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Analysis of the Relationship between Key Factors towards Understanding Islamic Debt Concept and Debt Repayment Accuracy amongst UiTM Workforce

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relationship between key factors towards understanding Islamic debt concept and debt repayment accuracy amongst UiTM workforce. To what extent does the concept of Islamic debt amongst UiTM staffs affect their debt repayment accuracy? The article attempts to answer this research question by discussing on empirical findings of the said relationship. Using stratified random sampling method, a total of 831 survey questionnaires were distributed to targeted respondents. However, only 690 usable feedbacks were collected and subsequently used for further data analyses via the Statistical

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Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 22.0. Based on Pearson's Correlation testing, the result revealed a positive relationship between key factors towards understanding Islamic debt concept and debt repayment accuracy for the dimensions of law and contract. Nonetheless, the correlational strength of this relationship was relatively weak. **Keywords:** Debt, Understanding, Concept of Islamic Debt, Morals, 'Mahmudah', 'Mazmumah'

Introduction

The concept of understanding has a deep connection with practice, and it serves as a foundation in people's lives (Azrina Sobian & Siti Fatimah Abdul Rahman, 2010). An accurate understanding will result in a laudable attitude, and it will also influence one's behaviour towards a righteous path. In the al-Quran, there are verses that illustrate how understanding is linked to practice. Allah SWT commanded Prophet Muhammad PBUH to firstly grasp the concept of 'tawhid', which states that there is no God other than Allah, prior to understanding the practice of asking for His forgiveness, as stated in the surah Muhammad, verse 19:

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ (19)

Meaning: Know, therefore, that there is no god but Allah, and ask forgiveness for thy fault, and for the men and women who believe: for Allah knows how ye move about and how ye dwell in your homes. (Muhammad, 47:19)

The verse above clearly highlights a contiguous relationship between understanding and practice in a daily life.

Drawing from the above statement, it is noteworthy to investigate the relationship between an understanding of Islamic debt concept and the practice of debt repayment. The practice of repayment observed in this article is measured based on the precision of debt repayment period. In particular, it is aimed at examining the relationship between factors towards understanding Islamic debt concept and debt repayment accuracy amongst UiTM staff workforce. The first section of this article highlights on the definition of Islamic debt, followed by the second section that describes further details of the said study. The third section explains on research methodology applied and the fourth section focuses on this study's empirical findings and its subsequent discussion. Last but not least, the fifth section draws on the conclusion of this article.

Definition of Islamic Debt

As stated in previous research, Zuhaily (2002) defined debt based on inherent elucidations by Imam Shafie, Maliki, Hanafi, and Hanbali. According to Imam Shafie, debt is defined as a transfer of asset usage from one party to another. In debt contracts, the debtor must return borrowed assets in an exact condition that it was specified in as before or replace the said assets with any properties of equal value. On the other hand, Imam Maliki defines debt as valuable assets that are prepared by a creditor for the debtor, solely for the purpose of receiving benefits from the said assets. The creditor obtains these assets that are subsequently paid back by the debtor periodically based on the amount of liability observed. Imam Hanafi also holds a similar stance, to which debt is considered a special contract that involves any provision of products by the creditor for the debtor's usage, and that borrowed assets must be repaid with an equal value. Imam Hanbali suggests that debt can be recognized

as a contract that is created by the creditor, which involves an agreement to transfer assets to the debtor with a guaranteed return.

Islamic Debt Law and Islamic Debt Contract

In ensuring needs and responsibilities towards debt, Islam has laid the principles of law in Islamic debt. Debt laws can change depending on the benefits or damages incurred from debt transactions. If the said debt is intended for damages, then it is either 'haram' or 'makruh' depending on the actions taken. The principle of debt is 'harus' (Mahmud, 2008) for daily necessities or to increase business capital. On the contrary, if the debt is meant for emergency purposes, hence, it is considered compulsory (Mahmud, 2008). Other laws include:

- a. 'Haram': It is 'haram' or sinful for the creditor to provide loan for the debtor should they have full knowledge that said loan will be used with malicious intent.
- b. 'Makruh': It is 'makruh' or optional for the loan to be used for intentions which is makruh, such as using the loan to process tobacco for the cigarette industry.
- c. 'Wajib': It is 'wajib' or compulsory should the creditor is aware that the debtor is in need of a loan to accommodate them and their family's life necessities, and there is no other way for them to do so.

A perfect debt contract between creditor and debtor possesses both principles and conditions. Although there are complete principles and conditions inside a debt contract, the party who expends their assets will be protected with certain procedures. Humans tend to feel a sense of calmness if and when there are certain methods of assurances that their assets will be returned to them. The implementation of a guaranteed debt contract will eliminate fraud, injustice, and conflict between both creditors and debtors concerning the debt. The debt contract implementation in Islam includes:

- a. Written debt agreement
- b. Witness in debt contract
- c. Debt collateral

Written Debt Agreement

A debt must be recorded or written down to ensure that the evidence of said loan is provided by the creditor and is then received by the debtor (Rahim, Sulaiman, & Razzak, 2012). It is required by both parties to prevent any future doubt or dispute. This instruction was stated by Allah SWT in the al-Quran, Surah al-Baqarah, verse 282:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ

Meaning: O ye who believe! When ye deal with each other, in transactions involving future obligations in a fixed period of time, commit them to writing. (al-Baqarah, 2:282)

Al-Tabari has stated that the verse above is an order from Allah SWT for debt records, regardless of whether it is a purchase debt or property debt.

Debt records must be written down in its entirety and complete with all information that are relatable to the debt (Alwi, 2006). The information should be comprehensible to both parties of the debt contract (al-Arabi, 1967). In verse 282 of Surah al-Baqarah, Allah SWT forbids any

concealment of facts in a debt contract, and commands that the debt contract be written in a clear and just manner in order for both parties to comprehend and appreciate all of its contents. Upon acquiescing, a confirmation must be undertaken with either a fingerprint mark or signature in order to further verify the agreement made between said parties. Should any one of the parties involved is not capable to understand the said agreement, either due to their inability to read or not being of sound mind, hence a representative must be appointed. This representative could either be a 'wali' or guardian who is truthful and fair-minded.

Witness in Debt Contract

An implementation of debt contract in Islam is strengthened with the presence of a witness. The words of Allah SWT in Surah al-Baqarah, verse 282:

فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَيْنِ مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشَّاهِدَاتِ

Meaning: Call upon two of your men to witness. If two men cannot be found, then one man and two women of your choice will witness. (al-Baqarah, 2:282)

As stated in the verse above, a 'witness' party must comprise of two men who are fair-minded, trustworthy, and of sound mind. Women can also be appointed as witnesses – the 'witness' party shall consist of two women and an additional man, with the consent of both debtor and creditor. Fairness of a witness is pertinent to ensure that the testimony is effective in the events of a dispute. In fact, the witness is a crucial figure in court proceedings, who will provide their testimony without disguising or concealing any truth. As such, the fair nature observed in a witness will bring about individual characters who manifest Islamic principles in their daily lives, and is always protecting themselves from both major and minor sins.

Debt Collateral

Placing assets as collateral or mortgage on a debt is part of a contract being implemented in Islam. It is an astute practice as the interest of creditors will be safeguarded through this collateral (Jusoh, 2014). The need to place a collateral or mortgage on debt is based on Allah SWT's words from the verse that discusses both record and testimony of debt in the al-Quran:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهْنِ مَقْبُوضَةً

Meaning: And if you are on a journey and do not find a scribe to write the document then resort to taking pledges in hand (al-Baqarah, 2:283)

Ibn Abbas further highlights the delineation of not obtaining a recordkeeper in the verse above – Even if a recordkeeper is in attendance but at the same time, no papers or pens are available for use, the collateral (mortgage) is thus guaranteed towards the debt involved (Ibn-Kathir, 1993).

Muhmadah in Islamic Debt

'Muhmadah' in Islamic debt management refers to the qualities that should be nurtured and integrated by both debtors and creditors, before and during the debt contract, and until the repayment is made. 'Muhmadah' of debt practices for Muslim debtors are as follows:

Courtesy in Repaying and Claiming Debt

Courtesy in repaying and claiming debt will reinforce the relationship between both debtors and creditors (Affanddi, Ahmad, & Sarmidi. (2015). The debtor must undeniably be courteous towards repaying his debt in response to the kindness displayed by the creditor. The courtesy observed will indirectly reflects the debtor's appreciation towards the latter. The need for courtesy in repaying debt was actually recommended by Rasulullah SAW as he said:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْوَلِيدِ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، أَخْبَرَنَا سَلْمَةُ بْنُ كَهَيْلٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا سَلَمَةَ، بَيْنَمَا يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ . رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ . أَنَّ رَجُلًا، تَقَاصَى رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَأَعْلَظَ لَهُ، فَهَمَّ أَصْحَابُهُ، فَقَالَ " دَعُوهُ، فَإِنَّ لِصَاحِبِ الْحَقِّ مَقَالًا. وَاشْتَرَوْا لَهُ بَعِيرًا، فَأَعْطُوهُ إِيَّاهُ " . وَقَالُوا لَا نَجِدُ إِلَّا أَفْضَلَ مِنْ سِنِّهِ. قَالَ " اشْتَرَوْهُ فَأَعْطُوهُ إِيَّاهُ، فَإِنَّ خَيْرَكُمْ أَحْسَنُكُمْ قِضَاءً " .

Meaning: Abu Huraira narrated:

A man demanded his debts from Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) in such a rude manner that the companions of the Prophet intended to harm him, but the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Leave him, no doubt, for he (the creditor) has the right to demand it (harshly). Buy a camel and give it to him." They said, "The camel that is available is older than the camel he demands." The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Buy it and give it to him, for the best among you are those who repay their debts handsomely." (al-Bukhari, no. 2390)

Keeping Promises and Not Postponing Payments

A good debtor will always keep his promise. Fulfilling promises is one of the 'siddiq' (truthful) qualities that is borne from a human's soul (Yasin, 1992). This positive quality is closely related to faith. For that reason, the believer will always fulfil his promises. As Allah SWT says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ

Meaning: O ye who believe! Fulfil (all) obligations. (al-Maidah, 5:1)

In the verse above, 'completing the agreement' involves a consummation of all kinds of contractual contracts that is only permitted by Allah S.W.T. Zaid bin Aslam has categorized the contract into six different types, namely: an agreement related to both commands and prohibitions of Allah SWT, agreement with the tribe, company agreement, sale and purchase agreement, marriage agreement, and oath agreement. (Ibn-Kathir, 1993).

Praying for the Welfare of Creditors

A good debtor should give credit to the creditors for their generosity in providing the loan (Sulaiman, 2009). The good creditors' kindness can be reciprocated by praying for their well-being. Although the debtor could not repay the creditors' kindness with money or assets except with his/her words of prayer, it will undeniably make the creditors happy (Othman, & Din, 2005). Rasulullah SAW himself, has actually prayed for his creditors' family well-being upon repaying the debts that he owed them. As the Prophet PBUH has said:

Meaning: "From Ismail Ibn. Ibrahim Ibn. Abdullah Ibn. Abu Rabiah from his father from his grandfather stated: "Rasulullah S.A.W once owed me forty thousand; when he came to me to

pay the debt, he prayed for me: "May God bless you, your family and your property. Indeed, the reward for a debt provided is thanksgiving and the repayment."

Mazmumah in Islamic Debt

In this article, the concept of 'mazmumah' in Islamic debt refers to adverse qualities that must be avoided and dissociated by a debtor before and during the debt contract, until the repayment has been made. These traits and attitudes do not in part, affect the position of 'fiqh' law within a debt transaction, but it is strongly encouraged to avoid it in the context of Islamic spirituality. Devious morals such as unwillingness to pay debts while being able to, as well as being indebted to the oppressors, do not make a debt transaction void or invalid, but it is in direct conflict with the moral values and pure spirituality of Islam. (Sulaiman, 2011). 'Mazmumah' in general, encompasses all behaviours deemed to be immoral and should be circumvented by Muslims. Amongst them are deceit, arrogance, envy, stinginess, anger, and other negative traits (Tatapangarsa, 1981). Morals of 'mazmumah' that need to be evaded by both creditors and debtors in their 'muamalat' debt are as follows:

Riba

There is a very close relationship between 'riba' and debt. Allah SWT has explained the verses related to 'riba' in the Quran prior to any discussions on the question of debt (Sabran, 2001). The practice of indebtedness tainted by an element of 'riba' is abysmal in Islam that Allah S.W.T. describes people who take 'riba' as irrational and preposterous people in the hereafter, possessed by the devil (Ibn-Kathir, 1993). The term 'riba' originated from the root word 'raba-yarbu-rabwan-riban-rubuwwan' (Ibn-Manzur, 1966). From a linguistic perspective, the term 'riba' refers to increment, growth, becoming tall, and developing (Rohi Baalbaki, 1992). These definitions are also widely used in the al-Quran. The word of Allah SWT:

يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُرِي الصَّدَقَاتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ (276)

Meaning: Allah will deprive 'riba' of all blessings and will bless growth for deeds of charity: For He loveth not creatures ungrateful and wicked. (al-Baqarah, 2:276).

Deferment of Payment and Capability

The debtor who defers payment of his/her debt while they are capable of paying it off, is considered an inhumane and selfish person. Debt needs to be notably paid off in Islam. As such, it is a cruel act for an individual if he chooses to postpone any repayment of the debt, even if when one is capable of doing so.

Failure in Paying Debt

A debtor's responsibility is very noteworthy in Islam that even a deceased believer will have his soul hung up until his debt is settled. The words of the Prophet SAW:

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَيْلَانَ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو أَسَامَةَ، عَنْ زَكْرِيَّا بْنِ أَبِي زَائِدَةَ، عَنْ سَعْدِ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " نَفْسُ الْمُؤْمِنِ مُعَلَّقَةٌ بِدَيْنِهِ حَتَّى يُقْضَى عَنْهُ " .

Meaning: Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah said: "The believer's soul is suspended by his debt until it is settled for him." (at-Tirmidhi, no. 1078)

Al-Shan'ani mentioned in the hadith above that a person will remain preoccupied with his debts even after death. This hadith advises Muslims to immediately settle debts before death and emphasizes the weight of a debtor's responsibility towards his debts (Ali, 2005).

Wastefulness in Debt

The fundamental basis of a person in seeking debt is to meet the needs of life (Jusoh, Awang, & Yusoff, 2011). However, if the practice of debt is not meant to fulfil an individual's 'needs', but rather is focused more on his 'wants', then the action is considered excessive and wasteful. In Islam, excessive and wasteful actions in matters that are considered 'harus' is forbidden. Allah SWT says:

يَبْنَئِ أَدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ (31)

Meaning: O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: and eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters.

Al-Qurtubi states that the verse above is Allah S.W.T commands for human beings to wear clothes, and the need to eat and drink, but forbids for mankind to be extravagant and wasteful (al-Qurtubi, 2000). Hence, wastefulness in debt is the practice of 'mazmumah' because such a wasteful practice is not meant for daily needs, but instead, to satisfy human lust solely.

Indebtedness to the Oppressors

The morality of 'mazmumah' in 'muamalat' debt is also related to individuals providing such a debt (Rahim, Sulaiman, & Razzak, 2012). Debtors who obtain their debts from oppressors would always be plagued by such creditors and thus, their lives would constantly be in a state of unease (Daud, Muhamed, & Ramli, 2017). The term 'oppression' is to put something out of place (Ibn-Manzur, t.t). The nature of oppression includes all negative qualities that are not revered and should be avoided by human beings such as shirk (the act of worship of deity, gods, or anything other than Allah S.W.T), taking the rights of others, and disobeying the command of Allah S.W.T. (Fiqhiyyah, 1992).

Oppression amongst human beings occurs when one has denied the rights of others, and Allah states that those who oppress others will be punished in the hereafter. The word of Allah SWT:

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (42)

Meaning: The blame is only against those who oppress men and wrong-doing and insolently transgress beyond bounds through the land, defying right and justice: for such there will be a penalty grievous. (asy-Syura, 42:42)

Hence, the debtor who owes debt from an oppressive creditor would be oppressed by the latter.

Methodology

Sample

The sampled population in this survey-based study comprised of workforce from UiTM Shah Alam (Selangor), UiTM Permatang Jauh (Penang), and UiTM Jengka (Pahang). The population was chosen based on several identified profiling characteristics. Firstly, it involved UiTM personnel who were still serving in any one of the aforementioned UiTM campuses. Secondly, these staffs entailed consumers who have used any types of Islamic banking facility for financing purposes. Thirdly, all of these consumers were Muslims. In other words, this study was only limited to respective Muslim staffs of UiTM Shah Alam, UiTM Permatang Jauh, and UiTM Jengka.

In addition, the selected respondents in this study were also identified based on other demographic factors such as population density and rapid development of the districts involved. UiTM Shah Alam was chosen to represent urban areas. UiTM Jengka was chosen to represent rural areas, whereas UiTM Permatang Pauh was chosen to represent suburban areas. Following these considerations, UiTM civil servants serving in the three campuses were selected as the targeted respondents. In this study, a stratified random sampling method was applied. Out of a total of 831 survey questionnaires distributed, only 699 data were successfully collected. Nevertheless, only 690 feedback were valid and used for further analyses.

Item-Measurements

The instrument used in this study, entitled Understanding the Concept of Islamic Debt, contained 28 items. With these item measurements, the researchers were able to examine the determinants of understanding Islamic debt concept and its relationship with the accuracy of debt payment among staffs of the three UiTM campuses, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Dimension, Elements and Item Numbers

Dimension	Elements and Item Numbers
Definition of Islamic Debt	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Debt (al-Qarl) is a loan of assets from the creditor to the debtor and must be repaid with the original loan amount. 2. Debt (al-Dayn) occurs in Islamic Financial Institutions in Malaysia based on the process of buying and selling by deferred payment.
Islamic Debt Law	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Islam does not encourage its followers to be in debt. 4. The law of giving debt in Islam is obligatory. Obtaining loans to buy lottery tickets to make profit is makruh. 5. It is haram to buy luxury furniture on credit for the purposes of showing off while old furniture is still in good condition. 6. It is obligatory to borrow to obtain food when you no longer have any property. 7. The creditor should be of the same degree as the debtor.
Mahmudah in Islamic Debt	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. The payment period should be extended for debtors incapable of paying without charge. 9. Requesting for loan in a courteous manner is a must in Islam.

	<p>10. Keeping promises in debt repayment is a must in Islam.</p> <p>11. It is a priority after getting a monthly salary to pay off debts.</p> <p>12. Appreciation from debtors to creditors is a must in Islam.</p>
Mazmumah in Islamic Debt	<p>13. A person entangled in debt is easy to lie to.</p> <p>14. A person who pays more than their total debt voluntarily is encouraged in Islam.</p> <p>15. Islam strictly forbids the practice of riba in debt.</p> <p>16. Excess payment from debt financing in Islamic banking is considered as riba.</p> <p>17. Unpaid debt will cause the soul to be trapped.</p> <p>18. Debtors who do not pay their debts cannot be punished.</p> <p>19. Obtaining luxury goods through debt to enhance one's self-image is not appropriate</p> <p>20. It is appropriate to defer payment of debt even if you can afford to pay it.</p> <p>21. There is no need to pay the debt if the creditor does not ask for their debt.</p> <p>22. A debt deduction of 60% of monthly salary is considered a bad level of debt.</p> <p>23. Nowadays, assets cannot be owned without debt.</p>
Islamic Debt Contract	<p>24. Records of debt transactions are not a requirement in Islam.</p> <p>25. Islam commands for debt transactions to be made with present witnesses.</p> <p>26. Most Islamic banking housing financing in Malaysia use the Bay' Bithaman Ójil (BBA) contract.</p> <p>27. UiTM vehicle financing uses the al-IjÉrah Thumma al-Bay' (AITAB) contract.</p> <p>28. The MusyÉrasah Mutanaqîah (MM) contract is used in personal financing of Islamic banking.</p>

Findings and Discussions

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Using descriptive statistical analysis, a demographic profiling was conducted on 690 usable data. The respondents' profiles were divided according to gender, age, marital status, level of education, employment, and monthly gross household income as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Respondents' Profile (N=690)

Respondents' Profile	Amount	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	317	45.9
Female	373	54.1
Age		
20 and below	1	0.1
21-29	199	28.8
30-39	218	31.6
40-49	189	27.4
50 and above	83	12.0
Marital Status		
Single	124	18.0
Married	566	82.0
Level of Education		
SRP and below	27	3.9
SPM	159	23.0
STPM	21	3.0
Diploma	119	17.2
Degree	114	16.5
Masters	192	27.8
PhD	58	8.4
Type of Position		
Academic	277	40.1
Administration	413	59.9
Monthly Income (RM)		
1000 and below	17	2.5
1001 – 3000	352	51.0
3001 – 5000	176	25.5
5001 - 7000	77	11.2
7001 - 9000	41	5.9
9001 and above	27	3.9

In Table 3 as shown above, the respondents' gender category was not greatly dominated by either male or female genders but were somewhat almost equally distributed. Male

respondents constituted 45.9% (n=317), followed by female respondents at 54.1% (n=371) respectively. The diversity of age groups could also be observed, starting from those aged below 20 years old, to those aged over 50 years old. Majority of the respondents came from those aged between 30 to 39 years old at 31.6% (n=218). In terms of education level, most respondents have postgraduate (Masters) degree qualifications at 27.8% (n=192). Also, majority of the respondents were from the middle-income group with a monthly household income earnings ranging between RM1001-RM3000.

Table 3: The Relationship Between Determinants in Understanding Islamic Debt Concept and The Accuracy Of Debt Payment

	Accuracy	Def	Law	Mahmudah	Mazmumah	Contract
Accuracy	1.000					
Def	0.035**	1.000				
Law	0.060**	0.249**	1.000			
Mahmudah	0.009	0.378**	0.242**	1.000		
Mazmumah	0.072	0.302**	0.236**	0.236**	1.000	
Contract	0.040**	0.192**	0.232**	0.244**	0.328**	1.000

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

The results of Pearson Correlation Analysis as illustrated in Table 3, reveals that the relationship between determinants of understanding Islamic debt concept and the accuracy of debt repayment, from an Islamic debt definition's perspective ($r=0.035$, $n=690$, $p<0.01$), Islamic debt law ($r=0.060$, $n=690$, $p<0.01$), and Islamic debt contracts ($r=0.040$, $n=690$, $p<0.01$), are positive and significant. However, the strength of this relationship is rather weak and only observed at a small level of significance. The dimensions for the variables of 'mahmudah' and 'mazmumah' indicate an insignificant relationship between them.

The above findings have resulted in two main inferences. Firstly, the direction of relationship between determinants of understanding Islamic debt concept and debt repayment accuracy for the dimensions of definition, law, and contract, is positive. These findings reveal that the higher the understanding of UiTM staffs on the definition, law, and contract of Islamic debt, the more precise would be the debt repayment period to be completed by them. Secondly, the strength of relationship between determinants of understanding Islamic debt concept and debt repayment accuracy for the dimensions of definition, law, and contract of Islamic debt, is on a small scale of significant level. The legal dimension is positioned first, followed by the definition dimension, which is observed in the last position.

In essence, the understanding of individuals and their practices or behaviours in Islam are closely related to each other. This is a result of the creation of human beings, via the espousal of both spiritual and physical elements (Jusoh, 2014). Understanding is closely related to the minds, to which it is similarly connected to the spirit, whereas practice is related to the body. According to linguistic scholars, the concept of understanding involves mind or thought processes that are related to the human soul, while human practices or deeds involve the physical actions (Rahim, 2018; Moradi et al., 2014).

Hence, the above empirical findings indicate a conversant relationship between understanding, which involves the human mind, and human practices or behaviour. In addition, the understanding of Islamic debt concept also has an influence on the percentage ratio of debt practices amongst UiTM staffs within the sampled population, particularly, in the aspects of credit card debts and personal loan debts. The higher the level of understanding Islamic debt concept, the lower the percentage of staff indebtedness, which would then subsequently lower the risk of severe indebtedness. This finding supports Jusoh (2014) who found that the level of understanding debt concept in Islam influences the habits or practices of debt amongst the targeted respondents studied.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights an emphasis on the mutual relationship between debtors and creditors in Islam by encouraging debtors to be courteous when repaying debts and also accentuates the process of rapid debt repayment. Expediting debt repayment will reduce the burden on creditors. The debtor's ability in expediting the payment of debts to creditors reflects his/her moral stature towards the latter in Islam. This is because the act of keeping promises to repay instead of impeding debts are included in one of the practices of 'mahmudah'. Besides paying debts, other 'mahmudah' practices include courtesy display when undertaking debt repayment, praying for the well-being of creditors, being indebted towards respectable parties, and be appreciative of life's necessities (Jusoh, 2014).

Moreover, findings that demonstrate the relationship between an understanding of Islamic debt concept and the accuracy of small-scale debt repayment need to be addressed effectively, by ensuring an organized and systematic process of financial management. For instance, a person needs to set goals of saving enough money to pay for a new home, buy a new car, plan a vacation with the family, settle credit card debt, and develop a retirement plan. Thereafter, each goal should be combined into short-term (less than 1 year), medium-term (1-3 years), and long-term (more than 3 years) goals so that those targets become easier and easily achievable.

Last but not least, financial education should be integrated in each and every individual. By spending wisely according to scheduled financial provisions, they would be able to avoid any potential disruptions of their financial plans. There is also a need for individuals to evade debt-oriented spending whilst shopping, by spending sparingly as opposed to a wasteful and extravagant manner. Lo! Those who are extravagant are the brethren of Satan, while Satan is a disbeliever in his Lord (Isra, 17:27).

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