

The Role of Work Ethic in Human Life

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of work ethic in human life. Work ethic is a fundamental thing that can determine a person's behavior in meeting their needs. This study found an analysis of the relationship between work ethic, economic values and value systems in Islam. The method of this study is a qualitative method that combines observation, interviews, and documentation related to work ethic. This study is suggested and expected to researchers in developing research on work ethics, especially in relation to economic values.

Keywords: work ethic, Islamic work ethic, economic value, work behavior, value system, human life

INTRODUCTION

A perfect life system is found in Islam because it contains fundamental principles that govern all aspects of human life.¹ One of them in the economic aspect, Islam ordered His servants to work as a way to meet their needs. Work is not a free thing. Work has provisions which aim to get the blessings of Allah SWT.

According to Toto Tasmara, work must be accompanied by a good work ethic to produce work in accordance with Islamic law. With a high Islamic work ethic, it will give birth to a high productivity and will affect human performance. Indirectly the work ethic is very instrumental in the continuity of human life.

Life in the world must be balanced and in line with life in the hereafter. Therefore, in doing things not only for the sake of the world but also for the life hereafter. Thus, Islam with all its principles that govern human life to obtain happiness in this world and the hereafter. Islamic work ethic is one tool to achieve this goal.

Work Ethics in Islam

Etymologically the work ethic comes from two words, ethic and work. The ethic comes from the Greek word "ethos" which means attitude, personality, character, and moral purpose.² "Ethos" forms the word "ethikos", which means "moral, which refers to moral character". The plural form is "*ta ethika*", and the origin of the word ethics in English.³ Ethos can also be understood as the norm or the way a person responds, looks at and believes in something.⁴

According to Beekun, ethics as the set of moral principles that distinguish what is right from what is wrong.⁵ Furthermore, ethic can be interpreted as character and attitude, habits and

¹ Bagus Mohamad Ramadhan and Muhamad Nafik Hadi Ryandono, "Etos Kerja Islami pada Kinerja Bisnis Pedagang Muslim Pasar Besar Kota Madiun", *JESTT*, Vol. 2 No. 4 April 2015, p. 274

² Dagobert D. Runes, *The Dictionary of Philosophy*, (New York: Philosophical Library), p.100

³ Desmon Ginting, *Etos Kerja: Panduan Menjadi Karyawan Cerdas*, (Jakarta: PT. Elex Media Komputindo, 2016), p. 2

⁴ Toto Tasmara, *Etos Kerja Pribadi Muslim*, (Yogyakarta: Dana Bhakti Wakaf, 1994), p.25

⁵ Rafik Issa Beekun, *Islamic Business Ethics*, (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1997), p. 2

beliefs and so on that are specific about an individual or group of people. And from the word "ethos" also taken the words "ethics" which refers to the meaning of "morals" or morality, namely the essential quality of a person or a group of humans including a nation.⁶

While the word "work" is an attempt to do something with planning and responsibility.⁷ The Work in the general definition is all forms of business carried out by humans, whether in material or non-material, intellectual or physical matters, and matters relating to worldly or final problems.⁸

So that from the meaning of ethos and work, the work ethos can be interpreted as an attitude carried out by humans towards their work. Or it can be interpreted as a strong nature that radiates from someone. So that the Work Ethic is a reflection of the attitude of human life that is fundamental to work.⁹ The intended emission is in the form of character and habits, while work in the context of work ethics is patterned work and is tied to income or efforts to obtain results, both material or non-material.

While the work ethic in Islam is a reflection of the belief of Muslims and Muslim women that work is related to the purpose of seeking the pleasure of Allah, namely in the context of worship.¹⁰ According to Tasmara, the Islamic work ethic is an earnest effort, by mobilizing all of its assets, thoughts, and remembrance to actualize or show its meaning as a servant of God who must subjugate the world and place itself as part of the best society.¹¹

Based on the understanding of work ethic, it cannot be denied that humans need to work to meet their needs. As in the Qur'an surah Al-Insyirah verses 7-8, which means "*if you have finished (of one business), then do it seriously (business) the other*". This verse explains that humans must to work hard in doing things, in other words do the job or work seriously in order to produce maximum results. And in achieving a maximum result a high work ethic is needed for this, so it is very important for every human being to have a good work ethic for the welfare of his life.

Work in Islam

According to the General Dictionary of Indonesian Language, work is an act of doing something.¹² Furthermore, work is *fitrah* and is one of the human identities, so that work based on the principles of tauhid, not only shows the nature of a Muslim, but also elevates his dignity as a servant of Allah.¹³ Because by working someone has carried out one of his obligations to the Creator.

Not only as an identity, work is also an order of Allah, as in the surah At-Taubah verse 105 that work is an obligation of a servant to Allah SWT. Not only from that, God also

⁶Ahmad Djanan Asifudin, *Etos Kerja Islami*, (Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press, 2004), p. 26

⁷Bagus Mohamad Ramadhan and Muhamad Nafik Hadi Ryandono, "Etos Kerja Islami pada Kinerja Bisnis Pedagang Muslim Pasar Besar Kota Madiun", on *JESTT*, Vol. 2 No. 4 April 2015, p. 278

⁸Mia Fitriah Elkarimah, "Etos Kerja Islami dalam Mewujudkan Kesejahteraan Sosial", on jurnal *An-Nuha*, Vol. 3, No.1, Juli 2016, p. 96

⁹Musa Asy'arie, *Islam, Etos Kerja dan Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Umat*, (Yogyakarta: Lesfi, 1994), p. 33-34

¹⁰Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Agama Kemanusiaan*, (Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press, 2004), p. 100

¹¹Harjanto Saputro and Ari Prasetyo, "Pengaruh Etos Kerja Islam Terhadap Kepuasan Kerja Karyawan pada Waroeng Steak dan Shake di Surabaya", on *JESTT*, vol 1, No. 3 March 2014, p. 164-165

¹²WJS Poerdarminta, *Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2008), p. 703

¹³Toto Tasmara, *Etos Kerja Pribadi Muslim*, (Yogyakarta: Dana Bhakti Wakaf, 1994), p. 2

commands to work according to our abilities just as the Creator will work according to His own method.

قُلْ يَاقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَابِلٌ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ¹⁴

Thus, the results of actions done by someone will have an impact on themselves because God will give an appreciation to every human who works. Because work also includes the manifestation of worship to God. And in the measure of Islam, work is also a statement of gratitude to the Creator for all the blessings that have been given to his servant.

According to Yusuf Qardhawi, working is an activity that has added value as worship to Allah and jihad in the way of Allah. This is because the charity of effort and creativity allows the society to carry out Islamic treatises, da'wah, look after themselves and help them in order to realize greater goals.¹⁵ Yusuf Qardhawi's opinion is in line with Allah's command that work is an act that must be done by humans to fulfill their needs.¹⁶

Work is not a movement without awareness of thinking, but work is a dynamic and creative totality of self as an option.¹⁷ This choice must be made in human life as a way to fulfill their daily needs.

In connection with work, *aqeedah* and Islamic teachings become a source of value and source of knowledge, in addition to the source of motivation. As a source of value, Islam establishes norms related to work.¹⁸ History has proven that Islamic *aqidah* has great potential to be a source of motivation that is able to change and build a basic attitude of life, character, and habits of human behavior in a very positive sense.¹⁹

Working is a form of worship, in Islam there is also worship that is not possible without costs and assets, such as zakat, infaq, shodaqah, waqf, hajj, and umrah. While costs / assets are not possible without work processes. So working to obtain property in the context of worshipping God is obligatory. Kaidah fihiyyah said,

ما لا يتم الواجب إلا به واجب

An obligation that cannot be done but with the implementation of something, then something is obligatory.

So by working, someone can make something happen or produce something. Work is a manifestation of righteous deeds. If work is a good deed, then work is worship. And if the work is worship, then human life cannot be separated from work. As God created humans to worship Him.

According to Imam al-Ghazali, humans consist of substances that have dimensions and substances that have the ability to feel and move with will.²⁰ The first substance is the body and the second is the soul or spirit. So that in working, humans cannot be separated from these two substances. And the second substance plays a role in a person's behavior.

The human soul must be filled with constructive motivations. Because as long as individuals are not properly motivated, there will be no system that can realize efficiency in the

¹⁴ QS. Az-Zumar: 39

¹⁵ Yusuf Qardhawi, *Peran Nilai dan Moral dalam Perekonomian Islam*, (Jakarta: Robbani Press, 2004), p. 151

¹⁶ Muhammad Bin Hasan Syaibani, *Kitab Kasb*, (Beirut: Dar Basyair Islamiah), p. 70

¹⁷ Musa Asy'arie, *Dialektika Islam: Etos Kerja dan Kemiskinan*, (Yogyakarta: Lembaga Studi Filsafat Islam, 2016), p. 83-84

¹⁸ Ahmad Djanan Asifudin, *Etos Kerja Islami*, p. 105

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 107

²⁰ M. Kholid Muslih, et.al, *Worldview Islam: Pembahasan tentang Konsep-Konsep Penting dalam Islam*, (Ponorogo: UNIDA Gontor Press, 2018), h. 183-384

use of its resources.²¹ Because humans are a resource that determines everything in life. Human resources cannot be maintained except with property (*al-mal*). Da property cannot be obtained except by development (*al-'imarah*).²²

The Relationship between Work Ethos and Economic Value

Work ethos is closely related to economic value. To what extent values are given to economic matters has a direct consequence on attitude towards work.²³ Humans can not be separated from economic needs, by working this is someone can realize what is needed.

Working to meet living needs in accordance with sharia is an important measure in the struggle. The Islamic work ethic also guarantees an increase in quality which in this case emphasizes professionalism and expertise in particular fields.²⁴ So, it can say that the Islamic work ethic views dedication to work as a virtue.²⁵

One positive impact on the existence of a work ethic can be seen from the provision of wages or rewards for the results of one's work. Someone who has a good work ethic, it's mean Islamic work ethic will give their workers' rights before their work period is over. The Islamic work ethic does not only motivate hard work, but the Islamic work ethic also provides a quality that is of quality to someone who has it.²⁶ In connection with work, *aqeedah* and Islamic teachings also become sources of knowledge besides the source of motivation.

The work ethic is related to the economy, and is closely related to social values and sensitive to social problems.²⁷ Work ethic is a part of value system. A person's work ethic is part of his individual values.²⁸ Based on Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on the theory of value, the value of something lies in the human work that is poured out on him. In other words, the substance of value is work. With work too, someone can fulfill their life needs.

Based on its nature, a job can be called *masyru'* and *ghairu masyru'*, *masyru'* and *ghairu masyru'* is determined by the value of the work and how to do it.²⁹ If the work turns out not to be tyrannical and how to do it in accordance with Islamic norms, then the work is categorized as people's work 'and it can be interpreted that the work is in accordance with Islamic work ethic. On the contrary, if the work is tyrannical or violates the norms of Islamic teachings, then the work is included in the *ghairu masyru* category and is not in line with the Islamic work ethic.

Working in the context of earning a living that is permissible (*hala*) is an important dimension of jihad. To ensure quality, Islamic work ethos stresses the significance of professionalism, in the sense of being an expert in the relevant field.³⁰

Charateristic of Islamic Work Ethic

Regarding this work ethic, there are several factors that affect the work ethic of someone who can determine the level of work ethic, generally divided into two types, namely

²¹ M. Umer Chapra, *Islam dan Tantanga Ekonomi*, penerjemah: Ikhwan Abidin B.(Jakarta: Gema Insani Pres, 2000), p 251

²²M. Umer Chapra, Masa Depan Ilmu Ekonomi: Sebuah Tinjauan Islam, Terj. *The Future of Economics: An Islamic Perspective*, (Jakarta:Gema Insani Press, 2001), p. 126

²³Panel YaPEIM Management Academy, *Islamic Management: The Application of Quranic Principle and Value*, (Kuala Lumpur: YaPEIM Management Academy, 2013), p. 77

²⁴*Ibid*, p. 79

²⁵ Darwish A. Yousef, "Islamic Work Ethic: A moderator between organizational commitment and job satisfaction in a cross-cultural context", p. 153

²⁶Panel YaPEIM Management Academy, *Islamic Management*, p. 78

²⁷Panel YaPEIM Management Academy, *Islamic Management*, p. 80

²⁸Mochtar Buchori, *Penelitian Pendidikan dan Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: IKIP Muhammadiyah Press, 1994), p. 7

²⁹Ahmad Djanan Asifudin, *Etos Kerja Islami*,p. 100

³⁰Panel YaPEIM Management Academy, *Islamic Management*, p. 79

internal factors and external factors.³¹ Internal factors in question such as moods, life experiences, habits, and the like. While external factors are religion, culture, natural environment, etc.³²

Internal factors can move or arouse someone can even be a very powerful driving engine. According to Saifullah, this factor usually comes from the teachings of the religion he believes in.³³ Because ideology can doctrine one's thinking and influence a person's behavior and attitudes.

In doing a job, the work ethic that a person has will be seen from his attitude and behavior. According to Tasmara, the personal characteristics that have an Islamic work ethic are:³⁴

1. Addicted to time,
2. Have a clean morality (sincere),
3. Addicted to honesty,
4. Have commitment,
5. *Istiqamah* and strong establishment,
6. Addicted to discipline,
7. Consistent and courageous to face challenges,
8. Have an attitude of confidence,
9. Have high creativity (creative people),
10. The type of person responsible,
11. Feel Happy for serving,
12. Have self esteem,
13. Have the soul of leadership,
14. Oriented to the future
15. Live frugally and efficiently
16. Have an entrepreneurial spirit,
17. Have a competing instinct,
18. The desire to be independent,
19. Addicted to study and thirst for knowledge
20. Have an overseas spirit
21. Pay attention to health and nutrition
22. Strong and never give up
23. Productivity oriented
24. Enriching the network of *silaturahmi*
25. Have the spirit of change

The Factors Impacting the Islamic Work Ethic

Many factors support a person's work ethic. This also relates to the systematics of life. The reality of human life is dynamic, plural, changing and between one person and another having different backgrounds, social conditions and environment. A person's socio-economic changes in this case can also affect his work ethic.³⁵

Among the factors that influence a person's work ethic, one of which is a religious factor. If a person has strong and true beliefs and beliefs over his religion, he will also do all his activities in accordance with his religious teachings such as Islam by seeing work as a form of worship. So religious teachings are one of the factors that can be the cause of the emergence of fundamental beliefs, views and attitudes that cause the high work ethic of man to be realized.³⁶

In addition to this, there is also a dimension that is present in human life and inseparable from human life. This is the transcendental dimension, namely the dimension that

³¹ Saifullah, "Etos Kerja Dalam Perspektif Islam", dalam *Jurnal Sosial Humaniorah*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Juni 2010, p. 57-58

³² Muhammad Ersya Faraby, "Etos Kerja Islam Masyarakat Etnis Madura", p. 56

³³ Saifullah, "Etos Kerja Dalam Perspektif Islam", p. 58

³⁴ Toto Tasmara, *Membudayakan Etos Kerja Islami*, (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2002), p.

³⁵ Ahmad Djanan Asifudin, *Etos Kerja Islami*, p. 30

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 104

transcends the boundaries of material values that underlies the human work ethic so that in this dimension work is seen as worship.³⁷ Thus, this transcendent dimension needs to be believed by someone so that what he does is not only limited to fulfilling his needs in the world alone.

Thus, transcendent values will be the basis for the development of spirituality as one of the factors that effectively shape personality. Work ethic is not formed by the quality of education and ability alone. Factors related to inner life, the inner atmosphere and the spirit of life that emanates from faith and faith also determine.³⁸

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that work ethic influences human life. A good person's work ethic or in accordance with the characteristics of an Islamic work ethic will affect the high productivity of one's performance in meeting their needs. Besides that, work ethic also plays a role in the attitude and actions of someone at work.

Economic values and value systems in Islam are related to one's performance. If a person's work ethic is good then his economic value is also good and the value system in Islam is also well understood. Thus, the Islamic work ethic must be possessed by all humans to create a good life in the world and the hereafter.

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³⁷Jalaludin, *Psikologi Agama*, (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 1997) Cet. ke-2, p. 229

³⁸Musa Asy'arie, *Islam, Etos Kerja dan Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Umat*, p. 34-35

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