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## Organizational Justice, Job Satisfaction and Islamic Spirituality among Malaysian SME Employees\*

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### Abstract

The role of Islamic spirituality in the relationship between organizational justice (OJ) and job satisfaction is investigated in this study (JS). The three components of OJ in this study are distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. Islamic spirituality (IS) is founded on piety values, and IS was used as a moderating factor in this study to alter the link between OJ and JS among Malaysian employees of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Four hundred sets of the questionnaire were issued using a simple random selection procedure, yielding 276 completed responses, suggesting a 69 percent response rate. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (MLRA) was used to test the proposed relationships. The findings of the study demonstrate that the three OJ aspects have a considerable impact on employee JS, indicating the significance of these elements in ensuring that employees are satisfied with their jobs. IS, on the other hand, had no effect on the link between the OJ dimensions and JS. This research has added to the existing body of knowledge by giving further empirical evidence on the impact of OJ aspects on employee JS in SMEs, notably in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Organizational Justice, Job Satisfaction, Islamic Spirituality, SME

**JEL Classification Code:** M1, M54, M540

### 1. Introduction

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) account for 90% of global businesses. No doubt, they make substantial contributions to employment and, more crucially, the economy. According to Falahat, Ramayah, Soto-Acosta, and Lee (2020), and Hanifah et al. (2019), SMEs are critical to

Malaysia's economic growth and employment prospects. In 2019, 97.3% of business enterprises were SMEs, accounting for 38.9% of Malaysia's GDP, 17.9% of export revenue, and 48.4% of total employment. The service sector was the main contributor to Malaysia's GDP, with 63.3% in 2019. The majority of SMEs were microenterprises, accounting for 76.5% and consisting primarily of small entrepreneurs with less than five full-time workers.

Although SMEs are critical to Malaysia's economy, the factors that contribute to their success are the source of dispute among scholars. Scholars from various fields concurred on the critical nature of SME accomplishments in employment, income creation, and social and economic growth (Omri & Boujelbene, 2015). Pletnev and Barkhatov (2016) mentioned that SMEs contribute 56% of the gross domestic product (GDP) of several European nations. Consequently, Abdullahi et al. (2015) and Al-Tit et al. (2019) highlighted the additional rationale for the relevancy of SMEs, including community empowerment, poverty reduction, and job creation. Indeed, different factors contributing to SME success have attracted the attention of academics, practitioners, and policymakers.

Due to the significant contribution of SMEs to the economy, having satisfied employees is important. Based on Resource-Based View, employees are considered as one of

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the main resources of a firm that will affect its performance, hence they need to be managed properly. Employees' perception of how fair an organization treats them will influence their satisfaction while working for the firms. Highly satisfied employees are important as they believe that the organization would have a tremendous future in the long run and care about their well-being. As a consequence, they would be more committed to the organization, have a higher retention rate, and tend to exhibit higher productivity (Fatt et al., 2010) lower absenteeism, and turnover intention (Dailey & Kirk, 1992).

Understanding job satisfaction (JS) has been the concern of organizational scholars for decades, and, in recent years, many of these scholars have turned their attention to the role of organizational justice (OJ) in shaping this important work attitude, which is JS. Researchers have established that OJ is a consistent and strong predictor of JS (Colquitt, 2001). OJ has been extensively studied and proven to be related to JS in the west, but this type of study is still new in Malaysia. In Malaysia, the majority of employees in SMEs are Muslims. Thus, this study attempts to test the moderating effect of Islamic spirituality (IS) on the relationship between OJ and JS. Studies have shown that good workplace spirituality will lead to good behavioral outcomes which will eventually bring better organizational performance (Belwalkar et al., 2018; Garg, 2020; Zhang, 2020).

Most researchers have discussed Islamic spirituality (IS) in connection with many variables, especially the outcomes such as leadership effectiveness, organizational citizenship behavior, and career success but those analyzing the moderating effect of IS are scarce in the literature. In most studies, IS is used as an independent variable and not as a moderator (Bhatti et al., 2016; Kamil & Jan 2014; Mohsen, 2007; Sulaiman & Bhatti, 2013). Therefore, this study contributes to the present body of knowledge in the area of spirituality in the workplace. Conceptually, this study will fill the gap in the literature on JS and OJ and for practical business purposes by suggesting the role of IS in the relationship between OJ and IS among Malaysian SME employees.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a psychological work construct used when measuring employee fulfillment on the job (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Spector (1997) defines it as “a global feeling about the job or as a related constellation about various aspects or facets of the job”. It gives a sense of fulfillment to oneself in performing one's job or assigned task. Job satisfaction is defined as “an attitude reflecting a person's feelings toward his or her job or job setting at a particular point in time” (Schermerhorn et al., 2012).

### 2.2. Organizational Justice

Organizational justice (OJ) can be divided into three dimensions as follows. Distributive justice refers to the “perceived fairness of organizational outcomes” (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). It is the equity in the distribution of resources to the individuals which consists of justice of wages, bonuses, the commitment of organizations in fulfilling their obligations, including trust between high managers with their subordinates.

Procedural justice refers to the fairness of the formal procedures of organizational decision making and how these are processed, such as the explanation of the procedures and the associated interpersonal treatment (Niehoff & Moorman, 1993). Procedural justice consists of how to control decision-making and decision processes. In addition, it is how the procedures are used in determining the fair distribution of outputs. It is also perceived as transparent to all parties involved in making such decisions.

Interactional justice is defined as the quality of interpersonal treatment received during the enactment of organizational procedures (Bies & Moag, 1986). In general, interactional justice reflects concerns about the fairness of the non-procedural aspects of interaction (Al-Zu'bi, 2010). It is the extent that the employees feel about the fairness obtained from the transaction when they apply some formalities. Transactional justice deals with sensitivities and personal interpretations.

### 2.3. The Relationship between OJ and JS

Organizational justice (OJ) is a basic requirement for JS (Greenberg, 1990). According to Greenberg, whether or not employees are satisfied with the company's system is determined by their perception of procedural justice, and whether or not they are satisfied with the outcome decided on by the company is determined by distributive justice. The importance of OJ has been emphasized by many researchers including Haerani et al. (2020), Thanh and Toan (2018), and Ushakov (2021). Other previous studies also show a positive relationship between OJ and JS (Naami & Shokrkon, 2020; Patras et al., 2020; Sembiring et al., 2020). A study by Lambert et al. (2021) found that procedural and interpersonal justice had positive effects on JS, while distributive justice had non-significant effects. Dong and Phuong (2018) proposed that the three dimensions of OJ have a significant relationship with employee JS. Therefore, the first three hypotheses are proposed to examine if OJ influences JS.

*H1: Distributive justice significantly influences employee job satisfaction.*

*H2: Procedural justice significantly influences employee job satisfaction.*

**H3:** *Interactional justice significantly influences job satisfaction.*

## 2.4. Islamic Spirituality

Spirituality was seen by the World Health Organization as a critical aspect of health, not precluding physical, psychological, and social health (Gall et al., 2005). From the Islamic perspective, spirituality is seen as the presence of a relationship with God in a way that defines the individual's self-worth, sense of meaning, and connectedness with others and nature (Fares & Noordin, 2016). Some see it as a concept embedded in piety (Mohsen, 2007). Islamic spirituality links the actions of individuals to the fundamental purpose of life. It also emphasizes that everything a person does is to ensure that the individual seeks the pleasure of God. Kamil and Jan (2014) revealed that Islamic spirituality leads to the attainment of high ethical and moral values of employees that might control many undesirable employees' behaviors which negatively affect organizational performance.

This study refers to the terminology of Islamic spirituality used by Mohsen (2007), Kamil and Jan (2014), Sulaiman and Bhatti (2013), and Bhatti et al. (2016), which have categorized spirituality as one component of piety besides social responsibility. According to those scholars, Islamic spirituality (IS) is defined as the act of enjoining deeds that strengthen one's relationship with God. These behaviors are prayers, fasting, pilgrimage, and charity. Islamic spirituality comprises faith, rituals, repentance, remembrance of Allah, and justice.

## 2.5. Faith

Faith provides Muslims with an aim to conduct self-checks and also abide by the rules and perform their self-analysis and understand the real role in life (Mohsen, 2007). Kamil and Jan (2014) stated that "belief in Allah implies a profound understanding of the unity of direction, clarity of goals, prevention of misconduct, and equality between people". Faith works as a shield that restrains from all bad behaviors and lights our minds to recognize virtue, good values, and morality (Mohsen, 2007).

## 2.6. Rituals

Al-Gazali (2004) explains that prayers restrain a believer from all wrongdoings, directing them towards morality and goodness. Further, Kamil and Jan (2014) affirm that "Prayer comprises of complete submission to Allah which brings life benefits and eases stress". Rituals (i.e., prayers, pilgrimage, fasting, and charity in Allah's way) when practiced properly they help strengthen loyalty, sensitivity, and identity among Muslims (Mohsen, 2007).

## 2.7. Repentance

Seeking genuine repentance raises the stature of a believer in front of Allah, as one agrees to his/ her mistakes or sins and promises not to repeat those mistakes or sins in the future. Notably, Repentance entails two conditions. First, a person should accept his/her own shortcomings, and second, he/ she should promise never to recommit those mistakes. These two conditions involve "self-audit and seeking feedback and result in self-awareness and self-improvement" (Mohsen, 2007, p. 107).

## 2.8. Frequent Remembrance of Allah

One of the key attributes of a good Muslim is the frequent remembrance of Allah (SWT) in their hearts, minds, and tongues. Remembrance of Allah polishes the heart and strengthens the faith of a believer in helping him/ her to not astray from the righteous path. One of the virtues in Islamic spirituality and characteristic of a Muslim is patience. Hence, one will be satisfied with their job regardless of how much injustice they have gone through.

## 2.9. Justice

By viewing the significance of piety and characteristics of a Muslim, one can easily observe the significance of justice in Islam. The word justice refers to equity, fairness, justice, and balance. The concept of justice in Islam is very comprehensive and entails equality and equity in all the deeds and actions observed by an individual. Research also supports the belief that workplace spirituality in an organization can certainly result in encouraging positive outcomes such as increased joy, serenity, job satisfaction, and commitment (Belwalkar et al., 2018; Garg, 2020; Zhang, 2020). Yusof and Mohamad (2014) stated that spiritual values positively influence and affect an individual's well-being and job performance. It also improves employees' values, commitment, and personal fulfillment (Asutay et al., 2021).

## 2.10. The Moderating Role of IS

The relationship between IS and JS, and between OJ and JS, can be explained by the organizational justice theory (Singh & Singh, 2019) which is rooted in Equity Theory. This theory explains how the employees' perceptions of justice will affect their job attitudes and organizational outcome. The design of the organization and its systems, including procedures that guide decision making, for the benefit of all stakeholders (employees are part of them), will influence the values and behaviors, and ethics (Sharma et al., 2019). Employees who perceive their organizations to be just, are likely to perceive their organization as being fair to

them and will influence their ethical behavior. Thus, in turn, this is likely to enhance employee JS. In the context of spirituality, IS is linked to managerial behavior and job performance (Fares & Noordin, 2016). Moreover, studies by Mohsen (2007), Sulaiman and Bhatti (2013), Bhatti et al. (2016), and Tuerwahong and Sulaiman (2018) suggest that IS contributes to positive outcomes including JS and performance. Therefore, the other three hypotheses in the study are to assess if IS moderates the relationship between OJ and JS.

**H4:** *Islamic spirituality significantly moderates the relationship between distributive justice and employee job satisfaction.*

**H5:** *Islamic spirituality significantly moderates the relationship between procedural justice and employee job satisfaction.*

**H6:** *Islamic spirituality significantly moderates the relationship between interactional justice and employee job satisfaction.*

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Instrument

To measure organizational justice, the Justice Scale which was developed by (Moorman, 1991) was used. This scale measures the perception of three types of justice: distributive, procedural, and interactional. The scale consists of 18 items; 7 items for measuring procedural justice, 6 for interactional justice, and 5 for distributive justice. The study conducted by Mohsen (2007) defines Islamic spirituality components in three dimensions; Faith, Rituals, and Islamic Social Responsibility.

Kamil and Jan (2014) extended Mohsen's work by affirming the IS components in the light of the Quran and Hadith that comprises of four key dimensions are Faith, Rituals, Repentance/Forgiveness, and Remembrance of Allah. Importantly, the compulsory requirements by all Muslims, such as prayer, charity, pilgrimage, and fasting are grouped under Rituals. This is followed by the Islamic spirituality dimensions of Repentance in asking for Forgiveness and the Remembrance of Allah. In this study, IS is measured by adopting the instrument improved by Bhatti et al. (2016) which consists of 15 items.

JS was measured by adopting the instrument developed by Dubinsky and Harley (1986), which consists of three items. A sample of JS item is "generally speaking, I am satisfied with this job". A seven-point scale is employed ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). This scale had an alpha coefficient of 0.89.

#### 3.2. Population

The population for this study comprised employees of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia.

Information on the population of SMEs was found in the SME directory of SME Corp. As of 1st April 2018, there were a total of 71,486 SMEs located in Malaysia. Due to constraints of time and a large number of Malaysian SMEs, only a sample of Muslim SMEs from Klang Valley comprises Wilayah Persekutuan (17,367 SME companies) and Selangor (23,083 SME companies) was selected.

#### 3.3. Sample Size

As asserted by Wynants et al. (2015), sample size can be determined through the number of variables used. For this research, the sample size will be based on the "rule of five" (Hair et al., 2019). This rule can be deployed here as a means to estimate the sample size for this study. A total of 36 items were used in this research instrument, in which three items are for JS, 15 items are for IS and 18 items are for OJ. Based on the "rule of five", the minimum sample size required for this study should not be less than 180 ( $36 \times 5 = 180$ ). To increase the response rate and confidence for this study, 400 questionnaires were distributed ( $180 \times 2 = 360 \sim 400$ ).

A sample of Muslim companies listed in the SME Corp Directory was drawn for this research. The sampling procedure used was simple random sampling. Questionnaires were distributed to Muslim employees working in SMEs in Klang Valley.

#### 3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire distributed contained a cover letter that outlines the research title, objective, and the research details including clear instructions on how to fill the questionnaire and a statement of confidentiality and the sole purpose for this research. The questionnaires were sent to all selected SMEs' Human Resources department in Klang Valley, Malaysia through email to be passed on to their employees. In the email, a link to the electronic version of the questionnaire was provided for participation in the survey. The electronic version of the questionnaire was created using Google Forms both in English language and translated into the Malay language (using Brislin's back-translation (Brislin, 1970)). Both languages appear in the questionnaire to facilitate understanding of the questions being asked.

### 4. Results

In the present study, 400 sets of questionnaires were distributed and 285 sets were returned. A total of nine sets of questionnaires were discarded due to incomplete responses and answered by a non-Muslim. Therefore, the total number of usable questionnaires is 276, indicating a 69% response rate. This is acceptable for social science research as most studies recorded a similar response rate. For example,

Yee-Loong Chong et al. (2014) recorded a response rate of 68% when conducting a study on SMEs in Malaysia.

#### 4.1. Respondents' Profile

From Table 1, the majority of respondents or 154 individuals (55.8%) had bachelor's degrees, followed by those who had a master's degree (48 respondents or 17.4%) and diploma qualification (45 respondents or 16.3%). Regarding the number of employees the organization employs, 143 respondents represented their organizations with the number of employees between 151 and 200 persons. 52 respondents represented the organizations

with employees in the range between 5 and 50 employees. 50 respondents were attached to the organizations with 101 to 150 employees. And, 31 respondents were working in organizations hiring between 51 and 100 employees.

The respondents mostly had been working for the organization for between two and six years represented by 87 individuals or 31.5%. It is followed by those who had been with the organization for 21 years and more consisting of 65 individuals or 23.6%. The third longest service group is those who had been working between 6 and 11 years comprises 55 individuals or 19.9%. The remaining groups are those who had working experience between 16 and 21 years (38 respondents or 13.8%), and those who had been with

**Table 1:** Respondents' Profile

Variables	Descriptions	Frequencies	Percentages
Education Level	School Certificate	21	7.6
	Diploma	45	16.3
	Bachelor	154	55.8
	Master	48	17.4
	PhD	8	2.9
Total Number of Employee	5 to 50 Persons	52	18.8
	51 to 100 Persons	31	11.2
	101 to 150 Persons	50	18.1
	151 to 200 Persons	143	51.8
Tenure (Total Experience)	2 to less than 6 years	87	31.5
	6 to less than 11 years	55	19.9
	11 to less than 16 years	31	11.2
	16 to less than 21 years	38	13.8
	21 years and above	65	23.6
Religion (Muslim)	Yes	276	100.0
Gender	Male	172	62.3
	Female	104	37.7
Marital Status	Married	192	69.6
	Not Married	84	30.4
Age	Below 26 years	44	15.9
	26 to less than 31 years	62	22.5
	31 to less than 41 years	67	24.3
	41 to less than 51 years	70	25.4
	51 and above	33	12.0
Position at Work	Ordinary Worker	123	44.6
	First-line management	51	18.5
	Middle-level management	67	24.3
	Top management	35	12.7

the organization between 11 and 16 years (31 respondents or 11.2%). All 276 respondents are Muslim. With regard to gender, 172 male respondents (62.3%) while 104 female respondents (37.7%) participated in the study. A total of 192 respondents or 69.6% were married while 84 respondents or 30.4% were still single.

Referring to age distribution, the majority of respondents (70 individuals or 25.4%) aged between 41 and 51 years old. It is followed by those aged between 31 and 41 years old (67 individuals or 24.3%). The third common category reflects those aged in the range from 26 to 31 years old which is represented by 62 respondents or 22.5%. It is followed by a group of 44 respondents or 15.9% who are aged below 26 years old. Looking at the respondents' position at work, 123 of them or 44.6% were ordinary workers, 67 individuals or 24.3% were holding middle-level management positions, 51 employees or 18.5% were holding first line management positions and the remaining 12.7% or 35 respondents were holding top management positions in their organizations.

#### 4.2. Results of Factor Analysis

A maximum likelihood factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed to examine the dimensionality of the items measuring all variables in the study. The approach is outlined by Coakes and Steed (2009). As shown in Table 2,

a five-factor structure emerged from the analysis explaining 67.7% of the variance in the model. KMO value of 0.894 indicates that the correlation matrix is sufficient for factor analysis. MSA values ranging from 0.949 to 0.798 indicate that the sampling is adequate for each item to form the factor structure. The results of factor analysis show the existence of five factors as originally conceptualized.

The first factor consists of all seven items measuring procedural justice with loadings ranging from 0.758 to 0.855. The second factor contains nine items measuring Islamic spirituality. Six items were deleted due to high cross-loadings. The remaining factor loadings range from 0.519 to 0.785. The third factor consists of all six items measuring interactional justice with loadings ranging from 0.629 to 0.900. The fourth component contains all five items measuring distributive justice with loadings ranging from 0.786 to 0.868. The last component is the dependent variable that contains three items with loadings in the range between 0.761 and 0.819.

From the results of factor analysis, it can be summarized that using single-factor analysis for independent, moderator and dependent variables ensure that the analysis meets that most stringent procedure for factor analysis, and the results of the subsequent analyses are sure to be due to the actual effect of the independent and the moderator variables. The results of factor analysis indicate the existence of five factors; one independent variable, one dependent variable, and three independent variables.

**Table 2:** Results of Factor Analysis for the Items

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
(PJ5)-There are procedures designed to hear the concerns of all those affected by the decision	0.855				
(PJ4)-There are procedures designed to generate standards so that decisions could be made consistency	0.844				
(PJ6)-There are procedures designed to provide useful feedback regarding the decision and its implementation	0.837				
(PJ2)-There are procedures designed to provide opportunities to appeal or challenge the decision	0.825				
(PJ7)-There are procedures designed to allow for the request for clarification or additional information about the decision	0.810				
(PJ3)-There are procedures designed to have all possible consequences by the decision represented	0.805				
(PJ1)-There are procedures designed to collect accurate information necessary for making decisions	0.758				
(IS09)-I do my duties in the best way I could and tawakal to Allah afterward for the outcomes		0.785			
(IS08)-Ask Allah forgiveness whenever make mistakes		0.771			

**Table 2:** (Continued)

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
(IS05)-I supplicate Allah whenever I face difficulty in my work (Doa)		0.764			
(IS13)-I direct my dedication to Allah alone		0.754			
(IS10)-Do my best in my work because Allah is watching me		0.678			
(IS03)-Seek Allah's help, when I make important decisions at my work		0.676			
(IS14)-Abstained from haram acts in my work due to Allah's sake		0.580			
(IS12)-Deal with co-workers with justice and generosity		0.522			
(IS04)-Perform Istikhara prayer when have to decide on competing alternatives		0.519			
(IJ4)-My supervisor treated me with kindness and consideration			0.900		
(IJ5)-My supervisor showed concern for my rights as an employee			0.867		
(IJ6)-My supervisor took steps to deal with me in a truthful manner			0.835		
(IJ3)-My supervisor provided me with timely feedback about the decision and its implications			0.765		
(IJ1)-My supervisor considered my viewpoint			0.759		
(IJ2)-My supervisor was able to suppress personal biases			0.629		
(DJ3)-Fairly rewarded for the amount of effort I put forth				0.868	
(DJ1)-Fairly rewarded considering the responsibilities given				0.834	
(DJ4)-Fairly rewarded for the work I have done well				0.815	
(DJ5)-Fairly rewarded for the stresses and strains of my job				0.814	
(DJ2)-Fairly rewarded in view of the amount of experience I have				0.786	
(JS2)-Worthwhile Accomplishment Doing the Job					0.819
(JS3)-Satisfied with the kind of work in this Job					0.803
(JS1)-Generally Satisfied with One's Job					0.761
% variance explained (67.70%)	17.75	14.77	14.14	13.43	70.61
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy					0.894
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square				6126.615
	df				435
	Sig.				0.000
MSA					0.949–0.798

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

### 4.3. Results of Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis is meant to ensure that the items used to measure a variable are consistently measuring it. The most common approach used to assess reliability is Cronbach's alpha (Souza et al., 2017). In the present study, three items were used to measure job satisfaction, five items were used to assess distributive justice, seven items were applied to

assess procedural justice, six items were applied to gauge respondents' feedback on interactional justice, and nine items were applied to measure Islamic spirituality. As shown in Table 3, all items used to measure the intended variables have high Cronbach's alpha values (highest the threshold value of 0.7), indicating that the items used are consistently measuring what they are supposed to measure (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

**Table 3:** Results of Correlation Analysis

No	Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4	5
1	Distributive Justice	4.95	1.33	(0.950)				
2	Procedural Justice	5.10	1.12	0.481**	(0.937)			
3	Interactional Justice	5.46	0.97	0.459**	0.262**	(0.899)		
4	Islamic Spirituality	6.29	0.60	0.312**	0.267**	0.188**	(0.848)	
5	Job Satisfaction	5.45	1.11	0.540**	0.424**	0.321**	0.288**	(0.860)

Notes: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed);  $N = 276$ ; Cronbach's alphas along the diagonal in the parentheses.

#### 4.4. Results of Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to evaluate the strength of the relationship between two quantitative variables (Hair et al., 2019). A high correlation means that two or more variables (correlation coefficient values are closer to 1) have a strong relationship with each other, while a weak correlation (correlation coefficient values closer to 0) means that the variables are hardly related. As shown in Table 3, the lowest correlation is observed between procedural justice and interactional justice ( $r = 0.262$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). On the other hand, the highest correlation is observed between distributive justice and procedural justice ( $r = 0.481$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ).

IS has a very low to moderate correlation with the three independent variables; distributive justice ( $r = 0.312$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), procedural justice ( $r = 0.267$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), and interactional justice ( $r = 0.188$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, IS has a low correlation with JS ( $r = 0.288$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating a potential moderating effect of the construct on the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Lastly, the three independent variables have also recorded low to moderate correlation with the dependent variable. The lowest correlation is between interactional justice and JS ( $r = 0.321$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) while the highest correlation is recorded between distributive justice and JS ( $r = 0.540$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ).

#### 4.5. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis is used to predict the value of a variable based on the value of two or more variables (Poole & O'Farrell, 1971). In the present study, since the study involves testing a moderating effect of Islamic spirituality on the relationship between organizational justice and job performance a moderated multiple linear regression analysis was used (Arnold, 1982; Baron & Kenny, 1986).

In performing the analysis, three steps are involved. In the first step, the independent variables (the three organizational justice dimensions) and the dependent variable (job satisfaction) were entered into the regression model. The

second step involved the inclusion of the moderator variable and the last step is where the interactions were entered. The interaction terms were calculated by multiplying each independent variable with the moderator variable.

The first step or model involves testing the direct relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. As shown in Table 4, the  $R^2$  is 0.388 indicating that 38.8% of the variance in the regression model is explained by the independent variables. The regression model is significant ( $F(272, 3) = 56.901$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Looking at the contribution of each independent variable in explaining the variance in the dependent variable, all three independent variables are significant predictors. Distributive justice is the strongest predictor ( $\beta = 0.465$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), followed by procedural justice ( $\beta = 0.169$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), and interactional justice ( $\beta = 0.106$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ).

In the second step or model, Islamic spirituality was entered and changes were observed. There was an increment in the  $R^2$  change of 0.013, which indicates that the inclusion of Islamic spirituality increased the explanation of variance in the dependent variable by 1.3% and the increment is significant that can be seen from sig.  $F$  change and the significant model ( $F(272, 4) = 44.835$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Looking at the Islamic spirituality variable, it is a significant predictor ( $\beta = 0.120$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the variable can be considered as an independent variable in future research.

The third step or model tests the moderating effect of Islamic spirituality. The  $R^2$  change of .003 shows a slight increase in the explanation of variance in the regression model by 0.3% and the increment is not significant but the model is still significant ( $F(272, 7) = 25.595$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). All the interactions were not significant, signifying that Islamic spirituality does not moderate the relationships between all three organizational justice dimensions and job satisfaction.

## 5. Discussion

The results of the moderated multiple linear regression analysis show that the three OJ dimensions are the significant predictors of JS. However, IS did not moderate the relationship between the OJ dimensions and JS.



**Table 4:** Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	Standardized Beta Coefficients		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Distributive Justice	0.465**	0.439**	0.438**
Procedural Justice	0.169**	0.151**	0.142*
Interactional Justice	0.106*	0.100	0.097*
<b>Moderator</b>			
Islamic Spirituality		0.120*	0.140*
<b>Interaction Terms</b>			
Distributive Justice*Islamic Spirituality			-0.024
Procedural Justice*Islamic Spirituality			0.001
Interactional Justice*Islamic Spirituality			0.056
<i>R</i>	0.623	0.633	0.635
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.388	0.401	0.403
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> Change	0.388	0.013	0.003
<i>F</i> Change	56.901	5.671	0.366
Sig <i>F</i> Change	0.000	0.018	0.777
Durbin Watson			1.983

Notes: \*\*Significant at the 0.01 level, \*Significant at the 0.05 level.

Nevertheless, IS should be regarded as the independent variable in future research as shown by a significant value in model two of the multiple regression analysis. There are three significant findings and three non-significant findings of the study. For significant findings, distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice are significant predictors of employee JS. For non-significant findings, IS does not moderate the relationship between the three dimensions of OJ and employee JS.

For the first significant relationship between distributive justice and employee job satisfaction, when employees feel that they are rewarded fairly for their effort they will subsequently feel satisfied with their job. It is supported by Lambert et al. (2020) who found that perceptions of quality training, distributive and procedural justice had significant positive effects on job satisfaction. Astuti and Ingsih (2019) discovered that distributive justice affects job satisfaction and performance. Another study among nurses found that the three dimensions of organizational justice affect nurses' job satisfaction (Jameel et al., 2020).

The second significant relationship is between procedural justice and employee JS. When employees feel that their organization provides comprehensive and fair procedures that apply to all employees to accomplish their job, they will feel satisfied. But, if they feel that the procedures are not fair, for example ignoring the rights of certain employees,

most likely they will feel dissatisfied. Abundant studies have provided support for the findings. Naami and Shokrkon (2020), Adebakin and Okon (2019), and Ismail et al. (2017) found that there is a significant relationship between procedural justice and JS. They claimed that procedural justice and JS of SMEs employees are imperative for the success and ultimate survival of these companies.

The third significant relationship is concerning the link between interactional justice and employee JS. A lot of studies have supported the present research findings showing that interactional justice is a vital predictor of JS. Hadi et al. (2020) conducted a study in Indonesia concerning OJ and various aspects of employee JS and found that the hypothesized relationships are supported. SMEs must improve the three dimensions of OJ during the process of developing the policy and after it is implemented because it has positive consequences on pay satisfaction, ethical decision, JS, affective communication, intention to join and keep working, and commitment (Hadi et al., 2020).

The non-significant relationships are related to the moderating role of IS. The moderator does not significantly moderate the relationships between the three OJ dimensions and employee JS in SMEs. The most plausible explanation for the phenomenon is that IS has been conceptualized as the variable describing piety or the total submission to Allah. And, the items developed to measure it “forced” the

respondents to provide favorable answers, thus, making the variability of responses limited to a certain extent. Making it worse, this instrument was answered by Muslim employees in SMEs.

Some studies pertaining to IS and JS have reported significant results. A study by Amaliah et al. (2015) conducted among 359 employees discovered that the values of Islamic religiosity are significantly and positively affect JS on small and medium businesses in the embroidery industry in Indonesia. On the other hand, another study by Sani and Ekowati (2019) discovered that IS does not directly influence employee organizational citizenship behavior, but spirituality at work and organizational commitment moderate the relationship between IS and organizational citizenship behavior. Another study by Adawiyah et al. (2020) found a significant moderating role of IS in influencing the relationship between TQM and employee JS.

These studies indicate IS is a pivotal construct in influencing various employee work outcomes in the organization. However, extra care should be exercised when conceptualizing and measuring it so that it can significantly contribute to the body of knowledge, the organization, and its employees.

### 5.1. Managerial Implications of the Study

To ensure employee JS, managers must make sure that procedural justice is ascertained by ensuring that all processes and procedures to accomplish tasks and to make decisions are fair and equitable to all employees (Lindquist, 1995). Every employee is given fair treatment (in terms of processes involved) for information, resources, and opportunities to perform their job functions. With regard to distributive justice, managers must also assure that employees receive equitable rewards and compensation for their efforts and achievements, and for difficulties and stresses, they endure while performing the job (Armstrong & Murlis, 2007). The individual reward system is preferable to ensure the existence of distributive justice in the organization as it is based on individual efforts and achievements. Pertaining to interactional justice, managers must give fair treatment to employees. All employees should receive equal rights, their views are heard, and there is no personal bias during the interactions with their superiors (Latham et al., 2005).

### 5.2. Research Implications of the Study

The findings of the present study enrich the existing work on the linkage between OJ dimensions and employee JS particularly in the SMEs in Malaysia. Procedural justice, distributive justice, and interactional justice are found significant to influence employee JS. However, the present study failed to provide evidence that IS moderates the

relationship between OJ dimensions and employee JS. The significant findings have paved the way for exploring other related factors that might affect the relationship. Factors such as managerial styles (i.e. telling, selling, participating, and delegating), leadership styles (e.g. servant leadership, authentic leadership, transformational leadership, etc.), and other organizational factors (e.g. organizational culture, organizational support, etc.) can be used as a moderator or mediator in future studies.

## 6. Conclusion

Job satisfaction has been a popular research topic among researchers since a few decades ago. In the present study, employee JS was investigated by focusing on the influence of OJ since it is strongly believed (supported by research evidence) that OJ will lead to satisfaction. Furthermore, it is also believed that the link between OJ can be strengthened by IS. In the present study, all three dimensions of OJ; procedural, distributive, and interactional justice, have been proven to influence employee JS, which indicates the importance of these factors in ascertaining employees' happiness while working with the organization. Furthermore, IS was hypothesized to strengthen the relationship between OJ and JS. However, the evidence did not support the hypothesis. The most probable reason is that employees in SMEs scored collectively high on this construct and this reduced the variability in the score. It is suggested that the concept should be revisited in terms of its conceptualization and measurement. This study has contributed to enriching the existing body of knowledge by providing additional empirical evidence on the influence of OJ on employee JS in SMEs particularly in the Malaysian context. From the findings, SMEs can increase employee JS through various strategies to ensure that justice prevails and happiness is felt by every employee.

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