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## **Theorizing the notion of well-being in Islam: An update of Ryff's theory of eudaimonic psychological well-being**

### **Abstract**

Prior studies suggest that knowledge about workers' psychological well-being is overly focused on materialism or biologically-based understanding, not taking into account the role of spirituality in one's well-being. Drawing on Ryff's (1989) psychological well-being framework and using an interdisciplinary approach, this paper offers a model of 'well-being in Islam' through theorizing this concept from an Islamic lens and contextually studying the implications of Islamic practices and spiritual facilities for employees' psychological well-being in workplaces. Drawing on qualitative data collected from twenty-two employees, our model (findings) shows that worshipping Allah, contemplative practices, and patience are key elements of one's well-being. This paper also points towards the important role of specific spiritual provisions (e.g., designated rooms for prayer, prayer time and ablution facilities) and contemplative practices (e.g., ritualistic-cyclic, creative process, generative, movement practices, stillness, activist, relational) for Ryff's six dimensions of employees' eudaimonic well-being. This study is unique as it integrates the notion of well-being in Islam into management and organization studies and offers a novel and contextual extension of Ryff's theory by integrating a spiritual notion of well-being. In the end, theoretical and practical implications are offered.

**Keywords:** Islam, Muslim majority countries, Spirituality, Well-being

## Introduction

Through work and workplaces, individuals hope and seek to achieve well-being and happiness (Abrams, 2010; Ohly & Schmitt, 2015; Sherman & Morley, 2020; Zacher & Rudolph, 2021) as key components of their life and psychological functioning (Senasu et al., 2019). However, defining good psychological functioning and state may be not only subjective but also vague (Delle Fave et al., 2018; Ryff & Singer, 2008) and many studies have solely focused on materialism or biologically-based views while ignoring the role of spirituality and religion (Delbecq, 2013; Neal, 2013). In addition, as underscored by Stephan (2018), earlier studies on well-being have mainly focused on its hedonic constituents (e.g., life satisfaction and happiness) (Belwalkar et al., 2018), rather than on its eudaimonic view (e.g., the meaning in life, self-acceptance and personal growth) (Ryff, 2018). Therefore, drawing on Ryff's (1989) eudaimonic psychological well-being framework, this study seeks to answer the following three research questions (RQs): (1) how Islam defines and views well-being, (2) what Islamic practices and spiritual facilities may affect employees' well-being in workplaces, and (3) what is the implication of Islamic practices and spiritual facilities for Ryff's (1989) eudaimonic psychological well-being model.

Although Ryff's model was proposed three decades ago, it is still widely used by researchers (e.g., Friedman et al., 2019; Hao & Xiao, 2021; Koburtay & Alzoubi, 2021; Koburtay & Syed, 2021) and has "widespread scientific impact" (Ryff, 2018, p. 242), simply because it relates to positive functioning that can be considered particularly relevant in organizational settings. In addition, this framework has been updated/validated by Ryff (2018) and Friedman *et al.* (2019). However, despite its value and relevance, Ryff's theory of well-being (including both the hedonic and the eudaimonic constituents) neglects the role of spirituality/religiosity as important factors for one's well-being and thus we seek to address this gap.

In this study, we define spirituality and religiosity from an Islamic lens because the conceptual foundation of psychological well-being (PWB) is commonly grounded in Western contexts and theorizations (e.g., Delle Fave, 2018; Duckitt, 1992; Hershcovis & Barling, 2010; Joshanloo & Niknam, 2019; Kuykendall et al., 2020; Napier et al., 2020; Ohly & Latour, 2014; Ryff, 1989; Sosik et al., 2017; Viot & Benraiss-Noailles, 2019) and barring a few notable exceptions (e.g., Hall & Breland-Noble, 2011; Joshanloo & Niknam, 2019; Skinner, 2010), there is a dearth of scholarship on how Islam views and defines well-being and what specific religious practices may matter for workers' well-being (Joshanloo, 2011). In addition, this topic remains relevant in Muslim majority countries (MMCs) in the Middle East (Koburtay & Syed, 2021), and prior studies (e.g., Hammer & Cragun, 2019; Hashemi et al., 2020; Milliman et al., 2017; Park et al., 2018) have called for additional research to develop a contextual understanding of PWB (e.g., Zacher & Rudolph, 2021).

To answer the research questions, and to offer in-depth thematic findings, first, we reviewed the main Islamic texts, i.e., the Quran and the Sunnah/Hadith, to highlight specific Islamic guidelines towards well-being (question 1) and then, we analyzed qualitative data to highlight what are the Islamic practices and spiritual facilities that matter for employees' well-being (question 2) and how and why are these Islamic practices and spiritual facilities important for Ryff's (1989) eudaimonic psychological well-being framework (questions 3).

The importance and novelty of this paper lies in presenting a novel model of well-being in Islam through (1) presenting a comprehensive, fresh and contextual understanding of the Islamic view of well-being, (2) highlighting specific implementations and practices of the Islamic view of PWB, and (3) highlighting the contextual extension of Ryff's framework by extending its model to Islamic notion and practices of well-being. In practice, this paper suggests specific contextual remedies that may reform specific adverse practices through

offering heuristic readings of Islamic texts towards well-being and therefore, it is hoped that this paper will stimulate more informed research among psychologists in the Middle East.

### ***Psychological well-being and spirituality***

Well-being and happiness are important dispositions of people's lives (Senasu et al., 2019). Although researchers have sought to determine key indicators of well-being and happiness, the results are vague and inconsistent (Senasu et al., 2019). In this paper, towards presenting a theoretical and contextual understanding of how Islamic notion of well-being is important for people psychological well-being (PWB), we follow Ryff's (1989) theory of PWB. In Ryff's (1989) model, 'well-being' can be approached based on two views: the hedonic and the eudaimonic approaches (Ryan & Deci, 2001). According to the hedonic approach, well-being is defined as the ability to achieve pleasure and avoid pain (LeFebvre & Huta, 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Turban & Yan, 2016), whereas the eudaimonic view suggests that people appear to be psychologically well when developing their potential (Turban & Yan, 2016) even during times of frustrations and difficulties. As noted by Stephan (2018), prior studies on the interplay between religiosity/spirituality and well-being have focused mainly on its hedonic components including life satisfaction and happiness (e.g., Belwalkar et al., 2018), rather than on its eudaimonic dimensions (Ryff, 2018). Given that the eudaimonic view is more critical to assess the implications of religiosity and spirituality for one's well-being over time, our approach here moves beyond the hedonic view, and thus allows us to underscore the various dimensions of eudaimonic well-being through which religious/spiritual people attain greater well-being. Ryff's (1989) eudaimonic view includes six dimensions that relate to the PWB of an individual (i.e., self-acceptance, personal growth, a feeling of purpose and meaning in life, autonomy, positive relationships with others and environmental mastery).

Self-acceptance refers to the way in which a person assesses their present life and past experiences and events in a positive way. The second dimension, personal growth, reveals the

extent to which a person has a continuity of development and growth. The purpose in life demonstrates how a person believes that their life has a meaning and a clear sense of direction. The fourth dimension, autonomy, implies the ability to evaluate oneself through personal standards and shows levels of independence and self-determination. The positive relationships dimension suggests the goodness and closeness of interpersonal relationships between people. Finally, environmental mastery signifies the extent to which a person can manage their daily lives effectively (Disabato et al., 2016; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2008). In this study, we seek to examine how and why are the Islamic practices and spiritual facilities important for Ryff's (1989) six dimensions of eudaimonic psychological well-being (RQ3).

### ***The notion of well-being in Islam***

Although the relationship between different forms of faith or belief systems and the generic notions of well-being has received some attention (Tiliouine et al., 2009), Islamic teachings and spirituality remain relatively ignored in terms of their potential effects on well-being (Abdul-Rahman, 2017; Joshanloo, 2013). In particular, spiritual implications of an Islamic view of well-being are ignored. In addressing the first research question in this paper – i.e., how Islam defines and views well-being, this section reviews the Islamic interpretations and notion of well-being drawing on Joshanloo and Weijers's (2019) definition of well-being, i.e., the good life for the one living it, as reflected in the Quran. This section also explains how Islam directs people to live to achieve well-being.

The mainstream or Western conceptions of well-being are generally more inclined towards subjective happiness neglecting the implications of spiritualities, worship and religious rituals for well-being (Joshanloo, 2013; Joshanloo & Weijers, 2019). In contrast, the core view of well-being in Islam suggests that spirituality and worship are key to people's well-being and flourishing since the ultimate well-being can be achieved through the absolute submission to the will of Allah in all aspects of life.

For Muslims, this view of well-being is intertwined with submission to Allah's absolute sovereignty (Joshnloo, 2017), and has a major emphasis on spiritual and religious fulfilment. Emmons (2000) suggests that spirituality enables people to solve problems and attain goals in their everyday lives. He uses the notion of spiritual intelligence to imply people's ability to manage their lives and discover meaning and significance.

Several Muslim scholars have highlighted the spiritual dimension of well-being and flourishing (Abdul-Rahman, 2017). A common theme evident in the literature is that worshipping Allah is a humans' ultimate function and its fulfilment leads to and supports one's well-being. The Quran states this in the following verse: "*And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind*" (Quran, Taha, 20:124).

In addition to the implications of worshipping Allah for one's well-being, the Quran also highlights specific practices that help people to manage their lives while maintaining happiness and well-being. One approach is through encouraging people to ponder on the 'ayaat' (signs) of Allah in the universe. For example, the following verse induces people to contemplate: "*We will soon show them our signs in the Universe and in their own souls, until it will become quite clear to them that it is the truth*" (Quran, Fusselat, 41:53). According to Abdul-Rahman (2017), these contemplations stimulate people's spiritual intelligence through abstracting positive feelings and meanings and boosting positive states including perseverance, optimism, gratitude and inspiration.

According to Munsoor and Sa'ari (2017), the notion of a 'tree of contemplative practices' may be used in an Islamic context to refer to key practices derived from the Quran and the Hadith. They note that there are some obligatory and voluntary practices aimed at cultivating the mind-body and the soul. These practices include: stillness (quieting the mind and body through repentance, supplication, centering, reflection, thinking about death and

silent ritual prayer); generative (forge a platform for evoking common thoughts and feelings through acts of devotion and prayers); creative process (focuses on the beauty of God's creation through geometry and floral forms inspired by nature); relational (relationship between a sheikh or spiritual teacher and a seeker and this takes the forms of dialogue, mentoring and spiritual guidance); activist (service to others and protests for justice); ritualistic-cyclic practices (the five pillars of Islam); and movement practices (presence of mind in prayers and daily living).

Another approach to well-being in Islam's teachings is 'sabr' (patience) when facing difficulties, frustration or adversity. Prior studies in the field of positive psychology show that practicing patience during difficult events is linked with lower incidence of mental illness. For example, Schnitker (2012) examined the relationship between patience and well-being and found a positive link between them. Schnitker (2012) argues that "patience has long been upheld as a character strength and desirable personality trait that promotes human flourishing and well-being" (p. 263). In addition, Schnitker and Emmons (2007) sought to understand the psychological and religious underpinnings of patience. They note that patience is significantly linked with spiritual transcendence and with religious behaviors.

From an Islamic lens, the following verses emphasize the importance of patience: *And be patient, for indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good* (Quran, Hud, 11:115). *And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient* (Quran, Al-baqara, 2:155). Considering the implications of patience for well-being in Islam, patience leads to peace and peaceful relationships between people (El-Aswad, 2014) as this concept in Islam is metaphorically used and described as a "key to a happy ending or relief" (aş-şabr muftāḥ al-faraj).

In addressing our first research question – i.e., how Islam defines and views well-being, and considering the Islamic teachings and prior literature, we agree that “only through submission to the Will of God and by obedience to His law can one achieve true peace and enjoy lasting purity” (Husain, 1998, p. 282). In operationalizing the definition of well-being in Islam, the following proposition has been developed:

**Proposition 1:** Worshipping Allah, contemplation and patience are key elements of one’s well-being in Islam.

### ***Organizational practices in the Middle East***

The integration of well-being in organizations in MMCs in the Middle East (e.g., Jordan, Lebanon, UAE, Qatar) is generally drawn on secular or Western approaches to well-being. In organizational policies and practices in MMCs, an explicit reference to Islamic view of well-being (e.g., contemplation, patience, and worship) is generally absent (e.g., Abdul-Rahman, 2017; Joshanloo, 2017; Schnitker, 2012). The majority of prior studies are concerned with job engagement (Bakker et al., 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2008; Weigelt et al., 2021), organizational commitment (Gupta, 2017) and job satisfaction (Wang et al., 2020) as indicators of subjective well-being (SWB) in organization, while not paying an explicit attention to Islamic guidelines for well-being and happiness. For example, Bakker and Oerlemans (2011) argue that “positive indicators of SWB include work engagement, happiness at work, and job satisfaction, [while the] negative indicators include workaholism and burnout” (p. 3).

Despite the neglect of Islamic views and guidelines for well-being in workplaces, there are a few studies that have been undertaken in this regard. For example, Koburtay and Alzoubi (2021) suggest that employers are encouraged to consider employees’ well-being by offering prayer rooms and ablution facilities for employees because these spiritual facilities are key to employees’ well-being inside workplaces. Similarly, Stephenson (2014) presented a framework for Islamic hotels which highlights specific spiritual facilities and Islamic

obligations. He highlights several Islamic principles as integral parts of organizations including, female and male prayer rooms equipped with the Quran and prayer mats; built-in ablution (wudhu) facilities; philanthropic donations; dress code for female staff; prayer time provision for Muslim employees; restricted working hours for Muslim staff during Ramadan; staff adherence to moral codes of conduct; halal food with no pork or alcohol; and transactions and investments in accordance to principles of Islamic banking, accounting and finance.

In contrast to the Western contexts (e.g., Stokes et al., 2016), very few studies have been conducted in Arab/Muslim countries to determine how organizations deploy an Islamic notion of well-being. In addition, findings from Western cultures cannot be uncritically transported to Muslim cultures. Hence, and because Islamic view of well-being and its spiritual practices and beliefs can be analysed for ‘therapeutic benefit’ (Tiliouine et al., 2009), this paper seeks to fill this gap by offering a novel and heuristic framework for businesses through exploring what are specific Islamic practices for well-being (RQ2) and what are the implications of Islamic practices and spiritual facilities for Ryff’s (1989) six dimensions of eudaimonic psychological well-being (RQ3). To answer these two research questions, and considering the literature, the following conceptual model (Figure 1) was developed to subsequently guide the data collection process.

**Insert Figure 1 here**

## **Method**

We followed a qualitative-inductive research design to explore insights, feelings and the unique experiences of participants (Koburtay, Refai & Haloub, 2020; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This research design allows thematic conclusions to be concluded from the collected transcripts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This research approach was deemed helpful to answer the two questions included in Figure 1 and to generate a profound understanding of the topic under

study. As a result of our data analysis, Figure 1 was extended and a novel framework emerged (Figure 2).

### ***Recruitment, sample and ethics***

Participants were recruited using purposive sampling protocol due to the sensitive and unique nature of this research. This ensured that the participants are knowledgeable and experienced in the area under study. The criteria for purposively recruiting participants included their religious affiliation (i.e., Islam) and their awareness of the focal constructs included in this study (e.g., Islamic practices, pillars of Islam, and well-being in Islam).

In total, 22 participants participated in this study. They worked in a wide range of sectors, such as Banking, Education, Tourism and Manufacturing. The sample included 14 men and 8 women. The majority were married ( $n = 18$ ), completed higher education ( $n = 15$ ) and all were Muslims. In line with our ethical commitment, some data were anonymised to avoid exposing the participants' identities. In view of rich and in-depth conversations, the number of participants was deemed sufficient because the data was saturated and the ability to generate new information/themes was exhausted, and further coding was no longer feasible (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Due to some restrictions because of COVID-19, and also because of the sensitivity of the topic, the participants took part in this study through answering open-ended questions using a paper-based or online survey, which provided them with complete privacy and anonymity. One author arranged data collection via formal emails and follow-up phone calls with the participants.

Ethical research was ensured as follows. First, all questions were carefully designed to minimize the probability of causing unnecessary anxiety or discomfort to participants. Second, the participant's voluntary consent to participate in this study was clearly sought in the cover letter after explaining the research objectives and informing them that they were free to

withdraw or stop their participation at any stage should they wish to do so. Also, the participants' identity was anonymized in the study. In relation to the data accessibility<sup>1</sup>, and taking into consideration the nature of this study's topic, the data will be available upon request.

### *Open-ended questions and guidance*

All questions were anchored based on our answer to the first research question (see Figure 1) and drawing on Ryff's (1989) six eudaimonic factors of well-being. Part 1 of the survey comprised demographical questions. Parts 2, 3 and 4 focused on the second and third research questions.

To address RQ2 (i.e., what Islamic practices and spiritual facilities may affect employees' well-being in workplaces), the following questions were included in the survey: (1) what kind of Islamic religious practices and spiritual facilities are needed by you and important for your well-being and happiness at work? Please list and explain; and (2) what kind of Islamic religious practices and spiritual facilities are offered by your organization to enhance employee well-being? Please list and explain. To generate further contextual insights and relevant data, our survey included an additional question, drawing on a 5-point Likert scale, as follows: "to what extent does your organization offer and support the following facilities and opportunities: (1) worship (including, prayer rooms and ablution facilities; reduced working hours in Ramadan; copies of the Quran; donation/charity/Zakat), (2) patience (through workshops and trainings; well-being centre; gym; meditation; education) and (3) contemplative practices". Regarding this third component (i.e., contemplative practices), the following question was included – i.e., to what extent are the following contemplative practices (stillness, generative, creative process, relational, activist, ritualistic cyclic and movement practice) important and needed in your life (Munsoor & Sa'ari, 2017). In our paper-based survey, detailed explanation

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<sup>1</sup> The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

and definitions were offered for these contemplative practices. This information was collected for all participants.

In relation to RQ3 (i.e., what is the implication of Islamic practices and spiritual facilities for Ryff's eudaimonic psychological well-being model), the following question was included: "according to your understanding of Islamic view of well-being (e.g., worship, patience, contemplation), to what extent are such Islamic practices and views of well-being important for Ryff's (1989) six eudaimonic dimensions of well-being". To facilitate the participants, the six dimensions were incorporated in the paper-based survey.

### ***Data analysis and findings***

This paper followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis since this procedure is advocated in several qualitative studies (e.g., Edwards & Few-Demo, 2016; Spates et al., 2019). First, we started with reading all transcripts, and notes were made to generate an overall sense of the participants' answers. Second, we organized all textual data/answers against the focal constructs included in this study. Third, we classified the data into units of meanings by coding all responses. This coding process involved a back-and-forth evaluation and interpretation of the transcripts, codes and categories, as this may permit new themes/codes to emerge and thus lead to a change in the preliminary analysis. In a later stage, the researchers started the process of grouping all similar codes and meanings together to discern key themes. In a subsequent stage, we evaluated the major themes to highlight similarities or differences across all transcripts. This process was refined through inter-rater reliability (IRR) checks to ensure credibility of data and thus reach more logical thematic conclusions. This was done by reviewing all data for significant statements and themes to help maintain objectivity and limit the inherent subjectivity of the data analysis.

As a result of our data analysis, the findings (i.e., propositions) were concluded in relation to the research questions. As shown below, two main thematic

conclusions/propositions were concluded as answers to RQ2 and RQ3. Accordingly, Figure 1 was extended and a novel framework emerged (see Figure 2).

***Proposition 2(a): At workplaces, designated rooms for prayer, prayer time provision and ablution facilities are key to workers' well-being***

According to the participants' answers, the most repeated codes in the responses to the question "what kind of Islamic religious practices and spiritual facilities are needed by you and important for your well-being and happiness at work" are 'praying', 'pray', 'place to pray', 'time to pray' and 'mosque'. For example, a retired 48-year-old man (P10) answered the question by saying that the "ability to pray on time without interruptions" is important for my well-being and happiness. This view was supported by a 26-year-old woman (P9) who claimed that "praying makes me feel safe".

In support of this view, P4 (40-year-old man, working in a shipping company), P5 (37-year-old man, faculty member), P6 (50-year-old man, Assistant Professor) and P7 (55-year-old man) reiterated the same idea by giving direct and short answers as follows: "pray", "a designated place to pray", "mosque", and "praying" respectively. Similarly, many other participants stressed on the same idea by saying that prayer and prayer time provision are needed and important for their well-being in workplaces (e.g., P11, P13, P14, P15, P16). They gave the following answers respectively: 'prayers room', 'time to pray', 'prayers room', 'praying', and 'a room for prayer so as to be quiet'. A 47-year-old general manager (P18 - Male) supported the same idea by saying "a proper place for 'Wudu' and a clean/quiet space for pray" are important for well-being. A 28-year-old female teacher (P21) shared the same notion by saying:

*“As a teacher for young children, I should be a good example for them by praying, fasting, paying the tithe, worshipping, patience, contemplation, helping the needy and the weak, and exhibiting cooperation and honesty, all of these practices are observed by students and then these are reflected in their practices in the future”.*

A 59-year-old director of quality assurance and planning (P22 - male) clearly linked well-being, comfort and positive energy at workplaces with performing prayer and prayer spaces or rooms.

*Sometimes during work, we need to perform the prayer on time, and according to Islamic teachings, it is preferable to pray in the mosque and with a group. And therefore, it is preferable to have a mosque in the organization or close to it (or praying room) and to allow the employee to pray in it, and the employee can be given a quarter-hour break in which to perform the prayer, and there is no objection to deducting it from working hours so that it covers working hours without shortage. This will make the employee feel comfortable, give him or her positive energy to complete the work actively, and increase the level of satisfaction.*

Further, a 45-year-old branch manager (P17 - male) gave an in-depth answer by suggesting relevant Islamic practices for well-being at workplaces:

*“Specific place to pray; the Athan [i.e., Islamic call to prayer; also spelt as Azan] can be heard within acceptable and comfortable sound volume limits; toilets suitable for wudu' [i.e., ablution] and purity or 'tahara'; allowed suitable break time for prayer; special consideration regarding work time and work environment conditions during*

*Ramadan fasting (e.g., avoid working under the direct sunlight); support with Hajj [Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca]; break time for those who plan to do Hajj (at least once during the whole service period); apply religious holidays (Eid Al-fitr and Aladha); consider religion ....and [respect] all Muslims and non-Muslims with clear regulations against any discrimination”.*

Interestingly, a female CEO at one of the companies (P19) also suggested many Islam practices as important factors for well-being at workplaces as follows:

*A policy that permits the display of religious objects in the office and in employees’ dress – e.g., wearing of the hijab, Quran on the desk; allowance of prayer/meditation time during working hours, events and meetings; providing a place for prayer; ablution (Wudu), dress, and facing [Macca direction] among others; time off and leave policy for religious celebrations, Eid Al-adha, Eid Al-fitr, pilgrimage among others; Friday prayer in the mosque (...); welcoming religious diversity in employment and acceptance of religious expression and symbols e; accommodations to prayer and fasting obligations; culture of respecting and allowing fasting during Ramadan; food and drink requirements (Halal food and drink) and respecting individual choice; religious and spiritual events, retreats like Iftar in Ramadan for the team; no discriminatory policies for religious beliefs; policies that clarify both permissible and non-permissible activities and match work duties to employee’s religious beliefs; mental health counselling programs; religion-based wellness and employee assistance programs; allowance of charity and alms giving activities between employees to those in need”.*

In addition to these views, a few participants indicated some other spiritual facilities/practices as important factors for workers' well-being. For example, a 26-year-old woman (P3) said that "20 minutes' spiritual break is enough" to enhance workers' well-being. Also, a 50-year-old man (P6 - Assistant Professor) suggested that "regular religious lectures" are important for one's well-being. A 37-year-old female (P8 - Assistant Professor) highlighted that "honesty, integrity, cooperation and accountability", as religious values, are important for workers' well-being.

To gain further contextual understanding about participants' workplaces, the following question was included in the survey – i.e., what kind of Islamic religious practices and spiritual facilities are offered by your organization to enhance employees' well-being. Interestingly, most of the participants said that prayer rooms and facilities are available in their workplaces, as important facilities for their well-being. For example, P8 said: "prayer rooms, I am sure there are other points to mention but honestly nothing is in my mind right now". Similarly, P10 explained that his organization offers "prayer time flexibility and flexible time in Ramadan". In support of this, many other participants answered this question by saying that their organizations offer "prayer rooms/areas/spaces" or "mosques". P22 said that "there is a Masjed [mosque], and in each college, there is a praying room for men and another one for women".

Moreover, another question, drawing on a 5-point scale, was included to understand the extent to which workplaces in Jordan offer the following spiritual/religious facilities: (a) prayer rooms and ablutions facilities, (b) reduced working hours in Ramadan, (c) copies of the Quran, (d) donations/charity/Zakat, (e) workshops/trainings, and (f) well-being centre/gym/meditation. Our findings indicated that most organizations offer flexible working hours during Ramadan, and prayer rooms and ablution facilities. In relation to the availability of Quran, donations/charity and workshops/trainings, our findings show that organizations

rarely offer them. Moving to well-being centre/gym/meditation, barring a few exceptions, most of the participants claimed that these facilities have been never offered to them.

Thus, proposition 2(a) gives an answer to RQ2 by suggesting that the provision of time, designated room and ablution facilities for prayer are key to workers' well-being. The following proposition 2(b) complements this answer to RQ2 by proposing specific contemplative practices as important factors for enhancing employees' well-being.

***Proposition 2(b): Contemplative practices are important for workers' well-being in the following order (ritualistic-cyclic, creative process, generative, movement practices, stillness, activist, relational)***

To support our answer to RQ2, proposition 2(b) was separately concluded as a result of analysing all responses received for the following question: to what extent are the following contemplative practices (stillness, generative, creative process, relational, activist, ritualistic cyclic and movement practice) important and needed in your life (Munsoor & Sa'ari, 2017). This question was anchored based on a 5-point scale (ranging from never to always).

Interestingly, drawing on an initial calculation through counting how many participants answered this question as 'always', the findings show different levels of importance for these contemplative practices for people's well-being. As shared by the participants, ritualistic cyclic (i.e., encourage and practice the five pillars of Islam) is considered as the most important contemplative practice for their well-being and happiness.

At a second level, the participants suggested that generative (i.e., evoking common thoughts and feelings through acts of devotion and prayers), creative process (i.e., focuses on the beauty of God's creation through geometry and floral forms inspired by nature) and movement practices (i.e., presence of mind in prayers and daily living) are important and needed for their well-being.

At a third level, activist (i.e., service to others and protests for justice) and stillness (i.e., quieting the mind and body through repentance, supplication, centering, reflection, thinking about death and silent ritual prayer), were considered as relevant for well-being. However, only one participant suggested that relational (i.e., having a relationship with a sheikh or spiritual teacher in the forms of dialogue, mentoring and spiritual guidance) is always important or needed for their well-being.

***Proposition 3: Worshipping Allah, contemplative practices and patience are strongly linked with Ryff's six dimensions of psychological well-being***

As explained above, to answer our RQ3 (i.e., what is the implication of Islamic practices and spiritual facilities for Ryff's eudaimonic psychological well-being model), the following question was included for participants - i.e., "according to your understanding of Islamic view of well-being (e.g., worship, patience, contemplation), to what extent are such Islamic practices and views of well-being important for Ryff's (1989) six eudaimonic dimensions of well-being".

Based on our data analysis, proposition 3 was concluded implying that Islamic view of well-being (including worship, contemplation, patience) is linked with boosting and flourishing Ryff's six dimensions of people's well-being. Specifically, the majority of participants shared a common answer by saying that Islamic practices and view of well-being are significantly important for their self-acceptance, personal growth, feeling of purpose, autonomy, close relationships with others and environmental mastery. For example, drawing on a 5-point scale ranging from 'most important' to 'least important', over than 93% of the answers suggested that Islamic practices and view of well-being are extremely important for the six dimensions of well-being.

Finally, a closing question was intended to unravel the participants' actual experiences and determine whether their organizations offer general well-being programs. The participants shared a common note that their organizations offer health insurance, professional training and education, nursery and flextime work arrangements.

Based on these results, the following conceptual framework emerged (Figure 2).

**Insert Figure 2 here**

## **Discussion**

Given that “workplace spirituality is a young area of inquiry with potentially strong relevance to the well-being of individuals, organizations, and societies” (Sheep, 2006, p. 357) and because religion may “help people cope with stressful life events” (Krause, 2019, p. 2; Kolodinsky et al., 2008), this paper sought to answer the following three question: (1) how does Islam define and view well-being, (2) what Islamic practices and spiritual facilities may affect employees' well-being in workplaces, and (3) what is the implication of Islamic practices and spiritual facilities for Ryff's (1989) eudaimonic psychological well-being model. The study focused on spirituality and well-being in Islam because it is the official religion in Jordan where religious rituals and ideology are diffused in the legislative framework and societal norms (Koburtay & Syed, 2021).

Guided by our research questions, insights from our survey yield key propositions. In support of proposition 1, the existing literature suggests that Islam encourages three key elements for one's well-being which are worshipping Allah (Joshani, 2013; Joshani & Weijers, 2019), contemplation (Abdul-Rahman, 2017; Munsoor & Sa'ari, 2017) and patience (Schnitker, 2012). Accordingly, we argue that worshipping Allah (through prayer, fasting, reading Quran and giving charities), contemplation (including ritualistic-cyclic, creative

process, generative, movement practices, stillness, activist, relational) and patience (being calm during difficulties, frustration or adversity) are key elements for one's well-being in Islam.

In support of propositions 2(a) and 2(b), this paper highlights specific spiritual practices to enhance workers' well-being in workplaces. The study suggests that at workplaces, designated rooms for prayer, and provision of prayer time and ablution facilities (proposition 2a) are key to workers' well-being. This finding lends support to Koburtay and Alzoubi's (2021) study which shows that inside prayer rooms/places, employees spend more time together discussing personal issues or at least things not directly related to their work, which in turn supports their well-being and happiness. Puchalska-Wasyl and Zarzycka's (2020) study lends further support to our finding, which shows that prayer is positively associated with people's well-being. In addition, we conclude specific contemplative practices as important factors for workers' well-being (proposition 2b). These contemplative practices are ritualistic-cyclic, creative process, generative, movement practices, stillness, activist, relational.

In relation to proposition 3, our findings show that the Islamic view of well-being (including worshipping Allah, contemplation and patience) is strongly linked with Ryff's six dimensions of psychological well-being which are self-acceptance, personal growth, a feeling of purpose and meaning in life, autonomy, positive relationships with others and environmental mastery. This finding is viewed in light of Hammer and Cragun (2019) who suggest that daily spiritual experiences are linked with indicators of well-being including meaning in life as well as physical and mental health. Proposition 3 also lends support to Chowdhury's (2018) study which pointed towards the important role of religiosity for well-being in terms of "self-identity, self-esteem and meaning and satisfaction in life" (p. 156). In addition, Hashemi et al.'s (2020) article supports our proposition by indicating that "engagement in religious activities, and belief in [Allah] provide individuals with a sense of significance, positive emotions, self-esteem, positive relations, sense of meaning, and purpose in life" (p. 8).

Thus, to conclude, this paper offers a preliminary support to the argument that workplaces in Jordan and other MMCs should offer spiritual care for employees (e.g., prayer rooms, prayer time provision and ablution facilities) as important predictors for their well-being and happiness.

### **Implications for practice**

Our findings suggest that managers and policymakers may need to be more aware of and sensitive toward the possible consequences of spiritual practices for employees' psychological well-being. Owing to Islamic emphasis on worshipping Allah (through prayer, fasting, reading the Quran and giving charity), contemplation (including ritualistic-cyclic, creative process, generative, movement practices, stillness, activist, relational) and patience (being calm during difficulties, frustration or adversity) and its implications for one's well-being, managers may recognize their employees' concerns and devise actionable strategies and resources to cope with their spiritual needs. For example, managers may consult their employees about their spiritual needs and accordingly provide suitable facilities in their workplace. This can be done, for example, by including specific spiritual development workshops as part of the HR training agenda and evaluating how these workshops may enhance employees' well-being and try to track these workshops overtime for optimal results. Specifically, HR managers may include spiritual facilities as a central part of their quality checklist. Further, this paper points towards several relevant implications for HR directors and policy makers (see Marescaux et al., 2019). For example, employers may consider workers' well-being and happiness by having prayer time provision and opening prayer spaces and ablution facilities. A further "spiritual-friendly" suggestion to improve workers' well-being is through reformatting the working hours during Ramadan. There may be a constant monitoring approaches and clear policies to track the trajectory of the HR practices in this regard.

### **Implications for theory: an extension of Ryff's theory of well-being**

From a theoretical viewpoint, the significance of the present study can be drawn from three points: (1) presenting a comprehensive, contextual, and fresh understanding of the Islamic view of well-being, (2) highlighting specific implementations and practices of the Islamic view of PWB, and (3) highlighting the contextual extension of Ryff's framework by extending its model to Islamic notion and practices of well-being. This section discusses this third point in details.

Our study contributes to Ryff's (1989) theory in three important ways. First, based on the novel theorizations of Islamic view of well-being, we highlight how spiritual and Islamic practices may be linked with workers' six dimensions of Ryff's view of well-being. Our study thereby constitutes specific contributions to Ryff's conceptual repertoire with typologies of spirituality and well-being in Islam.

Second, we extend Ryff's theory of PWB by investigating three spiritual/religious practices – i.e., worshipping, contemplation, patience - that may explain a better psychological functioning and status, mainly from the eudaimonic view. We further extend Ryff's psychological theory by suggesting that these elements of Islamic practices better explain well-being than focusing solely on materialism or biologically-based views (i.e., the hedonic view of well-being), and consider its spiritual dimensions. This view lends further support to Kasser and Ahuvia's (2002) study.

Finally, theorizing on Islamic view of well-being has so far focused on a narrow conception linked with legal and political doctrines while ignoring its spiritual dimensions and implications. By examining spirituality and Islamic practices as predictors and well-being as an outcome, we advance theorizing on the broader literature on well-being in the context of work and workplaces.

To conclude, this study has pushed the existing theory development of religion and psychology through offering a new model of well-being in Islam and further examining its implications for workers' psychological well-being in workplaces. To our knowledge, this study is the first that explores the notion of well-being in Islam and how this concept is practiced in organizations and therefore, we agree that “the juxtaposition of management with insights from spirituality and religion holds much promise” (Delbecq, 2013, p. 695).

### **Limitations and future avenues**

We acknowledge a few limitations of our study along with suggestions for future research. First, concepts such as well-being and spirituality are specific to social and cultural context and therefore may be viewed differently. Taking into consideration this paper's objectives, we define them from an Islamic lens, and we encourage future work to study these concepts from different theological underpinnings to understand how cultural traditions help in contextualising these constructs. The sample size coupled with the exclusive focus on specific demographics (i.e., gender, marital status, education) may raise concerns about the generalization of findings to the wider population. Therefore, future researchers may wish to replicate this study with large samples including participants with diverse demographics and social contexts to enhance the validity of the theory and findings. Specifically, because the majority of the participants in this study were male, married and had completed higher education, future studies may target unmarried individuals (male and female) or individuals who did not complete higher education as they may respond differently to our paper-based survey questions. This, in return, will enrich the existing debates regarding the topic under study. One further limitation is that our paper-based survey included a few closed questions which restricted the participants to pre-defined and specific answers. To strengthen the validity and accuracy of our findings, in-depth interviews may be conducted to examine why and how

religious/spiritual practices affect Ryff's six dimensions of eudaimonic psychological well-being.

Considering our findings - i.e., understanding workplace spirituality and well-being in Islam and exploring how they are relevant to workplaces, we advise further studies to examine the theoretical model introduced here using different research designs and study sites. From a theoretical lens, and towards stimulating the existing theory development and pushing a fresh conceptual thinking in the context of workplace psychology and well-being, we induce future work to use this study drawing on a design that may permit for a comparison between the eudaimonic and hedonic views of well-being. One final avenue for future enquiry is to statistically examine the relationships between the emergent contemplative practices and employees' well-being.

## **Conclusion**

“Workplace spirituality, as a field of inquiry, is new but important” (Pawar, 2014, p. 439). This study contributes to the literatures on psychological well-being, spirituality and religion by pointing towards the vital role of spiritual practices for workers' well-being. In this study, we present a model of well-being in Islam through (1) theorizing the notion of well-being from an Islamic lens, (2) determining specific implementations of the Islamic view of PWB, and (3) extending Ryff's framework by widening its model to Islamic notion and practices of well-being. Our model shows that worshipping Allah, contemplation, and patience are key elements for one's well-being in Islam. The model also highlights specific spiritual and contemplative practices to enhance workers' well-being in workplaces. In support of Ryff's theory of well-being, these spiritual and contemplative practices were associated with the six dimensions of workers' eudaimonic view of psychological well-being.

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Figure 1: Conceptual model: well-being in Islam

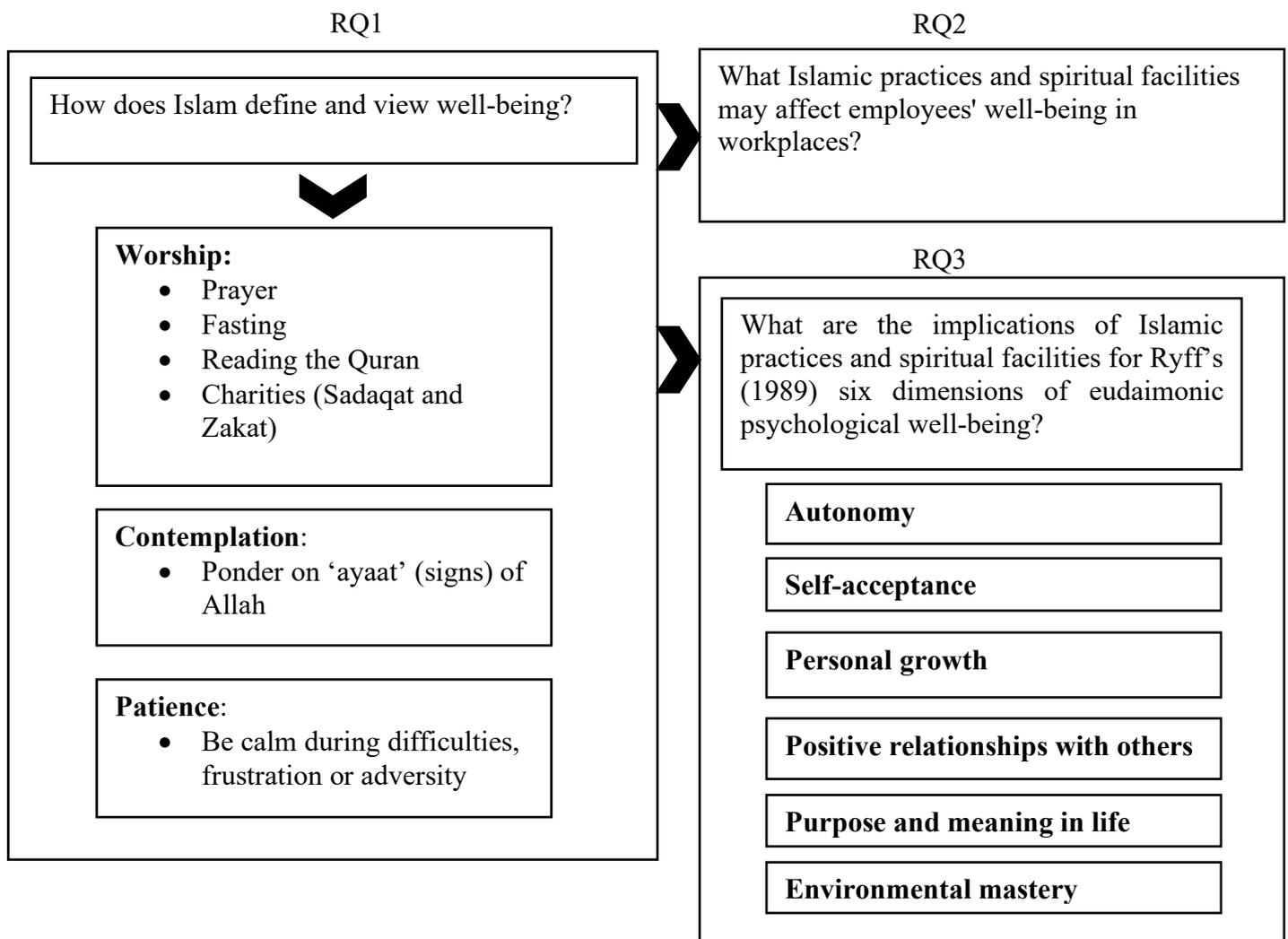


Figure 2: A novel model of well-being in Islam: an extended framework

