Guest Editors: Islam and Contemporary Issues

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The word 'Islam', in Arabic, means submission and peace. As a term, 'Islam' refers to the Message which was revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon him) by Allah, the One Creator, and a 'Muslim' is the one who believes in Islam. Like any other ideology, Islam consists of a creed or doctrine, and a system of rules and regulations. Unlike other ideologies, however, it is not man-made. The creed of Islam (Akidah) provides the correct and comprehensive answer to the fundamental question regarding the existence of man and universe. It addresses the issue of the human being's purpose in life and integrates it into the grand scheme of existence, i.e. what came before this life and what will come after it. This special issue themed of *Islam and Contemporary Issues* is the work that was collected from various scientific researches in Malaysia. It is devoted to the perspectives from academia from various backgrounds of knowledge and experts, revealing Islam as a religion in facing the challenges of human civilization in the world.

I believe with a little contribution made by them would give a million advantages among readers, researchers and those are interested in further to a deeper understanding in Islam as a way of life. I should to thank the contributors who have worked diligently to ensure all articles can be published on time. The selection of articles for this special issue has gone through several processes of evaluation and editing. All the articles were presented in several National and International Conferences. We were compiled, edited and managed the articles to become a special issue and later to be published in reputable journal.

A total of 15 articles have been submitted for reviewed and evaluated by referees through a blind peer review and experts. The reviewers/referees had checked on the content and relevancy of the articles so it can be fitted into the theme being selected. The final process involves the editing process which all 16 have gone through the editing process at least two times. The focus is to edit the language and grammatical errors. The first round of editing is done by the workshop members held on 22 December 2016 and the final editing is done by the appointed Guest Editor, Professor Dr Mohd Ekhwan Toriman, A dean from Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Generally, I can divide all the eight articles in this special issue into two sub-themes namely a) Islam in Communication and Management; and b) Islam in Counselling and Society. Islam,

being a complete code of life, presented its concepts of management for the humanity more than 1400 years ago. The principles of Islamic management can be traced back to the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) when he laid down the foundation of an Islamic Society. Those principles were administered by the Shura – a group of his companions for consultation. One of the key-element is the 'Islamic Quality Management System' or IQMS was highlighted by Khatijah Othman. Her article encompassed the differences within the Quality Management System of the contemporary practice in comparative to the Islamic practice. Based on her study indicates that by incorporating Islamic values as the fundamental base of the quality dimension, the quality service measurement can be viewed in a more holistic and comprehensive manner. This was in-line with Islamic values, norms and ethics. Hence the Islamic value system which is based on three basic dimensions namely the truth, justice and brotherhood provide definitive direction, a harmonious and conducive motivational atmosphere for an organization to attain success. Khatijah applies the "Kano Model" as a comparative analysis on the customer satisfaction from Islamic and conventional. From the model she found that human wants are unlimited and producer innovate their product as to have the product differentiation and to have higher profit margin.

The second article, written by Mahazan Abdul Mutalib, et.al discuss on women leadership in Islam. Leadership in Islam centers on trust (Amanah). It represents a psychological contract between leaders their followers that they will try the best to guide, protect and treat their followers justly. It revolves on doing good deeds for the sake of Allah, the Muslim community and humankind. However, there is an ongoing debate among Muslims about women in leadership positions. Can women be leaders? And, if so, what kind of leadership can they assume: religious (spiritual), political, both, or none? Mahazan analyse this issue by investigating variance of Islamic leadership behaviour orientation among women managers in Malaysia government-linked companies or GLCs. Based on the survey conducted in 2013 and 2015, respectively he revealed that Islamic leadership behaviour is understood and practiced widely by women officers across ages, years of working, and positions.

In order to understand further on the pattern of leadership behaviour, a series of independent sample t-tests were conducted. He found that, according to Islamic leadership behaviour of women managers based on age management level and length of service practise the same Islamic leadership behaviours.

Work life balance is an important topic of discussion in the academic world. Managing work with family for example is an important issue as it has decisive challenges for organizations, employees and researchers. In this regards, a good article entitled "Work-Life Balance Satisfaction among Academics in Public Higher Educational Sector" was written by Khairunneezam, et.al. This article aims to investigate the state of perceived work-life balance satisfaction among academics in public universities in Malaysia. A qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were applied in their study.

In regards to the satisfaction with work-life balance, the implication of this study is that the boundaries between work and home are fluid. Academics especially females continually argued that they found this separation difficult to make with work encroaching on family time especially at weekends. This in particular led to poorer job satisfaction for women. Khairunneezam (2011) suggest that flexibility in work practice is becoming an integral part of employment, particularly in public sector organisations, which are in effect, leading the way on this issue of work-life balance. On top of that, academic staff also felt that they were forced to give more attention towards their work, and had limited time spent for their own life and family.

The topic of women was then been carried on by Rosninawati particularly the connection between halal marketed and the lifestyles of modern Malay Women. In the Malaysia family's environment, society views women as important consumers because of significant number of family purchasing decisions were influenced by them. Her article emphasizes the importance and implications of halal certification in Islamic branding, consumer behaviour, advertising and purchasing decision in Malaysia. Her major finding indicates that by consuming *halal* food as outlined in *Sharia* law, they would be better Muslims. In addition, *Halal* requirement does affect modern Malay Modern Women in their daily lives especially in relation to food consumption.

The last two articles in the sub-theme of Islam in Communication and Management were focusing into two aspects, namely the importance of online news portals written by Sofia Hayati Yusoff, et.al and the use of negotiation approach as a medium of solving conflict written by Norhayati Rafida, etl.al. In is clear that since the September 11th terror attack at New York in 2001, the frequency of terror attacks around the world has been increasing and it draws more attention of the public. In fact, we can easily extract hundreds or thousands of news stories of any terror attack incidents from newswires such as CNN.com. In this regards, Sofia explore on how the main online news portals in Europe *(http://www.euronews.com/)* and Africa *(http://allafrica.com/)* report issues on recent attacks in Paris and Mali. The results indicated that Paris attack issues received 25 news coverage compared to Mali attack issues at 19 news coverage. In terms of news sources used, her research indicates that majority of the news articles used official sources such as Minister, Police officer, spokesperson, media, leader, authorities and security forces. The findings also revealed several news themes such as suspected attackers, rescue efforts, security efforts and death toll are emerged in this analysis.

What is the level of initial position possessed by environmental control officers? And what is the type of negotiation approaches employed are among the questions related to environmental issues were asked in the article written by Norhayati, et.al. This article reveals greater number of respondents who employed an integrative approach as having positive levels of initial position from one to three. The initial position is seen as a factor that needs to be carefully possessed by the environmental officers in determining the type of approach they will employ to negotiate. Finally, her team study concludes that the initial positive has no influence towards the negotiation approach in solving the environmental case in Malaysia.

The second theme underpinned the topic of Islam in Counselling and Society. Nine articles were categorised in this sections, covering from various perspective. For example, two articles were discussed in detailed on the Islam and its relationships with other religions, ie. Christian and Jewish. Alwani, et.al describe the holistic-textual approach to Qur'anic Verses on Muslim-Jewish Relationship. Her study indicates that only the first layer, which is the holistic-textual approach, via the Muslim-Jewish relationship according to accumulated Qur'anic verses on this issue. More specific study was carried out by Marina, et.al in her research entitled Understanding Religious Pluralism in Malaysia: A Christian and Muslim Debate. Generally, Islam as a religion and cultural practices. Is a worldwide phenomenon that is formed both in a local context-culturally, socially, politically and economically. Comprising of major religions of the world such as Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Chinese Religion, Taoism, Sikhism and "others," it has become a recent challenge for Malaysia to manage religious

diversity and maintain social harmony. By taking Malaysia as the research area, her study reveals that the discourse of "religious pluralism" started when some prominent Muslim scholars warned that Muslims in Malaysia are threatened by liberalism and religious pluralism, which can impinge into the faith of Muslims.

Meanwhile, the concepts of *Nubuwwah* and Messengership between Islam and Hinduism were discussed in detailed by Mohamed Mihlar and Mohd. Rosmizi. The philosophy of *Avatara*, especially *Kalki Avatara* in Hinduism was described and compred with the concept of *nubuwwah* (prophethood). The research found some similarities and significant differences on both concepts. While both concept of *Avatara* and *Nubuwwah* share many similarities especially on their purposes, *Avatara* is more related to God's incarnation which does not exist in Islamic teachings.

Christian Theologians Views on the Doctrine of Trinity in the Islamic Philosophical Criticism is another interesting topic written by Mohammad Nashief, et.al. This article is significance in providing the clear insight of the Oneness of God to both Christians and Muslims based on Islamic philosophical criticism.

Finally, few other articles, including Dini Farhana, Farhana Sabri, Nurhafizah and Reski are focusing on the wellness among the Malaysia family. Issue of child and family abuses, drug addictions and the relationships between religiosity and moral emotions are the main topics addressed in this section.

In summary, the collection of all articles form both sub-themes provide clear perspectives on the Islam in Communication and Management; and Islam in Counselling and Society. I believe this special issue could give additional knowledge to those general readers and researchers particularly to study and analyse all related issues in Islam contemporary.