The Work: An Islamic Psychospiritual Study

العمل: دراسة نفسية إسلامية

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Abstract:
Objectives: Discover the meaning of the work in psychology and Islamic psychology, the main problem of this study is: what is the meaning of the work in psychology and Islamic perspective?

Methods: The researcher used the qualitative method (content analysis). And to find the meaning of work the researcher will study the theoretical literature about the work in psychology and the Qur'anic verses which include the word work.

Results: The result show that there is big difference between the meaning of work in Psychology and Islamic psychology, researcher found that the meaning of work in psychology, it refers to an individual's explanations of his/her real live experiences and interactions at work, also it is about need of self-actualization. Also, the work is consistency between oneself and one's work, similar to the work is the harmony between one's self and one's work, similar to a evenness in one's personal relationship with work. But in Islam there is a big difference; Islam define work as worship (Ebadah).

Conclusions: The implication of the result of this research is lead to develop scale of the meaning of work from Islamic psychology perspective.

Keywords: The work; qualitative research; Islamic psychology.
1 Introduction

What is work and what makes it meaningful in people's lives? We must acknowledge that the problem of labor was not raised in the context of human existence. Studies mainly dealt with the problem of labor from its economic and social aspects. Here it must be noted that Sigmund Freud: He stated that work, like the need for love and food, is necessary for the development of the individual and society. This is because work has a material, social, economic, psychological and biological scope. Now is the time to pay attention to the issue of work and the importance it represents to individuals' lives. (Morin, 2008, p.1).

Islam ordered people for work before more than 1400 years ago. Allah said: (105) And say, "Do [as you will], for Allah will see your deeds, and [so, will] His messenger and the believers. And you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you of what you used to do."

And from Sunnah: 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The best thing you eat is from your earnings, and your children are from your earnings."

From the above mentioned, the work is an important component for human live because Allah (God) who create us ordered us to work.

There are many studies conducted Since the end of the 1980s, all these studies are tried to find the meaning of work, particularly in psychology (Rosso, D, & Wrzesniewski, 2010). Western psychology has developed over the decades allowing the human condition to be analyzed, especially with regard to the effect of childhood experiences on later life. However, this knowledge of the human psyche is still largely the product of its historical cultural environment, that is a secular humanist vision that prefers to see the mind more as machine that can be 'understood' and can even be mimicked by Artificial Intelligence algorithms in a computer. (Badri, et al, 2000, p. vii).

In a bibliographic study conducted by Morin, he reviewed 183 papers conducted between 1974 and 2006. (Morin, 2006), all of which focused on the topic of work. Based on the great development in the field of work and the context of work during the last years of the twentieth century, the meaning of work became of great importance, especially in the field of social sciences and more precisely in the field of vocational psychology. This is because of the importance that work represents in the lives of individuals and the economic development of countries. In this context, Morin prepared a questionnaire consisting of 30 statements to measure the meaning of work. This questionnaire has been used by practitioners and researchers in the field of psychology. However, the precise meaning of the work has only been partially determined (Pignault & Houssemand, 2021).

2 Meaning of Work

There are many scholars trying to define the meaning of work from different perspective, and they found that it is hard to defined it. In theoretical point of view, it has been defined differently in several academic fields. In psychology, it refers to an interpretation that reflect an individual's actual experiences and interactions at work (Ros & Surkiss, 1999). From other field like sociological perspective work, it involves assessing meaning in reference to a system of values (Rosso et al., 2010). The concept of work from a social perspective, involves a value system. In this case, the definition of work depends on cultural or social differences and this makes the interpretation of work more complex. (Pignault & Houssemand, 2021)

Generally, at the conceptual level, work has been defined in three different ways (Morin, 2003). First, the meaning of work is linked to the individual's view or perception of the work and the values that are attributed to this work (Morin & Cherré, 2004).

Brief and Nord (1990) emphasized that the Purposeful activity is the only element whose multiple meanings are compatible with each other. Accordingly, work is defined as the expenditure of energy through

1 (Narrated by Ibn Hazm)
the performance of consistent actions aimed at producing something useful (Firth, 1948; Fryer and Payne, 1984; Shepherdson, 1984). These activities may or may not be enjoyable, and may or may not be related to economic exchanges. Based on the interviews conducted by Fryer and Bryan, work was defined as: a useful activity with a specific purpose that goes beyond the pleasure resulting from its performance (Fryer and Payne, 1984).

Work as a term has some differences, because the meaning of work represents an individual’s interpretation of what work represents or the impact it leaves on an individual's life (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). However, an individual’s perception is influenced by the environment in which the individual grew up as well as the social system (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003) The psychological literature has primarily dealt with the positive side of work, although not every work experience is positive, as there are negative experiences. This hypothesis led to bias regarding the nature of the meaning of work in research, leading to some overlap between the concept of work and the concept of meaning of work, which expresses the extent of the personal importance of work and seems to depend on positive elements. (Steger & Duffy, 2012).

The basic idea of the meaning of work refers to its central importance to the lives of individuals, and this goes beyond the behavioral activity it produces. By referring to various historical references, these scholars sought to understand the importance of work in the lives of individuals (Pignault, A & Houssemad, C, 2021). Work can also be a source of identity. It may give you a profession, conferring on you the status of an auto mechanic, a beautician, a journalist, a nurse, a lawyer, or a teacher; often, along with wealth, education, and connections, your job helps fix your social class (Appiah, 2021). Work mean the familiar things we do in fields, factories, offices, schools, shops, building sites, call centers, homes, and so on, to make a life and a living. Examples of work in our commercial society include driving a taxi, selling washing machines, managing a group of software developers, running a till in a supermarket, attaching screens to smartphones on an assembly line, fielding customer complaints in a call center, and teaching in a school (Clark, 2017, p.62). In general, work is considered an important activity in the life of individuals and society alike, and therefore work is an activity through which a person discovers the world, practices his hobbies and talents, and achieves himself and his potential. Thus, work gives a person a sense of accomplishment and personal effectiveness, but it goes beyond that, as work gives life meaning. (Morin, 2008, p.2).

From the above all meanings the researcher defines the work is: an individual state of self-satisfaction for doing something to himself and people can benefit from it.

3 The Qur’anic Verses the Word “Work” is Mentioned

The Qur’an is the book of Allah revealed to his Messenger Muhammad peace be upon him and it is the book that falsehood does not come from his hands or behind him. In this section the researcher reviews some Qur’anic verses that mentioned the word work. The word (work) in Qur’an mentioned as (labor, business, action and, job) many times in these verses:

وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحٗا فَلَهُمۡ أَجْرٞۢاۢ وَلَا خَوۡفٌ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وَلَا هُمۡ يَحۡزَنُونَ (Al-Maidah: 36).

Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Sabeans (before Prophet Muhammad) [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness- will have their reward with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Al-Baghara:62). Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans [before Prophet Muhammad] - those [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness- will have their reward with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.

وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَذَلِكَ هَدُواْ وَذَلِكَ هَُدُواْ مَنۡ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِ (Q. Al-Maaidah: 69).

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, AL-Maaidah: 69) Indeed, those who have believed [in Prophet Muhammad] and those [before Him] who were Jews or Sabaeans or Christians - those [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness - no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.
And when those come to you who believe in Our verses, say, "Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy: that any of you who does wrong out of ignorance and then repents after that and corrects himself - indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful."

Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.

Except those who repent, and believe; for those who enter Paradise will not be wronged at all.

But whoever comes to Him as a believer having done righteous deeds - for those will be the highest degrees [in position]:

But he who repents, and believes, and does righteous deeds may indeed turn to Allah with [accepted] repentance.

Whoever disbelieves, upon him falls his disbelief. And whoever acts righteousness—they are preparing for themselves.

And it is not your wealth, nor your children that bring you nearer to Us (i.e. please Allâh), but only he who believes (in the Islâmic Monotheism), and does righteous deeds (will please Us); as for such, there will be twofold reward for what they did, and they will reside in the high dwellings (Paradise) in peace and security.

Whosoever does an evil deed, will not be requited except the like thereof; and whosoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female is a true believer (in the Oneness of Allâh).
of Allah), such will enter Paradise, where they will be provided therein (with all things in abundance) without limit.

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Fusilat:33). And who is better in speech than he who [says]: «My Lord is Allah (believes in His Oneness),» and then stands firm (acts upon His Order), and [invites] men to Allah’s (Islâmic Monotheism), and does righteous deeds, and says: «I am one of the Muslims.

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Fusilat:46). Whosoever does righteous good deed, it is for (the benefit of) his ownself; and whosoever does evil, it is against his ownself. And your Lord is not at all unjust to (His) slaves.

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Al-Jaathiya:15). Whoever does good, it is to their own benefit. And whoever does evil, it is to their own loss. Then to your Lord you will ‘all’ be returned.

From the above-mentioned verses, the word (work) means something people can do even if Ebadah (worship), or action. Another thing, the work can be right work or wrong work. Also, the word work mentioned in Qur’an as (present, tense and command verb like:

ولو كُفُنَّا حُكَّمًا ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Al-Anbiya:74). And to Lot We gave wisdom and knowledge and delivered him from the society engrossed in shameful practices. They were certainly an evil, rebellious people.

وَمَن يَقۡنُتۡ مِنكُنِّه للَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Al-Ahzab:31). And whoever devoutly obeys Allah and His Messenger and does righteousness - We will give her reward twice; and We have prepared for her a noble provision.

In this rever (Al-Ahzab:31) Allah Subhanahu Wataala (God Almighty) spoke directly to women if a women obey and did right work, she gave twice rewards. The researcher thinks that the woman has great role and does righteousness and does righteous deeds, and says:

وَلَوۡ كَفِنَّا حُكْمًا ﻷُۧنَ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ 

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Al-Baqara:74). Even then your hearts became hardened like a rock or even harder, for some rocks gush rivers; others split, spilling water; while others remain without limit.

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Al-Baqara:85). Then, you are those [same ones who are] killing one another and evicting a party of your people from their homes, cooperating against them in sin and aggression. And if they come to you as captives, you ransom them, although their eviction was forbidden to you. So, do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection, they will be sent back to the severest of punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.


In all the above Qur’anic verses the word action comes as a result of what people do, and the important theme here is that all the works that people do are known by Allah. Also, the result of the work done by the people comes into the plural, which emphasizes the need for teamwork.
The word *work* in whole Qur’an comes as command in nine verses:

1. 

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Al-An’aam: 135). Say, "O my people, work according to your position; [for] indeed, I am working. And you are going to know who will have succession in the home. Indeed, the wrongdoers will not succeed.

2. 

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Al-tawba: 105). And say, “Do [as you will], for Allah will see your deeds, and [so, will] His messenger and the believers. And you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you of what you used to do.”

3. 

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Hud:93). And O my people, work according to your position; indeed, I am working. You are going to know to whom will come a punishment that will disgrace him and who is a liar. So watch; indeed, I am with you a watcher, [awaiting the outcome]."

4. 

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Hud:121). Say to those who disbelieve, “Persist in your ways; we will certainly persist in ours.

5. 

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Al-Muminoon 51). [Allah said], "O messengers, eat from the good foods and work righteousness. Indeed, I, of what you do, am Knowing.

6. 

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Saba:11). [Commanding him], "Make full coats of mail and calculate [precisely] the links, and work all of you righteousness. Indeed I, of what you do, am Seeing.’

7. 

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Saba:13). They made for him what he willed of elevated chambers, statues, bowls like reservoirs, and stationary kettles. [We said], "Work, O family of David, in gratitude.” And few of My servants are grateful.

8. 

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Az-Zumar:39). Say, "O my people, work according to your position, [for] indeed, I am working; and you are going to know.

9. 

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, Fussilat:40). Indeed, those who inject deviation into Our verses are not concealed from Us. So, is he who is cast into the Fire better or he who comes secure on the Day of Resurrection? Do whatever you will; indeed, He is Seeing of what you do.

Therefore, the work in Islam is not just matter of earning money, or grazing cattle, doing business, but the work in Islam is Ebadah (worship). Therefore, any kind of work that you did must align with Islamic divine this mean if your business man you work must be according to Islam, if you are a farmer, you must a Muslim farmer, if you are employee, you must be a Muslim employee…etc.

In addition to that work mention in Qur’an as a profession like; commerce, plowing, farming and grazing.

(Al-Qur’an Al-Kareem, An-Nisaa: 29). Believers, do not consume your wealth among yourselves in falsehood, except there be trading by your mutual agreement. And do not kill yourselves. Allah is the Most Merciful to you.
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4 Discussion of the Result and Conclusion

From the theoretical literature of psychology about the work. The researcher found that the meaning of work in general is human behavior that lead to self-actualization and needs satisfaction. Thus, we find that psychologists have emptied the work of the spiritual aspect associated with it. Rather, they made it like any basic human need, when it is satisfied, the person can stop performing it. But work from the perspective of Islam and Islamic psychology is not just a need that, when satisfied, a person can stop performing. The meaning of work from this perspective goes beyond the material aspect, but rather is linked to the spiritual aspect of man, and man cannot stop working on the spiritual aspects. From this perspective, work is also considered a command from God Almighty to all people. The significance of this research is that it is one of the few studies to the limit of researcher knowledge that dealt with the subject of work from an Islamic psychology point of view. The results of this research can be useful in developing and constructing scale of the meaning of work from Islamic perspective.
References:


