LEADERSHIP TRAITS, LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR, AND JOB AUTONOMY OF IMAMS IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA: A MODERATED MEDIATION ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the process of how and when imams' leadership traits could influence their leadership behavior. In the moderated mediation analysis, this research hypothesized, two leadership traits of imams (i.e. motivation to lead or MTL and past leadership experiences) might mediate the influence of three leadership traits (general cognitive ability, personality, and religiosity) toward the imams' managerial leadership behavior. The analysis also hypothesized that the mediation process might be moderated by the imams' high and low job autonomous situation. A structured, Malay version-self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 357 imams around Peninsular Malaysia. Results of the hierarchical regression analysis revealed that the traits of imams explained 40.5% variance of leadership behavior. Specifically, the analysis demonstrated leadership behavior was influenced significantly by the imams' extraversion, agreeableness, and openness personality, social-normative MTL, and past leadership experiences. Imams' religiosity and general cognitive ability did not show potential to influence their leadership behavior. Furthermore, this research found social-normative MTL showed partial mediation on the association of personality extraversion and openness with the criterion. Past leadership experiences did not mediate the leadership traits and behavior association. Finally, the analysis revealed high job autonomous situation has potential to moderate the influence of openness personality and affective-identity MTL toward leadership behavior.

Keywords: Leadership behavior, leadership traits, imams of mosque, religious leaders.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This research investigated the integrated influence of general cognitive ability, personality, religiosity, past leadership experiences, motivation to lead or MTL, job autonomy toward leadership behavior. In this research, the traits of imams were hypothesized to be different in proximity with leadership behavior (Yukl, 1989; 2006; Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, 2004). Specifically, general cognitive ability, personality dimensions, and religiosity were investigated as distal leadership traits while MTL dimensions and past leadership experiences were investigated as proximal or intervening leadership traits. Furthermore, this research hypothesized the influence of distal and mediating leadership traits toward leadership behavior is different in low and high job autonomous situation (Trow, 1957; Ng, Ang, & Chan, 2008). Generally, this research aimed to achieve at least three objectives. First this research aimed to assess whether leadership traits have direct influence toward leadership behavior of imams. Second, this research aimed to assess the possibility of mediating model of imams' leadership. Third, this research aimed to assess the moderating influence of job autonomy on the traits and behavior association. This integrated approach in conducting leadership research is encouraged by scholars (Zaccaro et al., 2004; Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011). This is because the approach could help us investigate leadership process from a broader perspective. Further theoretical discussions on the issue and hypotheses of this research could be read at section 3.

Generally, this research was conducted on imams around Peninsular Malaysia because the group of leaders (imams) was recently dragged into the issue of mosque management and performance in Malaysia (e.g. Abdul Majid, 1991; Mohamed, 2004; Shafi'i, 2003; Sheikh Abdul Aziz, 2008; Zakaria, 2008). As a respond to the issue, this research found at least two issues brought forward by Muslim academics and government officials in Malaysia. One aspect of the critiques pointed to the issue of imams should be credited with greater responsibility and autonomy as officers or leaders of mosques in order to enable them functioning optimally (Abdul Majid, 1991; Abdul Latiff, 2007; Shafi'i, 2003; Sheikh Abdul Aziz, 2008). Another aspect of the critiques pointed to some important individual qualities that imams should possess in order to increase their performance as imams (Abdul Majid, 1991; Abdul Ghani, 2009; Mohamed, 2004; Othman & Abdul Ghani, 2004; Sheikh Abdul Aziz, 2008). According to the critiques, there are two individual qualities that imams should possess. First, imams and other mosque officers should have leadership and management knowledge and not only religious knowledge (Abdul Ghani, 2009; Othman & Abdul Ghani, 2004). Second, imams and mosque officers need also to have good and exemplary personalities that are suitable with the religious positions they are holding (Abdul Majid, 1991; Sheikh Abdul Aziz, 2008). In other words, the argument stressed mosque leaders need to portray themselves with exemplary manners and authentic religious personality in order to increase community respects on them.

2. THEORIES AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The theoretical framework of this research could be viewed in figure 1. In leadership field of study, one important aspect of leadership research is the study of leaders' behavior (Yukl, 1989; 2006). One way to conduct a research on leadership behavior is to investigate the

association of leadership behavior with leadership traits. This type of research should be conducted in order to provide us with greater understanding on effective leadership behavior and how to attain them (Yukl, 1989; 2006). This seems to indicate that, data collected for this research could be useful to help us identify some individual factors that need to be focused in order to enable the imams to become effective leaders and managers for mosque institution in Malaysia. Furthermore, in a preliminary study on randomly selected imams' around Kubang Pasu, Kedah Darul Aman, by using the same measures used in this research, Abdul Mutalib and Abdul Ghani (2010) did not find significant influence of leadership traits toward leadership behavior due to small number of samples (n=30). Nevertheless, Abdul Mutalib and Abdul Ghani (2010) stated that some pattern of leadership traits and behavior association did occur in the research, particularly between personality extraversion and affective identity MTL with leadership behavior. They stressed that by using a larger samples, significant results might be found on the variables. Thus, in this study, by using a larger set of samples of randomly selected imams around Peninsular Malaysia, this research further investigated the previous preliminary research conducted by Abdul Mutalib and Abdul Ghani (2010). It is expected that by using some statistical approaches, results found in this study could be generalized to the whole population of imams in Peninsular Malaysia. In the next subsections, we will review some theories and researches in leadership field of study. The review is important to bridge the above empirical researches and critiques concerning imams' leadership in Malaysia with leadership study.

2.1. *General Cognitive Ability and Leadership Behavior*

First, leadership researchers have found various cognitive constructs are possible to influence leadership performance (Mumford, Campion, & Morgeson, 2007). In general, there are three common areas of cognitive ability that have been found as important antecedents of leadership. The three areas of cognitive ability are: 1) general cognitive ability, 2) creative reasoning abilities 3) complex problem-solving skills (Zaccaro et al., 2004; Zaccaro, 2007). In addition to the above, another aspect of cognitive ability that has been found as significant to predict leadership, particularly leadership self-efficacy and goal orientation, is analytical ability (Chan, 1999). Moreover, in another research, creativity has been found correlated significantly with innovative leadership (Makri & Scandura, 2010). One aspect of cognitive ability that was focused in this research is general cognitive ability. General cognitive ability was found as one of the predictors of leadership in some previous researches (Bedell-Avers, Hunter, & Mumford, 2008; Connelly, Gilbert, Zaccaro, Threlfall, Marks, & Mumford, 2000; Zaccaro, 2001). Even though scholars have stated general intelligence and cognitive variables consistently predict leadership (Zaccaro et al., 2004; Zaccaro, 2007), this research found there were some researches that found cognitive variables have only minimal to moderate influence toward leadership (e.g. Connelly et al., 2000; Kickul & Neuman, 2000; Marshall, Fleishman, Martin, Zaccaro, Baughman, & McGee, 2000). In addition, there were also some researches that found other individual qualities for example leadership skills, personality, and motivation influenced leadership more than cognitive variables (e.g. Chan, 1999; Connelly et al., 2000; Chan & Drasgow, 2001). This seems to indicate the influence of cognitive variables toward leadership is inconsistent and inconclusive. Nonetheless, based on the reviews made by scholars (i.e. House & Aditya, 1997; Zaccaro et al., 2004), this research concluded that cognitive variable stand as one of the predictors of imams' leadership. The hypothesis is

supported by Rogers (1975) who found that imams should have sufficient education. The finding could be said as consistent with some critiques (i.e. Abdul Ghani, 2009; Sheikh Abdul Aziz, 2008). Moreover, Chan (1999) argued that level of education could be used as a measure of individuals' general cognitive concern. Thus, based on this reason, this research argues the following:

Hypothesis 1:
Imams' general cognitive ability (H1) has influence toward their leadership behavior

2.2.   Personality and Leadership Behavior

Second, in the theory of five factor model (FFM) of personality or the big five (Digman, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1987; 1991), personality consists of five broad and complex categories of human traits. The five categories of traits are 1. Neuroticism (or Emotional Stability) 2. Extraversion 3. Openness to experience 4. Agreeableness 5. Conscientiousness (Digmann, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1987; 1991). Generally, leadership researchers have found the dimensions of Five-Factor Model of Personality or FFM (Digman, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1987; 1991) have significance influenced toward leadership behavior (Zaccaro, 2007; Kaiser & Hogan, 2011). Based on this factor, personality has been one of the most common factors that are used by researchers to measure leadership (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994; Bono & Judge, 2004). There are some reasons for the adoption of personality scale in leadership studies. First, behavior is a function of personality (Hogan et al., 1994; Mount & Barrick, 1998). Second, personality has a trait-like nature, which means personality is consistent across adulthood and has longitudinal predictive power (Strang & Kuhnert, 2009). Third, along the history line of leadership research, personality has never been neglected by researchers. In fact, the earlier studies of leadership concentrated on the relationship between traits and leadership (Yukl, 1989; 2006; Zaccaro et al., 2004). These three points suggest that personality should not be neglected by leadership researchers. This could be viewed from numerous researches that investigated the association of personality and leadership. This has made this research to select the imams' personality as one of the variable that could predict their leadership behavior. The argument could be said as consistent with Sheikh Abdul Aziz (2008) who argued that imams in Malaysia should concern with their personality. Therefore, this research hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 2:
Imams' personality (H2) including its five dimensions or extraversion (H2a), conscientiousness (H2b), agreeableness (H2c), neuroticism (H2d), and openness (H2e) have influence toward their leadership behavior.

2.3.   Religiosity and Leadership Behavior

Third, as argued by some researchers and scholars (e.g. Abdul Ghani, 2009; Mohamed, 2004; Othman & Abdul Ghani, 2004; Rogers, 1975; Sheikh Abdul Aziz, 2008), imams in Malaysia should be religious. This argument is consistent with the general expectation of the Muslim population in Malaysia who regard their imams as the community religious leaders (Rogers, 1975; Wall & Callister, 1999). Moreover, religiosity has been found as a significance predictor

of leadership behavior in Christian religious organizations (Shee, Ji, & Boyatt, 2002; Bird, Ji, & Boyatt, 2004; Miles & Naumann, 2007). In addition to the researches, Jouili and Amir-Moazami (2006) have also found religious educational practices have resulted Muslim women in France and Germany to be empowered with religious leadership responsibility. Thus, based on the researches, this research hypothesized Islamic religiosity dimensions have some influences toward imams' leadership behavior. Furthermore, this study aimed to increase our understanding on the influence of religiosity toward leadership behavior. This is based on the reason that this study investigated the influence of religiosity together with other leadership traits (i.e. general cognitive ability, personality, past leadership experiences, and MTL) toward leadership behavior of imams. Previous researches (Shee, Ji, & Boyatt, 2002; Bird, Ji, & Boyatt, 2004; Jouili & Amir-Moazami, 2006; Miles & Naumann, 2007) investigated only the bivariate relationship of religiosity and leadership without including some other predictors. Therefore, the third hypothesis for this research is as follows:

Hypothesis 3:
Imams' religiosity (H3) and its two dimensions or Religious teaching (H3a) and Religious learning (H3b) have influence toward their leadership behavior.

2.4. Past Leadership Experiences and Leadership Behavior

Fourth, specific kind of leader experiences was found to be related with various indices of leader performance (Ligon, Hunter, & Mumford, 2008). One recent research that investigated the relationship of past leadership experiences as a mediating antecedent for leadership behavior is Iddekinge et al. (2009). Specifically, they applied the principle of distal and proximal or mediating effect of leader traits toward leadership constructs as detailed by some scholars (House & Aditya, 1997; Yukl, 1989; 2006; Zaccaro et al., 2004) and investigated in some researches (Chan, 1999; Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Hendricks & Payne, 2007). In relation to past leadership experiences, Iddekinge et al. (2009) found both leadership experiences significantly predicted knowledge, skills, and abilities of leaders (KSAs) in predicting leadership performance. Earlier than Iddekinge et al. (2009), Chan (1999) found past leadership experiences and leadership self-efficacy mediated the association of distal antecedents (general cognitive ability, personality, and values) with MTL in predicting leadership potential. The same was also found by Chan and Drasgow (2001) in their leadership behavior research. Thus, based on these researches, we could see that past leadership experiences had been found as more proximal toward leadership potential and leadership behavior. Therefore, in sum, based on the previous researches this study hypothesized past leadership experiences work as a proxy to the association of distal traits (general cognitive ability, personality, and religiosity) with leadership behavior. In relation to another distal variable or religiosity, even though there was no research investigated the association of religiosity and past leadership experiences in predicting leadership behavior, we could see religiosity stands as one of the distal trait variables based on the strong association of religiosity and personality found in previous researches (Hamzah, Krauss, Noah, Suandi, Juhari, & Manap, et al. 2007; Ho Ji & Ibrahim, 2007; Krauss, Hamzah, & Idris, 2007). Furthermore, religiosity could be grouped under the category of leadership value, which is one of leaders' distal traits as theorized by leadership scholars (i.e. Zaccaro et al., 2004; Yukl, 2006). Thus, based on the previous researches, this research hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 4:

Imams' past leadership experiences (H4) has influence toward their leadership behavior.

Hypothesis 5a – 5c:

Imams' past leadership experiences mediate the influence of general cognitive ability (H5a), personality (H5b), and religiosity (H5c) toward their leadership behavior.

Hypothesis 6a – 6h:

Imams' past leadership experiences mediate the influence of general cognitive ability (H6a), personality extraversion (H6b), personality conscientiousness (H6c), personality agreeableness (H6d), personality neuroticism (H6e), personality openness (H6f), religious teaching (H6g) and religious learning (H6h) toward their leadership behavior.

2.5. Motivation to Lead (MTL) and Leadership Behavior

Fifth, Rogers (1975) found that imams in Malaysia should have some motivation to function as religious leaders. This research investigated the imams' motivation by using a specific leadership motivation concept called the motivation to lead or MTL (Chan, 1999; Chan & Drasgow, 2001). Chan and Drasgow (2001, p.481) stated, "various non-cognitive ability constructs such as personality and values relate to leader behaviors through the individual's motivation to lead (MTL), which in turns affects the individual's participation in leadership roles and activities" (p.2). Based on the definition, we could see Chan (1999) and Chan and Drasgow (2001) posited MTL is an antecedent of leadership behavior and also function as the mediator for leadership traits and leadership behavior relationship. This is the reason of why this research hypothesized MTL as a mediator for the influence of leadership traits toward leadership behavior. Furthermore, other scholars (e.g. House & Aditya, 1997; Zaccaro et al., 2004; Barrick & Mount, 2005; Yukl, 2006) also argued the same. They argued motivational constructs normally function as mediator for traits and leadership or organizational performance relationship. Therefore, based on previous researches that generally found MTL has direct positive effects to leadership variables above and beyond other predictors of leadership (e.g. Chan, 1999; Chan & Drasgow, 2001), this research hypothesized MTL as a mediator to the association of personality and leadership behavior. Furthermore, based on Hendricks and Payne (2007) whom found slightly inconsistent result with other researches (i.e. Chan 1999; Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Sanchez, 2003 Amit et al., 2007) this research suggests MTL should be further investigated. Thus, based on the previous researches, this research hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 7:

Imams motivation to lead (H7) and its three dimensions or affective-identity MTL (H7a), non calculative MTL (H7b), and social normative MTL (H7c) have influence toward their leadership behavior.

Hypothesis 8a – 8c:

Imams' motivation to lead mediates the influence of general cognitive ability (H8a), personality (H8b), and religiosity (H8c) toward their leadership behavior.

Hypothesis 9a – 9h:
Imams' affective identity MTL mediates the influence of general cognitive ability (H9a), personality extraversion (H9b), personality conscientiousness (H9c), personality agreeableness (H9d), personality neuroticism (H9e), personality openness (H9f), religious teaching (H9g) and religious learning (H9h) toward their leadership behavior.

Hypothesis 10a – 10h:
Imams' non calculative MTL mediates the influence of general cognitive ability (H10a), personality extraversion (H10b), personality conscientiousness (H10c), personality agreeableness (H10d), personality neuroticism (H10e), personality openness (H10f), religious teaching (H10g) and religious learning (H10h) toward their leadership behavior.

Hypothesis 11a – 11h:
Imams' social normative MTL mediates the influence of general cognitive ability (H11a), personality extraversion (H11b), personality conscientiousness (H11c), personality agreeableness (H11d), personality neuroticism (H11e), personality openness (H11f), religious teaching (H11g) and religious learning (H11h) toward their leadership behavior.

2.6. *Job Autonomy, Leadership Traits, and Leadership Behavior*

Finally, there were scholars and government officials argued that imams in Malaysia should be given with higher autonomy (e.g. Abdul Majid, 1991; Sheikh Abdul Aziz, 2008). According to most leadership and organization scholars, situational variables function as moderator in organizational behavior as well as organizational leadership researches (e.g Weiss & Adler, 1990; Antonakis, et al., 2004). Based on this understanding, this research argues that high and low job autonomous situation could moderate the association of leadership traits and leadership behavior of those imams. This argument is consistent with the theory of Path-Goal Leadership (Evans, 1970; 1974; House, 1971; 1996; House & Mitchell, 1974) and the theory that explains phenomenon of job autonomy affecting personnel and work outcomes by Turner and Lawrence (1965) and Hackman and Lawler (1971) (as cited in Hackman & Oldham, 1975). This is because, in one hand, the theory of Path-Goal Leadership explains two aspects of moderating variables that influence leadership processes are nature of tasks and nature of followers (Yukl, 2006) and job autonomy could be included in the category of nature of tasks of leaders. On the other hand, the theory explained by Turner and Lawrence (1965) and Hackman and Lawler (1971) (as cited in Hackman & Oldham, 1975) detailed job autonomy could influence one of the three critical psychological states, or experienced responsibility for the outcomes of the work. The other two critical psychological states for workers are experienced meaningfulness of the work and knowledge of the actual results of the work activities. In general, these three critical psychological states could affect individual's personal and work outcomes (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Based on these two theories, the inclusion of job autonomy as a moderating variable for the imams' leadership traits and behavior association should be justifiable. Therefore, based on the above discussions, this research hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 12a – 12c:

Imams' Job autonomy moderates the influence of general cognitive ability (H12a), personality (H12b), religiosity (H12c), past leadership experiences (H12d), and motivation to lead (MTL) (H12e) toward leadership behavior.

Hypothesis 13a – 13L:

Imams' job autonomy moderates the influence of general cognitive ability (H13a), personality extraversion (H13b), personality conscientiousness (H13c), personality agreeableness (H13d), personality neuroticism (H13e), personality openness (H13f), religious teaching (H13g) and religious learning (H13h), past leadership experiences (H13i), affective identity MTL (H13j), non calculative MTL (H13k), and social normative MTL (H13L) toward their leadership behavior. The research hypotheses discussed above has been summarized in figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Research Theoretical Framework
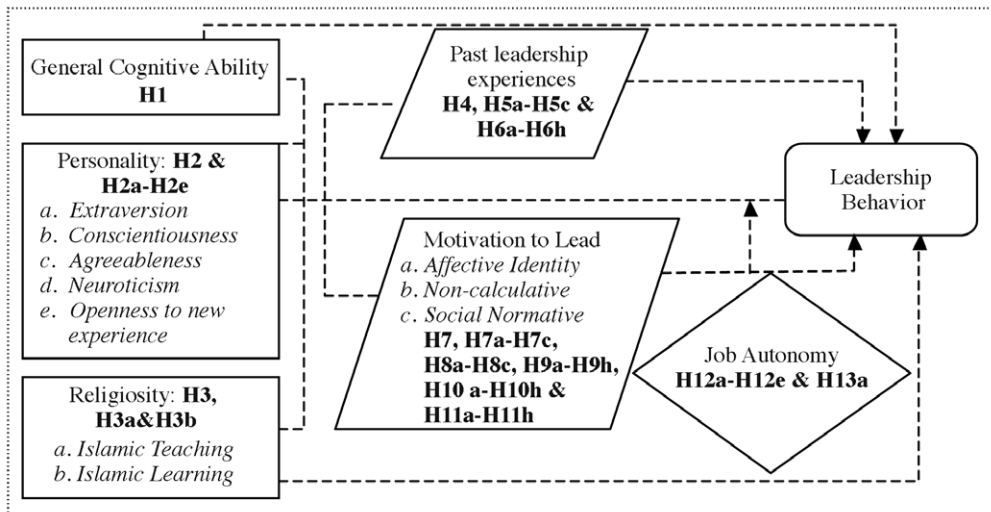
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the research design, sampling procedures and also the instruments used in this research.

3.1. Research Design

This research is hypothetico-deductive and correlational in nature. This is because this research was designed to test several hypotheses as discussed above. The hypotheses were tested in order to identify several factors (leadership traits) that might influence leadership behavior of imams. Moreover, the data for this research was collected by using the survey approach. Based on the nature of the survey approach (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000), this research applied

quantitative techniques in collecting and analyzing the data. Specifically, the data for this research were collected by using measures and scales. Further discussions on the instruments used for this research will be discussed below

3.2. Sampling Procedure

Based on the table of sample sizes prepared by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a total of 144 survey items and 20 demographic questions were distributed to 357 imams around Peninsular Malaysia. Amongst the imams selected, 206 of them returned the survey to be analyzed. With regard to the sampling procedure used for this study, this research applied the probability sampling technique or the simple random sampling technique in order to allow for data generalizability (Hair et al., 2010; Rani, 2004). This means, this research considered the population of imams in Peninsular Malaysia has equal chances to be selected as respondents for this study. Specifically, information concerning population of imams in Malaysia was obtained from Sistem Maklumat Imam dan Masjid or SISMIM 2010, Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia. SISMIM 2010 lists only name of mosques and number of mosque officers in Malaysia without specifying details of the imams in Malaysia. Thus, by randomly selected the samples from the list of mosques as consist in SISMIM 2010, this research expects that the sampling procedure is free from social desirability and biases. This is because the researchers have no prior information concerning the imams that had been selected as samples for this study.

3.3. Research Instruments[1]

There were seven survey instruments used in this research. Four of the instruments have 5-point likert scales with 5 (strongly disagree) and 1 (strongly agree). The four instruments were used to investigate the imams' leadership behavior (the criterion), personality, motivation to lead, and job autonomy. The four instruments are Managerial Practices Survey (MPS) form G 16-3 (Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002), USMaP-i (Yusuff, Abdul Rahim, & Esa, 2010), Motivation to Lead scale (MTL) (Chan & Grasgow, 2001), and Job Autonomy scale (Spreitzer, 1995) respectively. Results revealed that the items adopted to measure each variable are reliable with Cronbach's alpha scores were between 0.600 and 0.945 (see table 1).

The other three variables investigated in this study or general cognitive ability, religiosity, and past leadership experiences were not measured by using likert scales. Thus, no Cronbach's alpha reliability test was conducted on the measures. General cognitive ability was measured by using the Cognitive Reflection Test (Frederick, 2005). The instrument uses three mathematic questions to assess the respondents' impulsiveness in making decision. Meanwhile, religiosity and past leadership experiences were measured by using demographic questions. This research assessed the imams' religiosity by using two dimensions or hours the imams spend to attend religious classes per week and hours the imams' spend to deliver religious classes to the community per week. The dimensions were adapted from Jouili and Amir-Moazami's (2006)

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[1] The authors are grateful to G. Yukl who provides Managerial Practices Survey (form G 16-3), Kim Yin Chan who provides motivation to lead scale and Muhammad Saiful Bahri Yusuf who provides the USMaP-i for this research.

research that found active involvement in religious educational activities have resulted pious women in France and Germany to be empowered with religious leadership responsibility. Finally, past leadership experiences were measured based on the years the respondents work as imams. The measure was adapted from Kalbers and Cenker (2008).

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha scores for the measures

Measures	Cronbach's alpha	Measures	Cronbach's alpha
1. MPS form G 16-3 (Yukl, et al., 2002)	0.945	4. Religiosity (Jouili & Amir Moazami, 2006)	Nil
2. CRT (Frederick, 2005)	Nil	5. Past leadership experiences (Kalbers & Cenker, 2008)	Nil
3. USMaP-i (Yusuff et al., 2010)	0.919	6. MTL (Chan, 1999; Chan & Drasgow, 2001)	0.806
a. Extraversion	0.611	*a*. Affective identity	0.797
b. Conscientiousness	0.778	*b*. Non calculative	0.783
c. Agreeableness	0.600	*c*. Social normative	0.627
d. Neuroticism	0.719	7. Job Autonomy (Spreitzer, 1995	0.758
e. Openness	0.600		

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As explained previously, data for this research was obtained from 206 randomly selected imams around Peninsular Malaysia. Based on the demographic information provided by the samples, this research found the samples are between 24 to 83 years old. Mean for age found in this study is 57 years old and majority of the imams are more than 50 years old (70.4%). The data shows that the position of imams in Peninsular Malaysia is normally held by elder Muslims. Furthermore, most imams in Peninsular Malaysia have been appointed as imams between 1 to 10 years (52.9%). Mean score found for years the respondents serve as imams is 12.21 years. Only 21.4% of the respondents have worked as imams for more than 20 years. With regard to the imams' occupation, most of them have experienced working as farmers or self-employed (31.6%), teachers (27.7%), and government servants (31.1%). Very few respondents have experienced working as university lecturers (1.5%), entrepreneurs (0.5%), and corporate executives (1.9%). Most of the data above is consistent with Abdul Mutalib and Abdul Ghani (2010) on their preliminary research at Kedah Darul Aman and Othman and Abdul Ghani (2004) at Perak. Furthermore, consistent with the two researches, this research found most of the imams completed either primary or secondary schools (41.3%). Furthermore, this research also found high number of imams experienced non-formal Islamic education or *pondok* education (23.3%). An interesting fact that should also be reported is, 13.6% of the respondents have a diploma and 16.5% of the respondents completed a bachelor

degree education. This signifies that in Peninsular Malaysia, the position of imams is also held by college and university graduates. Nevertheless, very few of the respondents have a master degree (2%) or a PhD degree (0.5%). Collectively, 64.6% of the respondents received either primary, secondary, or non-formal Islamic education and 30.1% of the imams completed either a diploma or bachelor degree education.

As displays in figure 1, this study investigated the process of 'how' and 'when' certain leadership traits of imams influence their effective leadership behavior. The word 'how' here connotes the testing of mediation and the word 'when' connotes the testing of moderation (Hair et al., 2010). In order to answer the hypotheses, this research conducted a series of hierarchical multiple regression analysis on the data as display in table 4 and 5 below. In addition to the two tables, results of bivariate correlations, and Cronbach's alphas reliability analysis for all variables are presented in table 2 and 3. Table 2 shows that, at 0.01 level of significance, the imams' leadership behavior have positive correlation with their personality and motivation to lead but negative correlation with past leadership experiences ($r = 0.375$, 0.488, and -0.264 respectively). Specifically, based on table 3, all personality dimensions except agreeableness correlated significantly with leadership behavior. With regard to MTL, only non-calculative MTL did not show significant correlation with leadership behavior. The results might indicate that the three variables (i.e. personality, past leadership experiences, and MTL) could be significant predictors of leadership behavior as compared to other variables or general cognitive ability, religiosity, and the imams' job autonomy. Moreover, table 2 also shows that the imams' personality correlated significantly with their motivation to lead and job autonomy ($r = 0.458$, 0.343, $p < 0.01$ respectively). Specifically, table 3 shows that the dimensions of personality and motivation to lead correlated between each other significantly except between affective-identity MTL with personality agreeableness and neuroticism as well as between social normative-MTL and personality neuroticism. Table 3 also shows that all dimensions of personality and two dimensions of MTL except social normative MTL correlated significantly with job autonomy. In addition to leadership behavior, table 3 shows that past leadership experiences have positive correlation with personality agreeableness and job autonomy ($r = 0.151$, $p < 0.05$ and 0.191, $p < 0.01$) but negative correlation with non calculative MTL ($r = -0.153$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 2: Correlation matrix between Variables

	Variable/Dimension	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	**Leadership Behavior**	3.81	0.57							
2	**General Cognitive Ability**	0.228	0.495	-0.032						
3	**Personality :**	3.934	0.306	0.375**	-0.044					
4	**Religiosity**	3.968	3.900	0.102	-0.052	0.134				
5	**Past Leadership Experiences**	12.22	10.46	-0.264**	-0.045	0.014	-0.092			
6	**Motivation to lead:**	3.404	0.508	0.488**	-0.199**	0.458**	0.154*	0.065		
7	**Job autonomy**	3.601	0.794	-0.005	0.022	0.343**	0.016	0.125	0.191**	

Notes: *$p < .05$ (two-tailed) **$p < .01$ (two-tailed)*

Table 3: Correlation matrix between dimensions (for multidimensional variables) and variables (one-dimensional variable

Variable/Dimension	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 Leadership Behavior	3.809	0.566														
2 General cognitive Ability	0.228	0.495	-0.032													
Personality:																
3 Extraversion	3.89	0.56	0.374**	0.03												
4 Conscientiousness	4.01	0.47	0.325**	-0.060	0.690**											
5 Agreeableness	3.67	0.61	0.023	0.042	0.534**	0.461**										
6 Neuroticism	2.13	0.57	-0.166*	0.039	-0.253**	-0.388**	-0.016									
7 Openness	0.57	0.330**	-0.026	0.654**	0.576**	0.501**	-0.128									
Religiosity:																
8 Islamic Teaching	3.86	5.96	0.080	-0.027	0.011	-0.040	-0.046	0.010	0.106							
9 Islamic Learning	5.96	4.49	0.072	-0.054	0.166*	0.232**	0.167*	-0.034	0.215**	0.096						
Motivation to lead:																
10 Affective-identity MTL	2.98	0.81	0.380**	0.143*	0.351**	0.327**	0.107	-0.093	0.289**	0.008	0.118					
11 Non-calculative MTL	2.00	0.69	0.118	-0.075	-0.241**	-0.329**	-0.205**	0.242**	-0.171*	-0.012	-0.187**	0.073				
12 Social normative MTL	3.19	0.63	0.477**	0.150*	0.231**	0.247**	-0.161*	-0.119	0.189**	0.014	0.000	0.669**	0.184**			
13 Past Leadership Experiences	12.22	10.46	-0.264**	0.045	0.065	-0.043	0.151*	0.067	-0.090	-0.112	-0.011	0.108	-0.153*	-0.032		
14 Job autonomy	3.601	0.794	-0.005	-0.022	0.363**	0.388**	0.332**	-0.148*	0.398**	-0.059	0.106	0.185**	-0.216**	-0.036	0.191**	

tailed) **$p < .01$ (two-

In general, table 4 stated that the five traits of imams (i.e. general cognitive ability, personality, religiosity, past leadership experiences, and motivation to lead) explained 35.6% variance (R^2) of their effective leadership behavior. Nevertheless, based on table 4, the influence of the five traits, after considering the influence of each dimension for multidimensional variables (i.e. personality, religiosity, motivation to lead), the result revealed that leadership traits of imams explained 40.5% variance (R^2) of their leadership behavior. Referring to figure 1, the first hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to answer H1, H2, H2a - H2e,H3, H3a and H3b. Based on table 4, this research found that the imams' general cognitive ability did not influence leadership behavior significantly (β -0.013, $p < 0.840$). Thus H1 is not supported. Furthermore, this research found personality of imams (H2) influenced their leadership behavior significantly (β - 0.368, $p < 0.00$). Specifically, based on table 5, out of the five dimensions of personality, only conscientiousness (H2b) and neuroticism (H2d) did not influence leadership behavior significantly. Personality extraversion (H2a), agreeableness (H2c), and openness (H2e) influenced leadership behavior significantly (β 0.311, $p < 0.002$; β -0.298, $p < 0.00$; β 0.193, $p < 0.031$ respectively). The results explain that H2, H2a, H2c, and H2e are supported while H2b and H2d are rejected. Finally, table 4 also shows imams' religiosity (H3) did not influence leadership behavior significantly (β -0.014, $p < 0.813$). Specifically, based on table 5, this research found the two dimensions of religiosity or religious teaching (H3a) and religious learning (H3b) did not influence the imams leadership behavior significantly (β - 0.048, $p < 0.455$; β -0.008, $p < 0.904$ respectively). This indicates that H3, H3a, and H3b are not supported.

In the next analysis, this research investigated 'how' the traits of imams influenced their leadership behavior and this requires the analysis of mediation (Hair et al., 2010). Based on figure 1, the analysis of mediation was conducted to answer H5a - H5c, H6a - H6h, H8a - H8c, H9a -H9h, H10a - H10h, and H11a - H11h. Figure 1 explains there are two mediating variables for this research or past leadership experiences and motivation to lead or MTL. Furthermore, the three dimensions of MTL were also treated as mediators in this research. First, this research assessed whether the mediators could influence leadership behavior of imams. This is to answer H4, H7, and H7a - H7c. Based on table 4, this research found past leadership experiences of imams (H4) influenced their leadership behavior significantly (β - 0.294, $p < 0.00$). Thus, H4 in this research is accepted. Moreover, in the same table, this research also found the imams' motivation to lead or MTL (H7) also influenced their leadership behavior significantly (β 0.434, $p < 0.00$). This means, H7 is also accepted. Specifically, according to table 5, this research found only one dimension of MTL or social-normative MTL (H7c) influenced the imams' leadership behavior significantly (β 0.287, $p < 0.001$). This means that only H7c is accepted in this research while H7a and H7b are not supported.

Table 4: Results of hierarchical multiple regression

	Leadership Behavior				
	Model Summary		Coefficients		
	R² / ΔR²	F change	B	Std. Error	Sig.
Step 1:	**0.144/ 0.131**	**11.304**			**0.000**
General Cognitive Ability			-0.013	0.075	0.840
Personality			0.368	0.122	0.000
Religiosity			0.052	0.010	0.427
Step 2:	**0.356/ 0.340**	**32.898**			**0.000**
General Cognitive Ability			0.408	0.066	0.407
Personality			0.184	0.119	0.005
Religiosity			-0.014	0.008	0.813
Motivation to Lead			0.434	0.073	0.000
Past Leadership Experiences			-0.294	0.003	0.000
Step 3:	**0.376/ 0.344**	**1.282**			**0.273**
General Cognitive Ability * Job Autonomy			0.275	0.092	0.354
Personality * Job Autonomy			-0.868	0.076	0.077
Religiosity * Job Autonomy			-0.106	0.011	0.676
Motivation to Lead * Job Autonomy			0.726	0.087	0.175
Past Leadership Experiences * Job Autonomy			0.549	0.005	0.122

Table 5: Results of hierarchical multiple regression

	Leadership Behavior				
	Model Summary		Coefficients		
	R² / ΔR²	F change	B	Std. Error	Sig.
Step 1:	**0.223/0.191**	**7.052**			**0.000**
General Cognitive Ability			-0.006	0.072	0.921
Personality:					
a. Extraversion			0.311	0.102	0.002
b. Conscientiousness			0.134	0.118	0.170
c. Agreeableness			-0.298	0.073	0.000
d. Neuroticism			-0.016	0.069	0.824
e. Openness			0.193	0.089	0.031
Religiosity:					
a. Religious Teaching			0.048	0.006	0.455
b. Religious Learning			-0.008	0.008	0.904

Table 5: Results of hierarchical multiple regression *(cont)*

	Leadership Behavior				
	Model Summary		**Coefficients**		
	R^2 / ΔR^2	**F change**	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Sig.**
Step 2:	**0.405/ 0.368**	**14.789**			**0.000**
General Cognitive Ability			0.031	0.065	0.587
Personality:					
a. Extraversion			0.239	0.092	0.008
b. Conscientiousness			0.022	0.110	0.813
c. Agreeableness			-0.103	0.071	0.181
d. Neuroticism			-0.046	0.062	0.463
e. Openness			0.166	0.080	0.038
Religiosity:					
a. Religious Teaching			0.024	0.005	0.679
b. Religious Learning			0.015	0.007	0.801
Motivation to lead:					
a. Affective-identity			0.078	0.056	0.332
b. Non-calculative			0.109	0.053	0.091
c. Social-normative			0.287	0.075	0.001
Past Leadership Experiences			-0.253	0.003	0.000
Step 3	**0.446/ 0.372**	**1.105**			**0.359**
Job Autonomy * General Cognitive Ability			0.346	0.094	0.257
Job Autonomy and Personality:					
a. Job autonomy * personality-extraversion			-0.733	0.125	0.431
b. Job autonomy * personality-conscientiousness			0.727	0.125	0.431
c. Job autonomy * personality-agreeableness			-0.603	0.096	0.392
d. Job autonomy * personality-neuroticism			-0.414	0.065	0.150
e. Job autonomy * personality-openness			0.418	0.099	0.553
Job Autonomy and Religiosity:			.974	.068	0.051
a. Job autonomy * Religious teaching			-0.094	0.007	0.685
b. Job autonomy * Religious learning			0.034	0.011	0.915
Job Autonomy and Motivation to Lead:					
a. Job autonomy * affective-identity MTL			1.032	0.066	0.034
b. Job autonomy * non-calculative MTL			-0.078	0.070	0.814
c. Job autonomy * social normative MTL			-0.505	0.092	0.359

In relation to the test of mediation, according to Hair et al. (2010, p. 767), "mediation requires significant correlations among all three constructs". Thus, in this research, for the hypothesized mediating influence of past leadership experiences toward the association of general cognitive ability (H5a), personality (H5b), and religiosity (H5c) with leadership behavior, based on table 2, since past leadership experiences only correlated significantly with the criterion (leadership behavior) but not with the distal variables (i.e. general cognitive ability, personality, and religiosity), past leadership behavior could be said as showing no potential to function as the mediator for this research. Thus, hypothesis H5a, H5b, and H5c are not supported. Furthermore, in relation to motivation to lead or MTL as the mediator, based on table 2, since only the association of personality, MTL, and leadership behavior (H8b) fits the mediation requirement as stated by Hair et al. (2010) above, this research only assessed the potential of MTL to mediate the association of personality and leadership behavior in the hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The mediating influenced of MTL toward the association of general cognitive ability (H8a) and religiosity (H8c) with leadership behavior was not expected to occur due to the insignificant correlation of the two predictors with leadership behavior. Thus, hypotheses H8a and H8c are not supported. Specifically, based on table 3, only two dimensions of MTL, and three dimensions of personality could be inserted in the mediation analysis. The two MTL dimensions are affective identity and social normative, while the three dimensions of personality are extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness. This means only H9b, H9c, H9f, H11b, H11c, H11f fit the requirement of mediator analysis stated by Hair et al (2010). H9a, H9d, H9e, H9g, H9h, H11a, H11d, H11e, H11g, and H11h did not fit the requirement of mediation analysis and thus the hypotheses are not supported in this research. Non calculative MTL did not have potential to stand as the mediator due to the insignificant correlation with the criterion (i.e. leadership behavior). Thus, H10a, H10b, H10c, H10d, H10e, H10f, H10g, and H10h are also not supported in this research. Table 4 and 5 (step 2) show the results of the stated hypotheses that fit the requirement of mediation analysis (Hair et al., 2010) or specifically H8b, H9b, H9c, H9f, H11b, H11c, and H11f.

First, in assessing H8b, as displays in table 4, the influence of personality toward leadership behavior was reduced but remained significant due to the mediating influence of MTL toward leadership behavior. This indicates that MTL partially mediated the influence of personality toward leadership behavior (Hair et al., 2010). Thus, H8b is partially supported. Secondly, for H9b, H9c, H9f, H11b, H11c, and H11f, based on table 5, this research found, only the influence of social normative toward leadership behavior is significant (β -0.253, $p < 0.00$) while the influence of affective identity toward the criterion is insignificant. This made the mediating influence of affective identity MTL was also not counted in the regression analysis. Thus H9b, H9c, H9f are not supported. Moreover, based on table 5 that shows the influence of personality extraversion and personality openness reduced due to the significant influence of social normative MTL, this research sees H11b and H11f are partially supported. Furthermore, based on table 5, since the influence of personality conscientiousness remained insignificant even after the mediators were inserted, H11c is rejected.

In addition to the mediation analyses, this study also hypothesized that job autonomy might moderate the above association of leadership traits with leadership behavior. Specifically, this

research sees that both high and low imams' job autonomy could moderate the association of the investigated leadership traits and leadership behavior. Furthermore, for the potential significant mediator as found above, or motivation to lead, this research sees that the partial mediation of the mediator might be moderated by job autonomy. Kenny (2011) termed this situation as moderated mediation or the mediation influence of some variables toward the criterion is stronger due to the interaction with the moderator. According to Kenny (2011), there are two major forms of moderated mediation. Based on the theoretical framework of this study (figure 1), this research applied the second form of moderated mediation as stated by Kenny (2011). The second form states that the direct effect of the predictors (both initial variables and mediators) toward the criterion could change significantly due to the interaction with the imams' high and low job autonomy (Kenny, 2011). Therefore, this research hypothesized that the association of each variable and dimension with the criterion (i.e. leadership behavior) in this research might be moderated by the imams' high and low job autonomy. The moderation analyses for this research were conducted to answer H12a to H12e and H13a to H13L.

Generally, based on table 2 and 3, moderation of job autonomy seems hard to be established in this research. This is because, according to Hair et al. (2010, p.770), "analysis of moderators is easiest when the moderator has no significant linear relationship with either of the constructs". As seen in table 2 and 3, the moderator or job autonomy did not correlate significantly only with the criterion (leadership behavior) and one predictor (non-calculative MTL). Nevertheless, based on the issue that insignificant correlation of moderating variable with both predictors and criterion is only desirable (Baron & Kenny, 1986), this research did not omit job autonomy as a potential moderating variable in the analysis. This action is supported with the theory of job autonomy has effects on organization outcomes (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Thus, based on these two factors, this research assumed job autonomy is suitable to be investigated as moderator for this research. As displayed in table 4, only at 0.10 level of significance, job autonomy was found to have potential to moderate the association of personality and leadership behavior. Other associations show no interaction with job autonomy. Thus, this research could conclude that, the results show job autonomy did not have significant potential to moderate the leadership traits and behavior association. Thus, H12a to H12e are not supported. In relation to H13a to H13L, based on table 5, job autonomy only interacted significantly with the association of personality openness and affective identity MTL with leadership behavior (β 1.032, $p < 0.034$; β 0.974, $p < 0.05$ respectively). This indicates H13f and H13i are supported. Other associations or H13a, H13b, H13c, H13d, H13e, H13g, H13h, H13j, H13k, and H13L are not supported. Finally, since the potential moderator in this research or motivation to lead did not interact with job autonomy in influencing leadership behavior, this research assumes that moderated mediation is not supported in this research. In sum, job autonomy was found to have significant potential to increase the influence of affective identity MTL and personality openness toward the criterion. Specifically, by using line graph (figure 2a and 2b), this research found the situation occurred mostly in high job autonomous situation. This signifies that the influence of personality openness and affective identity MTL toward leadership behavior is stronger in high job autonomous situation.

Figure 2a: Interaction of high and low job autonomy on the association of achievement-identity MTL and leadership behavior
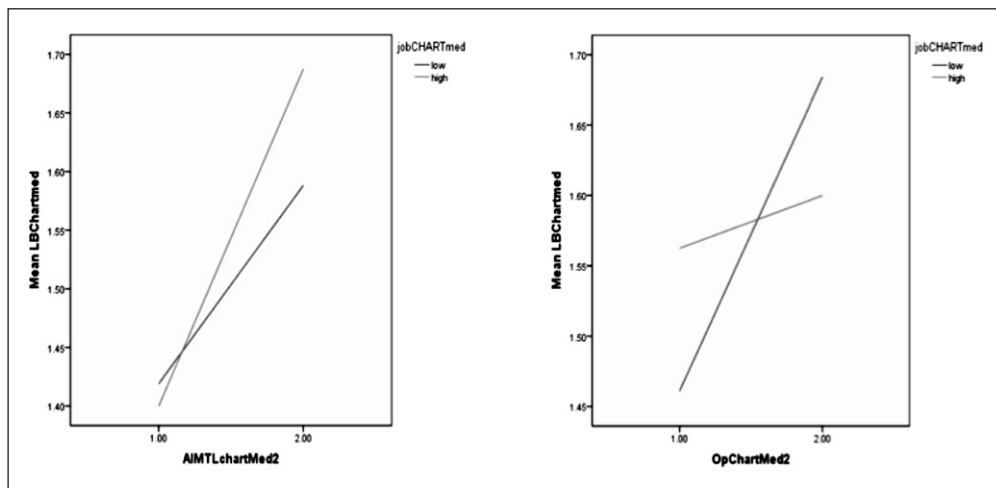
Figure 2b: Interaction of high and low job autonomy on the association of personality openness and leadership behavior
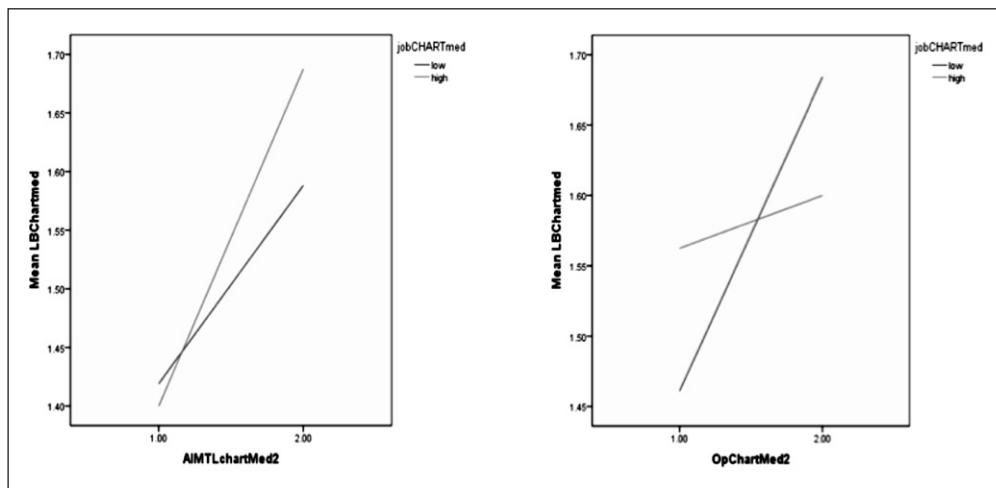
5. CONCLUSION

In this research, we have achieved several conclusions. First, we have found personality and motivation to lead or MTL have significant potential to influence the imams' leadership behavior. This research also found two specific dimensions of personality (extraversion and agreeableness) and one dimension of motivation to lead (social normative) influenced leadership behavior significantly. Second, we found years the samples work as imams have negative significance influenced toward their leadership behavior. Third, we found one dimension of personality (openness) and motivation to lead (affective identity) interacted with job autonomy to influence leadership behavior. Fourth, since the influence of motivation to lead or MTL dimensions did not reduce the influence of personality dimensions completely, we found partial support on the mediation model of leadership. Fifth, in order to compare the moderating influence of low and high job autonomous situation toward the imams leadership traits and behavior association, by using line graphs, this research found the influence of personality (openness) and motivation to lead (affective identity) toward the criterion (leadership behavior) happened in high job autonomous situation. This signifies some support was found on the moderated model of leadership in high job autonomous situation. The argument is supported with the result that affective-identity MTL significantly influenced the imams' leadership behavior only in high job autonomous situation. In general, this research suggests that the above findings could be used as a guide in the selection of future imams for mosque institutions in Malaysia, particularly in Peninsular Malaysia. Furthermore, this research encourages similar investigation to be conducted on imams in East Malaysia. Geographical constraints and socio-economic differences might reveal different results between imams in West Malaysia (Peninsular Malaysia) and East Malaysia (Sarawak, Sabah,

and Labuan). In addition, this research calls for more issues concerning imams' leadership and mosque management in Malaysia to be investigated. Examples of future researches that could be conducted are measurement of mosque performance in Malaysia, readiness of imams in Malaysia to accept high responsibility, types of autonomy needed by imams to perform well, and people or followers' perceptions if imams are given with greater leadership and managerial autonomy. Moreover, future researches should also investigate the issue qualitatively in order to describe in greater details the association of imams' leadership traits and leadership behavior. It is also suggested future researches to expand this research by assessing the effectiveness of imams' leadership behavior and managerial performance in Malaysia. This could be done by incorporating more situational or contextual variables of imams' leadership or by investigating the issue from the angel of management or leadership outcomes. Finally, this research calls for a more rigorous conceptual analysis to be conducted in the aspect of religious leadership behavior from the perspective of Islam.

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