islamic Moderation or Wasatiyyah (IMW) as prescribed by the holy Quran is a pure and natural personality and behaviors of Muslim people. The original essence of the term IM as a concept addressing the issue of balanced or just is contained in many places in the Quran (al-Baqarah, 2:143). However, there is another statement describing Muslims as those who, when they spend, do not excessively and not sparingly, but are between that, (justly) moderate. This verse explains that individual Muslim personality and behaviors of conduct should be in the form of moderation as demanded by the Almighty and should become a trait of individual personal practice in daily life. In the first verse, the Almighty describes the original trait of a Muslim community. Obviously, this type of community should always be developed, organized and structured according to this fundamental principle and trait. Therefore, both statements can be regarded as conveying a concurrent meaning together, in which it describes Muslims as the best nation (al-Furqaan, 25:67; Aali-Imraan, 3:110). Based on this evidence and explanations, if IM were to be practiced by an Islamic community, there should not be severely disturbing violence and extremism, a constraint to peace in the world today.

Apparently, from this context, the term IM is taken and developed from the expression stated in verse 143, al-Baqarah in which it has been interpreted in various conceptual meanings; namely, middle path, justice and middle, moderate, the best position, the most honorable, the most perfect, and the alternative selection as in Hassan (2011); Qutb (2000); Sya'rawi (2004); Abdullah (2009); Ibn Kathir (2003); Kamali (2010); and Ghazali (2008). This term is also interpreted as referring to the first generation of Islamic community who received direct prophetic training and education in positioning themselves within justice and balanced society. Therefore, they were regarded as the best and exemplary nation that is, moderate in all ways, aspects or demeanor, not extreme, neither obsessive in their religious belief and ethical practices. In fact, all their actions are in a state of stability, jointly viewed, learned and worked in efforts encompassing issues of the world and the hereafter (Basmih, 2001). An example of extremism in religious belief can be observed whenever a person has a consideration that a prophet is a son, a representation of God or taking an idol as an intermediary between a human being in connection to God the Almighty.

There is a need for the study to be conducted to identify the views and practiced of IMW by the people. It portrays the way of life and stands on specific issues. Therefore this study is considered crucial in looking into how the understanding and realization of Islamic Moderation (Wasatiyyah) IMW in Malaysian Higher Learning Institution (MHLI) specifically towards the students. Hence this work elaborates on the model of IMW based on five componential factors which underpinned Operational Functionality (OF), Practices Effectiveness (PE), Attitudinal Paradigm (AP), Representation Personality (RP) and Cognitive Understanding (CU). The structural model is

expected to play an essential role in developing MHLI in producing balanced, excellent students and become the main contributors to develop the nation.

II THE FIVE COMPONENTIAL FACTOR MODEL OF ISLAMIC MODERATION

As observed from the previous discussion, the term IM usually understood with its common literature resources been elaborated from Islamic religious perspective. Currently, there is not even one single attempt to construct an instrument assessment on IM. In other words, there is none in existence of any inventories designed to measure IM personality and practices. Hence, the purpose of the current study is to develop and provide initial validation for an IM as a measurement scale. The extent that the disposition of having IM personality, or not having, can be understood, at least in part, as an expression of an IM personality trait of practices. Through this study, it is realized that it might be useful to develop a measure of an IMW from the perspective of the Five Factor Model (FFM). One advantage of this approach is that the assessment of IM personality would be more readily understood from the perspective of the FFM, especially in explaining the differences in nature and the way people behave (McCrae & Costa, 1997; Bouchard & Loehlin, 2001). In this regard, several researchers, e.g., Ives and Olson (1984), Straub (1989), DeLone and McLean (1992), Sarsam and Al-Samarraie (2018) have stressed the importance of developing standardized instruments for measuring user personality and behaviors. Obviously, it is an essential theoretical issue that has received considerable attention in the field of behavioral research in social sciences (Melone, 1990; Bailey & Pearson, 1983; Sarason, 2015).

A. Model of Implementation of Islamic Moderation (Wasatiyyah) IMW in MHLI

In the context of IMW implementation for MHLI, the model of IMW included five important components mentioned that is the Operational Functionality (OF), Practices Effectiveness (PE), Attitudinal Paradigm (AP), Representation Personality (RP) and Cognitive Understanding (CU). The scales were constructed based on the factor of knowledge outcome effects in which it develops and shape self-representation personality factor, attitudinal, behavioral tendencies factor, self-ability and stability factor and finally charismatic personality traits factor. The mediation interrelation is presented in the following Figure 1.

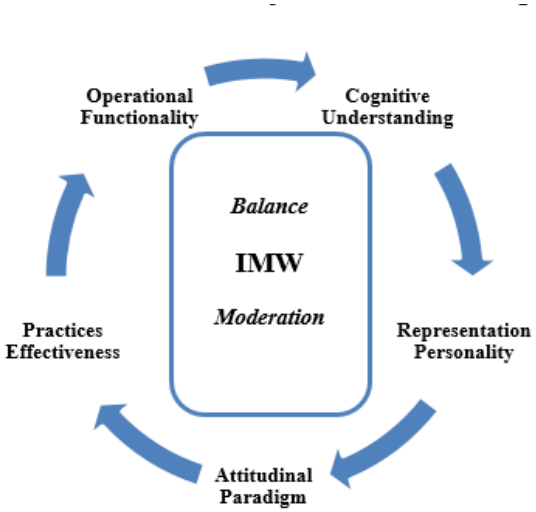

Figure 1. Performance Evaluation based on Factors Model of Balanced and Moderation IMW-MHLI

These include the outcome development effect of the knowledge existence and creation within the CU processes; the effect of the knowledge practices on personality representation; the effect on attitudinal behaviors; the effect on internal expression and stability and the effect on life operational function. In line with the government's aspiration to produce an adequate human resource with knowledge and high moral values to increase the level of capacity, accessibility, and participation in higher education, five componential IMW-MHLI should bring forward the aspiration of excellent to the overall MHLI ecosystem and stakeholders. To meet the research objectives and based on the conceptual framework presented above, the hypotheses were developed accordingly:

H1: Cognitive Understanding (CU) is positively effect on Representation Personality (RP)

H2: Representation Personality (RP) is positively effect on Attitudinal Paradigm (AP)

H3: Attitudinal Paradigm (AP) is positively effect on Practices Effectiveness (PE)

H4: Practices Effectiveness (PE) is positively effect on Operational Functionality (OF)

B. The Description of the Five Componential Factor Model

Cognitive Understanding (CU)

The term CU here is referring to the state of intuitive understanding of IM as conceptual knowledge. Therefore, the items of test construction of this factor were targeting to measure the naïve, intuitive and straightforward understanding of IM in comparison to the complex, deep and comprehensive conceptual understanding. In another word, CU is a representative value of knowledge outcome on IM. Therefore, it covers

two important cognitive aspects; the first one is the concept of IM as a comprehensively understandable terminology within the research community. The second is focusing on the self-consciousness on the importance of IM knowledge impact and suitability. Therefore, its total number of the construct is 11.

Representation personality (RP)

The term RP here is referring to the standard of self-achievement, commitment, and willingness as a personality trait presented naturally with the existence IM knowledge and its practices. Therefore, the items of test construction were targeting to measure the manifestation of IM practices in term of self-awareness, perfectionism, moderate and self-strive achievement. Its total numbers of the construct is 10.

Attitudinal Paradigm (AP)

The term AP here is referring to the self-conceptual understanding that shaping individual attitudinal behaviors and practices. Any paradigm shift should lead to a behavioral change. Therefore, a paradigm-shifting is an outcome of knowledge creation. For this factor, 14 constructs been identified.

Practices Effectiveness (PE)

The term PE here is referring to the situation of self-ability, satisfaction and emotional stability as an outcome from the internal expression of knowledge impact. Its total numbers of

the construct is 11.

Operational Functionality (OF)

The term OF here is referring to the observable outcome produced by the knowledge of IM. These impacts were measured in term of academic performances, self-development and charismatic firmness. Its total numbers of the construct is 8.

III METHODOLOGY

This study is an analysis of Islamic Moderation Instrumentation (IMI's) psychometric properties using 508 participants among Public Universities in Klang Valley, Malaysia. The IMI is a 54 item Likert-type scale specifically designed to measure IM practices within MHLI. Its structure and dimensionality have been selected objectively from comprehensive literature reviews related to the field of IM concepts and practices.

A. **Population**

In this study, the population is the students in Public universities in Malaysia such as UPM, UM, USIM, UKM, UITM, and UIA. A total of 508 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in 6 six public universities (UPM, UM, USIM, UKM, UITM, UIA). In producing a reliable research data outcome, the larger sample size has a higher chance to be more stable in the SEM analysis. In particular, a larger size is required in a complex model, so more than 200 responses are required to produce a justified and objective outcome (Kline, 2005; Zainudin, 2012).

Therefore, the sample size of this study is considered stable and reliable.

B. **Measurement**

The scale of 'Representative Personality' (RP) was used to measure the standard of self-achievement, commitment and willingness as a personality trait presented naturally with the existence. There were ten questions, and a 5-point Likert scale was used (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The questions included the following: 'I like to learn in a group even if it imposes,' I would like to ask the lecturer or friends if there are things I do not understand' and so on.

'Operational Functionality' (OF) was measured with eight questions about academic performances, self-development and charismatic firmness. The questions included the following: 'I plan all works well, but I still failed because of the time constraints,' 'I spend less amount of time in private study, but I perform very well,' 'I work hard, so sports are a waste of time for me' and so on. 'Practices Effectiveness' (PE) was measured the situation of self-ability, satisfaction and emotional stability as an outcome from the internal expression of knowledge impact. It consists eleven questions such as 'it is difficult for me to forget certain memories and thoughts that are on my mind', 'I am a student who is excellent in the University; that is the point of satisfaction of my life', 'I travel in group, I always worry about the safety of the group members' and so on.

'Attitudinal Paradigm' (AP) was measured with fourteen questions about the self-conceptual understanding that shaping individual attitudinal behaviors and practices. The questions included following: 'Environment noise does not affect my devotion in prayer,' 'the duty of fasting Ramadan is very harmful to my daily tasks,' 'Read the Quran without understanding is normal for me' and so on. 'Cognitive Understanding' (CU) was measured the state of intuitive understanding of IMW as conceptual knowledge. It consists eleven questions such as 'A Muslim should strive to be moderate in anything worthwhile,' 'A Muslim should be a balance between their physical and spiritual', 'A Muslim must also be moderate in their actions and their behavior' and so on.

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 15.0 and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) 23.0 was used for data analysis. To ensure the objectivity of the data outcome, the general research hypotheses of the sample, pooled-confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and SEM were applied. SEM is designed to evaluate how well a proposed model or hypothetical construct explains collected data (Yoon et al., 2010). SEM can synthetically analyze relations among constructs by the simultaneous conduct of path analysis and factor analysis. It can also presume precise path analysis by the presumption of errors. Thus, SEM is a suitable method for this study. In applying SEM, as an estimation method for model evaluation and procedures, the maximum likelihood (ML) method and the two-stage testing processes were utilized (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, Tatham, 2006).

IV RESULT OF ANALYSIS

A. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The characteristic of respondents is described by gender, age, level of education, CGPA and year of study in the present university. The respondents comprises of six public universities which UPM (17.3%), UM (16.5%), UKM (15.4%), USIM (17.3%), UITM (17.1%) and UIA (16.3%). The majority of respondents are female (72.2%) and male (27.2%). With regard to age, 77% respondents come from the age of 19-23, 14.6% respondents were from the age of 24-28, 8.5% respondents from the age of 28 and above. The majority of respondents have bachelor degree qualification (74% - 376 respondents), 69 respondents (13.6%) have master qualification, 36 respondents (7.1%) have STAM/STPM/Diploma qualification, 26 (5.1%) respondents have Asasi/Tamhidi, and only one respondents (0.2%) hold a Ph.D. 320 respondents (63%) are have CGPA 3.0 – 3.59, 132 respondents (26%) are having CGPA 3.6 and above, 41 respondents (8.1%) are having CGPA 2.6-2.99, and 15 respondents (3%) are having CGPA 2.0-2.59. The majority of respondents is in Year 2 (179 respondents– 35.2%), 158 respondents (31.1%) in Year 3, 134 (26.4%) of respondents in Year 4 and 37 (7.3%) of respondents in Year 1.

B. The Measurement Model

In the Pooled-CFA, all constructs were pooled and being assessed together at once. This study decided to employ the Pooled-CFA since it is more efficient, thorough, and can avoid the model identification problem especially if some of the constructs have less than four measuring items (Zainudin, 2015). By using this method, all constructs are pooled together and linked using the double-headed arrows to assess the correlation among the constructs as shown in Figure 2.

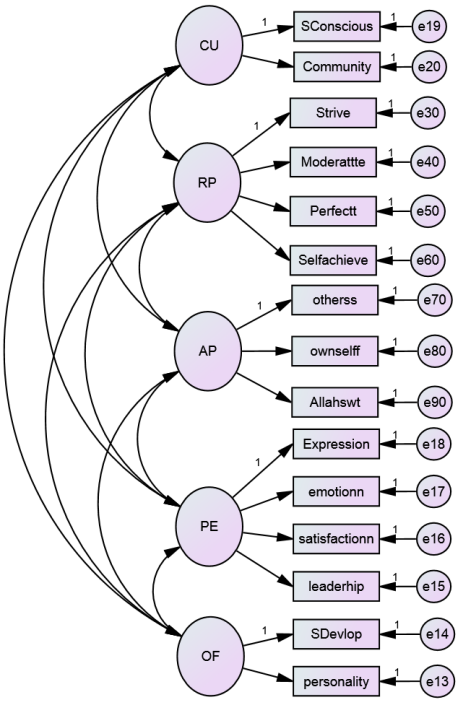

Figure 2. The Pool-CFA of Measurement Model

As measured models are deemed to be valid and acceptable, the SEM was taken to the next stage of analysis. The fit index of a model in the SEM analysis is largely divided into three types: the AFI, incremental fit index (IFI), and parsimonious fit index (Hair et al., 2006). The analysis results are shown in Table 1 that the fit indices suggest an adequate fit (Hair et al., 2010) indicating that the model fits the data satisfactorily. The models are measured as RMSEA is 0.053, CFI is 0.951, and Chi-Square/df is 2.176. It is commonly agreed that it is satisfactory CFI is above 0.9, RMSEA is below 0.08, and Chi-Square/df is below than 3 (Zainudin, 2015). The Fitness Indexes in Table 1 have achieved the required level of construct validity as proposed by Zainudin (2015, 2012). Thus, the measurement model is said to achieve the construct validity.

Table 1: Fitness Indexes Indicate the Fitness of the Construct.

Name of category	Name of index	Index value	Comments
1. Absolute fit	RMSEA	0.053	The required level achieved
2. Incremental fit	CFI	0.951	The required level achieved
3. Parsimonious fit	Chisq/df	2.176	The required level achieved

C. Hypothesis Testing

Following the confirmation of the measurement model validity, the structural model specified by assigning relationships from one construct to another based on the conceptual framework as shown in Figure 3. The following hypotheses have been tested:

H1: Cognitive Understanding (CU) is positively effect on Representation Personality (RP)

H2: Representation Personality (RP) is positively effect on Attitudinal Paradigm (AP)

H3: Attitudinal Paradigm (AP) is positively effect on Practices Effectiveness (PE)

H4: Practices Effectiveness (PE) is positively effect on Operational Functionality (OF)

H4: Operational Functionality (OF)is positively effect on Cognitive Understanding (CU)

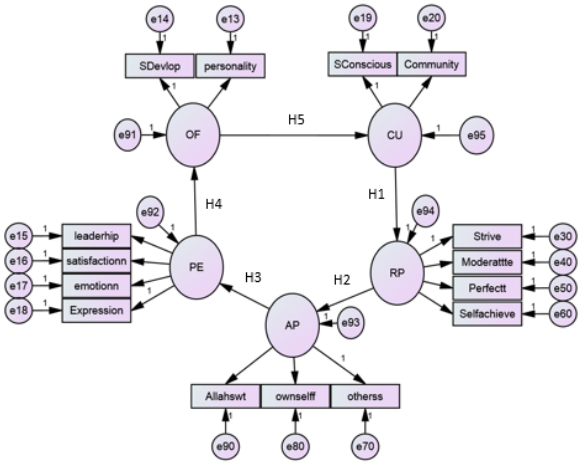

Figure 3. Structural Model

Based on Table 2, it is shown that CU → RP is significant (c.r. = 5.339; $p < 0.05$), RP → AP is significant (c.r. = 5.811; $p < 0.05$), AP → PE is significant (c.r. = 6.088; $p < 0.05$), PE → OF is significant (c.r. = 8.867; $p < 0.05$) and OF → CU is significant (c.r. = 4.512; $p < 0.05$). It is conclude that all paths are significant which is the critical ratio is above 1.96 and p value is below than 0.05. (Zainudin, 2012). Result shown that the most dominat is the relationship between Representation Personality (RP) and Attitudinal Paradigm (AP) with R^2 is 0.784 (78%).

Table 2: The Regression Path Coefficients and its significance based on p-value < 0.05

	Construct		Construct	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	R^2	Result
H1	RP	<-	CU	0.333	0.063	5.339	***	0.280	Significant
H2	AP	<-	RP	1.765	0.304	5.811	***	0.784	Significant
H3	PE	<-	AP	0.396	0.065	6.088	***	0.379	Significant
H4	OF	<-	PE	0.582	0.066	8.867	***	0.200	Significant
H5	CU	<-	OF	0.801	0.177	4.512	***	0.320	Significant

V CONCLUSION

The five components of Islamic moderation (Wasatiyyah) (IMW) which are, Operational Functionality (OF), Practices Effectiveness (PE), Attitudinal Paradigm (AP), Representation Personality (RP) and Cognitive Understanding (CU) could become a strong contributing factors in building the direction of MHLI in order to build an excellent and outstanding nation that is rich in knowledge, culture and civilization. It is hoped that IMW plays it role as a catalyst to develop MHLI that enables the nation to sustain with dignity and just in the era of globalization and competition. To sum, IMW integration within the MHLI demands the comprehensive understanding and application from its citizen since its comprehend the values of spiritual growth, not material, contentment not greed, patience not haste, moderation not maximization, balance not tilt, cooperation not competition and spreading the integrated knowledge of intellectuality and religiosity for the benefit of Ummah.

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