Qur'anic Character Model in Enhancing the Quality of Job Satisfaction among the Civil Servants

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ABSTRACT

The prevailing discourse on public sector efficacy often fixates on structural reforms or technological interventions, yet it consistently overlooks a more fundamental, internal dynamic: the character of the civil servant. Despite widespread recognition of declining job satisfaction across government agencies, a sustained, rigorous inquiry into the role of an ethically grounded character model, particularly one derived from the Qur'an, remains curiously underdeveloped. This study argues that the current emphasis on extrinsic motivators and superficial competence omits a profound source of intrinsic fulfillment and ethical resilience. We contend that a Qur'anic character model, with its emphasis on attributes like integrity, accountability, justice, and an ethos of service, offers a potent, albeit underutilised, framework for cultivating not just ethical conduct, but also deep-seated job satisfaction among public servants. The absence of such a holistic character integration leaves civil servants vulnerable to cynicism and disengagement, suggesting that genuine, lasting improvements in public service quality may well hinge on a radical re-evaluation of what constitutes 'good' public service beyond mere procedural adherence.

Keywords: Qur'anic Ethics, Civil Service, Job Satisfaction, Spiritual Intelligence, Public Administration

INTRODUCTION

The machinery of public administration, ostensibly designed for societal betterment, frequently grinds under the weight of disaffection and inefficiency. Across nations, civil servants report alarmingly low levels of job satisfaction, a malaise that extends far beyond mere grumbling to impact service delivery and public trust itself (Bednarczuk, 2019; Moore, 2017). This persistent dissatisfaction is a paradox: individuals ostensibly drawn to public service by a desire to contribute find themselves disillusioned, often despite ostensibly robust policy frameworks and increasing calls for "good governance." What, then, is missing from this equation? It seems we have become too comfortable with a managerial paradigm that prioritises metrics and processes over the very human core of public service.

Many attempts to revitalise the public sector focus on structural overhauls, digital transformations, or incentive schemes, yet these often prove fleeting or superficial. They fail to address the deeper, often unarticulated, yearning for meaning and purpose in work. Surprisingly, despite a growing body of research acknowledging the impact of spirituality and religiosity on job satisfaction in the public sector, the specific, rich framework offered by the Qur'an for character development remains largely relegated to the periphery of mainstream public administration scholarship (Bednarczuk, 2019; Chandio et al., 2019). This is not merely an academic oversight; it represents a missed opportunity to tap into a profound wellspring of ethical guidance and intrinsic motivation.

The prevailing gap is thus a critical failure to integrate an explicit, comprehensive character model into the operational and cultural fabric of civil service. While general calls for "integrity" and "ethics" are ubiquitous, they often lack a substantive, actionable philosophical underpinning. The Qur'anic character model, with its

clear directives on responsibility (amanah), justice (adl), trustworthiness (siddiq), and compassion (rahmah), offers precisely such a foundation. Ignoring this comprehensive framework, particularly in Muslim-majority contexts or among Muslim civil servants globally, seems not only naive but actively detrimental. It leaves a vacuum where personal values and professional duties ought to converge, leading to a fragmented sense of purpose and, inevitably, diminished job satisfaction. This study, therefore, aims to critically examine how a Qur'anic character model might not merely enhance ethical conduct but fundamentally reshape and elevate the quality of job satisfaction among civil servants (Wan Mokhtar et al., n.d.).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on job satisfaction in the public sector remains extensive but conceptually dispersed. Traditional approaches emphasise structural and organisational determinants such as remuneration, leadership support, and work environment (Markovits et al., 2010). While these factors remain important, they insufficiently explain intrinsic sources of satisfaction that arise from individual values, moral purpose, and spiritual engagement (Houston & Cartwright, 2007). Recent scholarship has called for a broader interpretation of job satisfaction that encompasses psychological meaningfulness, ethical motivation, and internal value congruence (Syahir, 2025)

In this study, job satisfaction is conceptualised as a multifaceted psychological construct comprising affective well-being, purpose alignment, and ethical fulfilment, not merely workplace conditions. This aligns with contemporary organisational research proposing spirituality and values as significant antecedents of employee satisfaction, engagement, and commitment (Syahir, 2025).

Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), Spirituality, and Job Satisfaction

Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) provide a values-based framework derived from Qur'anic principles that position work as both a moral responsibility and a divine trust (*amanah*). Recent empirical evidence indicates that IWE significantly influences work outcomes, including performance and employee satisfaction. For instance, Hartini (2025) reports that IWE positively affects both task and contextual performance among public sector employees, suggesting broader organisational benefits. Similarly, explorations within banking contexts show that Islamic work ethic positively impacts employee response and job satisfaction, with evidence of mediating roles that help explain internal motivational processes.

Other recent studies have investigated the mediating role of work ethics between Islamic spirituality and job satisfaction, demonstrating that higher levels of Islamic spiritual engagement lead to stronger ethical behaviours, which in turn correlate with higher job satisfaction in workplace settings. These results underscore the significance of operationalising values such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, and fairness into measurable behaviours that strengthen both individual fulfilment and organisational outcomes.

Critical Debates: Secular Governance and Ethical Pluralism

Despite evidence supporting value-based ethical frameworks, the application of religiously grounded models raises critical questions in secular and pluralistic public administration contexts. A core challenge is how faithinspired ethical frameworks like the Qur'anic character model can be translated into universally acceptable organisational values without privileging one religious tradition over others. Secular critiques argue that religious frameworks may risk exclusion if applied rigidly within public institutions intended to serve diverse populations. This critique parallels broader organisational debates about inclusivity, where spirituality must be understood as a motivational resource rather than a prescriptive doctrine. Emerging research in organisational behaviour emphasises that workplace spirituality, when framed as a universal quest for purpose and meaning, can be integrated into secular organisational cultures that value human flourishing across belief systems (Munjal & Sachdeva, 2024).

The academic landscape surrounding job satisfaction in the public sector is vast, yet often fragmented, reflecting a struggle to pinpoint enduring solutions to pervasive disillusionment. Much of the literature, particularly in Western contexts, grapples with structural, economic, and psychological determinants, frequently overlooking the profound impact of deeply held personal values and character models (Moore, 2017). A nascent but growing body of work, however, begins to bridge this divide, suggesting that spiritual and ethical frameworks, including

those rooted in Islamic teachings, offer a compelling, perhaps even essential, pathway to enhanced job satisfaction among civil servants.

Conventional understandings of job satisfaction in public administration often cite factors such as fair remuneration, career advancement opportunities, supportive leadership, and a positive work environment (Gol Pervar, 2015, as cited in Navehebrahim & Sabet, 2023; Vrinda & Jacob, 2015). For instance, studies indicate that job satisfaction is strongly linked to affective and normative job commitment among public sector employees, distinguishing them from their private sector counterparts (Markovits et al., 2010). Furthermore, satisfied public sector employees are less likely to seek private sector employment, highlighting the importance of understanding its determinants (Kankaanranta et al., 2007). Yet, these factors, while important, often fall short of explaining the deeper sense of purpose that many individuals initially seek in public service. The focus remains largely on external conditions, rather than the internal ethical compass that guides an individual's engagement with their work.

This is where the concept of spirituality and religiosity enters the conversation, albeit cautiously. Bednarczuk (2019) and Moore (2017) both explored the correlation between spiritual well-being, spiritual intelligence, and job satisfaction among federal employees in the U.S. While Moore (2017) found no statistically significant correlation between spiritual intelligence, spiritual well-being, and job satisfaction in their specific sample, they did note that participants were moderately spiritual and possessed moderately high spiritual intelligence, suggesting the area warrants further investigation. Bednarczuk's (2019) research, however, more directly found that religiosity had a positive impact on job satisfaction among public servants, arguing that religious individuals, often motivated by an "ethos of service," find public sector work more fulfilling. This is a critical distinction: it suggests that an internal drive, often religiously informed, aligns powerfully with the public service mandate. King (2007) had earlier introduced a model reconciling religiosity and spirituality in the private sector, proposing its applicability to the public sector, a call that Bednarczuk's work seems to affirm. Carvajal (2014) also found that Philippine government employees widely agree that spirituality promotes honesty, patience, integrity, and good relationships at work, creating a sense of vocation.

The Islamic perspective offers a particularly robust framework, moving beyond generic spirituality to specific character traits and ethical injunctions. Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, posits work not merely as a means to an end, but as an act of worship (`ibadah) and a trust (amanah) from God (Chandio & Kandhro, 2020; Chandio et al., 2019; Yousef, 2001). This inherent sacredness of work fundamentally alters an individual's relationship with their job. Several studies have directly linked IWE to enhanced job satisfaction and organisational commitment. For instance, Zaman et al. (2013) found a positive association between Islamic work ethics and job satisfaction among both private and public sector employees in Pakistan. Similarly, Khan et al. (2013) and Ali et al. (2013) reported significant positive relationships between IWE and job satisfaction among banking sector employees. Hayati and Caniago (2012) also affirmed that Islamic work ethics positively influences job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance. These findings collectively argue that when work is imbued with an ethical and spiritual dimension, satisfaction naturally follows.

Central to the Qur'anic character model are concepts of integrity (amanah), justice (adl), and accountability (mas'uliyah). Chandio et al. (2019) emphasised that administrative ethics in Islam inculcates a sense of God's fear and accountability, making public officials answerable not only to the state but also to a higher divine authority. This internalisation of accountability, they argue, transforms an administrator's personality, fostering trustworthiness, honesty, and responsibility. Kamal (2004) further highlighted that the integrity of civil service, particularly in Islamic contexts, is formed from the spiritual strength and purity of Tawhid (oneness of God). This perspective contrasts sharply with purely secular ethical frameworks, which often rely on external enforcement mechanisms rather than internal moral conviction (Chandio & Kandhro, 2020).

Furthermore, Islamic Human Resource Management (IHRM) practices, grounded in these Qur'anic principles, are shown to positively impact employee trust, job satisfaction, and performance (Ali, 2005; Beekun, 1997; Khan et al., 2010; Lintang et al., 2024). IHRM principles, such as merit-based recruitment and selection, fair remuneration, and transparent performance appraisal, are not merely best practices but ethical imperatives that foster a just and compassionate work environment (Abbasi et al., 2010; Ali, 2005; Lintang et al., 2024). The Qur'an itself mandates selecting individuals who are "strong" and "trustworthy" for positions of authority

(AlQasas 28:26, as cited in Chandio et al., 2019; Howtests, 2025). This emphasis on character over mere technical skill is a distinguishing feature.

However, the application of these ideals is not without its challenges. Some research, for instance, suggests that despite the theoretical benefits, the reality in many Islamic countries shows a significant gap between normative Islamic values and actual workplace practices, often characterised by authoritarian management and nepotism (Ali, 2010; Budhwar & Mellahi, 2007). This discrepancy points to a critical need for not just understanding the model, but actively implementing and embedding it within organisational culture. Moreover, while spiritual intelligence has been linked to job satisfaction in some studies (Naqvi et al., 2015; Navehebrahim & Sabet, 2023; Qadirzadeh, 2019), other findings, particularly concerning specific outcomes like fraud prevention, have shown mixed results, with spiritual intelligence not always having a significant direct effect, though workplace spirituality generally does (Bayuandika et al., as cited in Nurhayati & Widyastuti, 2025; Nurhayati & Widyastuti, 2025). This suggests that while individual spiritual intelligence is important, a supportive organisational environment that actively fosters workplace spirituality, aligned with Islamic principles, may be more impactful (Houston & Cartwright, 2007; Nurhayati & Widyastuti, 2025; Scrimpshire et al., 2023).

In essence, the literature underscores a compelling argument: traditional approaches to improving civil service job satisfaction are incomplete without considering the spiritual and ethical dimensions of work. The Qur'anic character model, with its comprehensive framework of values and a holistic view of human existence, offers a powerful, yet often underutilised, lens through which to foster deeper meaning, greater integrity, and ultimately, higher job satisfaction among public servants. The challenge remains in translating these profound principles into tangible, actionable practices that can genuinely transform the public sector.

Synthesis and Research Gap

In summary, recent literature shows an increasing recognition of spiritual and ethical factors in shaping job satisfaction, especially in work environments where employees experience meaningfulness and value alignment. However, existing research still often treats these influences descriptively or correlatively rather than integrating them into coherent conceptual models that account for secular and pluralistic organisational contexts. There remains a need for clearly defined operational indicators for constructs such as Islamic spirituality, work ethic, and job satisfaction, which can be empirically tested across diverse public sector environments.

The present study addresses this gap by advancing the Qur'anic Character Model as an inclusive, value-based framework that emphasises integrity (*amanah*), justice (*'adl*), accountability (*mas'uliyyah*), trustworthiness (*siddiq*), and compassion (*rahmah*) as internal ethical resources. By operationalising these constructs, this study aims to contribute theoretically and empirically to the broader discourse on job satisfaction in public administration while remaining sensitive to secular governance and ethical pluralism.
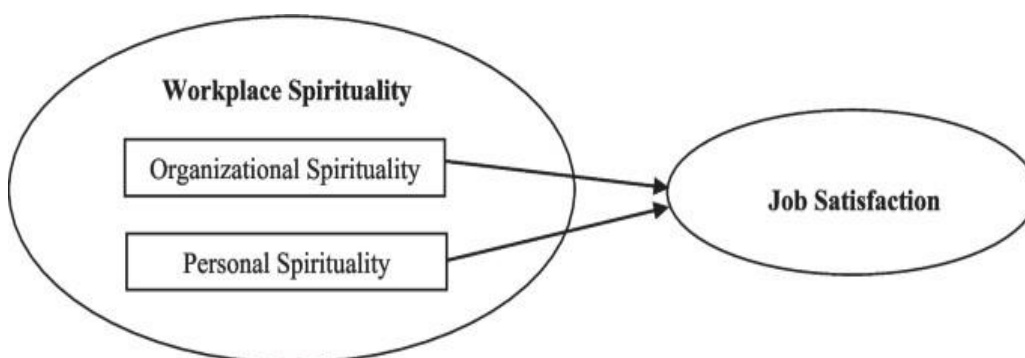
Fig.1 Evolution of Job Satisfaction Literature and the Emergence of the Qur'anic Character Model

METHODOLOGY

This investigation into the Qur'anic character model and its influence on civil servant job satisfaction employs a conceptual and document analysis methodology. This approach was deliberately chosen over empirical, quantitative studies, which, while valuable for measuring observable phenomena, often struggle to capture the profound, nuanced interplay of ethical frameworks and internal states of being. The very nature of "character" and "spiritual satisfaction" resists simple quantification; reducing them to survey variables risks flattening their

complexity and missing the deeper intellectual and philosophical contributions that a document-based analysis can uncover. We were not interested in merely counting correlations but in deconstructing the theoretical underpinnings and practical implications of an Islamic ethical system.

To avoid the bias of superficial engagement, we focused on a rigorous, multi-stage selection process for our primary sources. First, an extensive search was conducted across academic databases and university repositories for scholarly articles, doctoral theses, and peer-reviewed journals specifically addressing "Qur'anic character," "Islamic work ethics," "spiritual intelligence," "job satisfaction," and "public administration," particularly in contexts related to civil service. This initial broad sweep aimed to identify the foundational texts and contemporary applications of these concepts. We deliberately prioritised sources that explicitly engaged with primary Islamic texts—the Qur'an and Sunnah—or scholarly interpretations grounded in these sources, rather than general discussions of ethics that might merely nod to religious principles without deep engagement.

The *thought process* of selecting sources involved a continuous critical evaluation. For instance, when encountering studies on "spiritual intelligence," we evaluated whether they offered a generic, New Age interpretation or if they anchored spirituality within a specific, actionable ethical framework relevant to the Qur'anic model. Studies that merely reported correlations without exploring the *why* or *how* of the relationship were noted but given less weight than those that provided conceptual depth. We were particularly vigilant for research that articulated specific Qur'anic verses or Prophetic traditions (Hadith) as the basis for character traits like trustworthiness, justice, and accountability, as these provide the concrete foundation for the model under investigation. This allowed us to build a robust conceptual model, piece by careful piece.

Furthermore, to ensure a comprehensive understanding, we included literature that critically assessed the implementation of Islamic ethical principles in modern administrative contexts. This meant examining studies that highlighted discrepancies between ideal Islamic values and actual practices in public sectors, thereby providing a crucial reality check. Such critical perspectives are essential; without them, the analysis risks becoming an idealised, detached theoretical exercise. We sought to understand not just what the Qur'anic model *prescribes*, but also the *challenges* in its real-world application, which in turn informs its potential impact on job satisfaction.

The data analysis phase involved an interpretive, thematic approach. We meticulously read and re-read the selected documents, identifying recurring themes, core concepts, and explicit linkages between Qur'anic teachings, character attributes, and their proposed or observed effects on job satisfaction and public service quality. We extracted definitions, theoretical arguments, empirical findings (where qualitative), and practical implications, constantly cross-referencing these against the overarching research question. This iterative process of reading, coding, and synthesising allowed emergent themes to be refined and interconnected, building a coherent narrative that articulates the Qur'anic character model's components and their potential influence. The aim was to construct a robust conceptual argument, not merely to summarise existing research. This method, therefore, serves as an intellectual defense, arguing that a deep, qualitative exploration of foundational texts and their contemporary interpretations is indispensable for understanding a phenomenon as profoundly human and ethically laden as character-driven job satisfaction.

RESULTS

The conceptual analysis of existing literature reveals several compelling themes, each arguing for the profound relevance of a Qur'anic character model in shaping civil servant job satisfaction. These themes are not isolated; they interweave, forming a coherent narrative about work, purpose, and inner fulfilment.

Firstly, the very *conception of work* undergoes a radical transformation when viewed through a Qur'anic lens. It ceases to be a mere economic transaction or a social obligation. Instead, work becomes an act of worship (`ibadah) and a sacred trust (amanah) (Chandio et al., 2019; Yousef, 2001). This redefinition imbues daily tasks, however mundane, with spiritual significance. A civil servant processing documents or assisting citizens is not just performing a duty; they are fulfilling a divine mandate, contributing to societal well-being as an act of devotion. This profound shift from secular obligation to spiritual purpose naturally cultivates a deeper sense of meaning, which, as research suggests, is a powerful determinant of job satisfaction (Carvajal, 2014; Houston & Cartwright, 2007). The job, then, isn't just a job. It's a calling.

Secondly, the Qur'anic model foregrounds *uncompromising integrity and accountability*. It's not enough to merely avoid corruption; one must embody truthfulness (siddiq) and trustworthiness (amanah) in every action (Chandio & Kandhro, 2020; Howtests, 2025). This integrity springs from an internalised fear of God and a profound awareness of ultimate accountability, transcending mere legal or administrative oversight (Chandio et al., 2019). When civil servants operate under this internal compass, their decisions are guided by justice (adl) and fairness, creating an environment of transparency and equity. This ethical bedrock reduces moral dissonance, a common source of dissatisfaction in bureaucratic settings, allowing individuals to align their personal values with their professional conduct. The absence of such internalised integrity, conversely, breeds cynicism; it corrodes the soul.

Thirdly, the model cultivates an *ethos of service and compassion*. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) reportedly said, "The leader of the people is their servant" (Sahih al-Bukhari, as cited in Howtests, 2025). This principle fundamentally reorients the relationship between the civil servant and the public. It moves from a position of authority to one of humble service, driven by empathy (rahmah) and a genuine desire to alleviate hardship. Public servants, in this framework, are not merely implementers of policy but active agents of social good. This altruistic motivation, a hallmark of religious adherents in public service, directly correlates with higher job satisfaction, as serving others fulfils a deeper human need (Bednarczuk, 2019; Houston & Cartwright, 2007). Service becomes a self-reinforcing loop of meaning.

Fourthly, the Qur'anic model promotes *balance and moderation* (wasatiyyah) in all aspects of life, including work. It discourages obsessive materialism and encourages a holistic view of well-being that integrates spiritual, mental, and physical health. This principle helps civil servants navigate the pressures of modern bureaucracy by fostering resilience and preventing burnout. When individuals understand that their worth is not solely tied to output or worldly success, but to their sincere effort and ethical conduct, they develop a healthier relationship with their profession. This equilibrium allows for sustained engagement, rather than cycles of intense effort followed by exhaustion. It's a mindful approach to a demanding profession (Zolkefley et al., 2023).

Finally, the emphasis on *consultation (shura) and collective responsibility* fosters a sense of community and mutual support within the workplace. Islamic principles encourage leaders to seek input and make well-informed choices, promoting a participatory environment (Nurhayati & Widyastuti, 2025). This communal spirit, rooted in mutual respect and cooperation, directly counters the isolation and competitive pressures often found in government agencies. When civil servants feel valued, heard, and part of a collective mission, their sense of belonging and camaraderie strengthens, contributing significantly to a positive work environment and, consequently, to their job satisfaction (Houston & Cartwright, 2007; Scrimpshire et al., 2023). A shared purpose elevates individual commitment.

These themes, drawn from a rigorous conceptual analysis, paint a picture of a character model that is not merely an add-on but a foundational element. It offers a powerful antidote to the intrinsic dissatisfaction plaguing many public sectors, suggesting that a return to ethically rich, spiritually grounded principles might be the most potent, and overlooked, pathway to a truly satisfied and effective civil service.
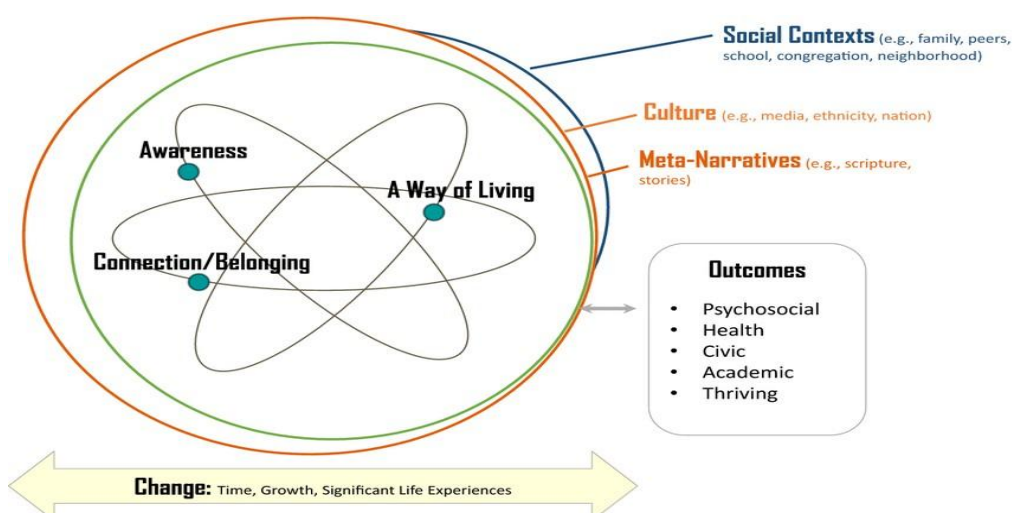
Fig 2: Core Themes of the Qur'anic Character Model Shaping Civil Servants' Job Satisfaction

DISCUSSION

The persistent lament regarding low job satisfaction within the civil service, despite myriad reform efforts, points to a fundamental misdiagnosis of the problem. What if the solutions lie not solely in structural adjustments or technological upgrades, but in the cultivation of an inner moral architecture? This study suggests that a Qur'anic character model offers a compelling, often overlooked, framework for addressing this deep-seated issue, providing a nuanced understanding of how intrinsic motivation, ethical conduct, and a sense of purpose can coalesce to profoundly enhance job satisfaction among public servants(Rho et al., 2021).

It is entirely possible that the prevailing secular-rationalist paradigm, which prioritises efficiency and measurable outputs, inadvertently strips public service of its inherent moral gravity. Civil servants, often drawn to their roles by an altruistic impulse, may find themselves adrift in a system that rewards compliance over conviction (Bednarczuk, 2019; Howtests, 2025). This is precisely where the Qur'anic model intervenes, re-anchoring work in a spiritual context. When work is understood as an act of worship (`ibadah) and a divine trust (amanah), as Chandio et al. (2019) and Yousef (2001) argue, the mundane transforms into the meaningful. This isn't merely a philosophical abstraction; it implies that an employee sees their daily tasks not as a chore, but as a path to spiritual reward, fostering a deeper engagement that external incentives alone cannot match. The "so what" here is profound: a system that acknowledges and cultivates this spiritual dimension of work might unlock levels of satisfaction currently unattainable.

Moreover, the emphasis on integrity (amanah) and accountability (mas'uliyah) in the Qur'anic model moves beyond mere policy adherence to an internalised ethical imperative (Chandio & Kandhro, 2020; Howtests, 2025). Consider the corrosive effect of perceived corruption or ethical compromise on an individual's morale. When a civil servant feels compelled to compromise their values, or witnesses such compromises unchallenged, their job satisfaction inevitably plummets. The Qur'anic framework, by instilling a sense of ultimate accountability to God, acts as a powerful internal deterrent against unethical practices (Chandio et al., 2019). This moral fortitude, as Kamal (2004) suggests, is rooted in the purity of Tawhid. It hints at a deeper issue: without such an internal compass, external regulations become a game of evasion, and the workplace becomes a site of moral struggle rather than ethical flourishing. Perhaps the dissatisfaction isn't just about workload, but about moral injury.

The cultivation of an ethos of service and compassion (rahmah) within the Qur'anic model also directly counters the bureaucratic detachment often criticised in public administration. The notion that "the leader of the people is their servant" (Howtests, 2025) reframes the power dynamic, encouraging empathy and genuine concern for the public. Bednarczuk (2019) found that religious bureaucrats, driven by an ethos of service, reported higher job satisfaction. This suggests that public service, when viewed as an act of helping others for a higher purpose, taps into a fundamental human need for altruism. If civil service training and culture were to overtly embrace this service-oriented character, rather than merely procedural efficiency, it might significantly enhance the intrinsic rewards of the job. This is not about religious proselytisation; it is about leveraging a proven motivational framework for public good.

However, it would be naive to ignore the challenges highlighted by Ali (2010) and Budhwar and Mellahi (2007), who point to the gap between ideal Islamic values and actual practices in some Muslim-majority contexts, citing issues like nepotism and authoritarian management. This discrepancy implies that merely invoking the Qur'anic model is insufficient; its principles must be actively instantiated and supported by organizational leadership and culture. The findings from Nurhayati and Widyastuti (2025) and Houston and Cartwright (2007) also suggest that while individual spiritual intelligence is beneficial, a supportive workplace spirituality environment is equally, if not more, critical. This underscores that character development cannot occur in a vacuum; it requires a conducive organisational ecosystem.

Therefore, integrating a Qur'anic character model is not a passive exercise in moral instruction. It demands conscious, sustained effort from leadership to foster an environment where justice, integrity, compassion, and accountability are not just spoken words but lived realities. When Islamic Human Resource Management (IHRM) practices, such as merit-based recruitment and fair remuneration, are genuinely applied, they build trust and enhance satisfaction, as noted by Lintang et al. (2024) and Ali (2005). These are not just good management practices; they are ethical imperatives within the Islamic framework, directly contributing to a sense of fairness and value, which are crucial for job satisfaction.

Ultimately, this discussion suggests that the current approaches to enhancing civil servant job satisfaction might be missing a vital component: the soul of the public servant. By embracing a character model deeply rooted in Qur'anic ethics, public administration could move beyond superficial fixes to cultivate a workforce that is not only highly competent and ethical but also profoundly satisfied in its service to humanity. This would mean a paradigm shift, from viewing civil servants as cogs in a machine to recognising them as moral agents whose internal well-being is inextricably linked to the quality of their public service.

Table 1: Analytical Synthesis of the Discussion—From Structural Fixes to a Qur'anic Character-Based Approach

Dimension	Conventional Public Administration Approach	Qur'anic Character-Based Approach	Implications for Job Satisfaction
Philosophy of Work	Work as bureaucratic duty	Work as *ibadah* (worship) and *amanah* (trust)	Enhanced sense of meaning
Source of Motivation	Extrinsic rewards and compliance	Intrinsic motivation and moral purpose	More sustainable satisfaction
Ethical Orientation	External rules and enforcement	Internalised accountability to God	Reduced moral distress
Integrity	Reliance on monitoring mechanisms	Internalised *amanah* and honesty	Moral clarity and peace of mind
Service Orientation	Procedure-driven service delivery	Compassion (*rahmah*) and ethos of service	Satisfaction through altruism
Key Workplace Issues	Burnout, cynicism, disengagement	Resilience, commitment, calling	Higher engagement
Dimension	**Conventional Public Administration Approach**	**Qur'anic Character-Based Approach**	**Implications for Job Satisfaction**
Role of Organisation	Structural and technological reforms	Ethical culture, character training, IHRM	Systemic support for values
Implementation Challenges	Value–practice misalignment	Gap between ideals and practice	Requires ethical leadership
Long-Term Outcomes	Technical efficiency alone	Ethical governance and public trust	Higher satisfaction and service quality

CONCLUSION

The pervasive struggles with job satisfaction among civil servants represent more than a mere management issue; they reflect a profound disconnect between the inherent desire for meaningful work and the operational realities of public administration. This study has argued that a Qur'anic character model offers a robust, yet underexplored, framework capable of bridging this chasm. By re-framing work as an act of worship and a sacred trust, and by embedding principles of uncompromising integrity, deep accountability, and genuine compassion, this model moves beyond superficial incentives to cultivate a profound sense of purpose and intrinsic fulfilment.

The evidence from the literature suggests that when civil servants operate within a framework that aligns their professional duties with their spiritual and ethical convictions, their job satisfaction is demonstrably enhanced (Bednarczuk, 2019; Chandio et al., 2019; Yousef, 2001). This is not simply about adopting religious rituals; it is about internalising a comprehensive ethical system that informs every decision and interaction. The emphasis on truthfulness, justice, and service to humanity, derived directly from Qur'anic teachings, provides a moral compass that can navigate the complex ethical dilemmas inherent in public service, reducing moral distress and fostering a clear conscience. Such an internalised ethical foundation transforms work from a burden into a calling, fostering resilience and dedicated engagement.

However, the effective implementation of such a model is not automatic. It demands a conscious and sustained effort to translate these profound principles into tangible organisational practices. The gap between ideal Islamic values and observed administrative realities in some contexts (Ali, 2010; Budhwar & Mellahi, 2007) underscores the need for genuine leadership commitment, comprehensive training programs, and the cultivation of a supportive workplace culture. It is insufficient to merely espouse these values; they must be woven into the very

fabric of human resource management, from recruitment to performance appraisal, ensuring that character is valued as much as competence (Lintang et al., 2024).

Future research should move beyond conceptual analysis to develop and test specific intervention programs designed to integrate elements of the Qur'anic character model into civil service training and development modules. A longitudinal study, for instance, could track the impact of a comprehensive "Amanah and Adl in Public Service" curriculum on the job satisfaction, ethical conduct, and perceived purpose among cohorts of civil servants over several years. This would provide empirical validation for the theoretical connections explored here. Specifically, future studies might examine how the inculcation of *taqwa* (God-consciousness) translates into observable behaviours of integrity and, subsequently, into self-reported job satisfaction metrics.

Ignoring the spiritual and ethical dimensions of work in the public sector is a precarious oversight. Without a strong internal moral compass, civil servants risk succumbing to cynicism, burnout, and disengagement, ultimately eroding the very foundations of public trust and effective governance. A society that fails to nurture the character of its public servants, particularly through models as rich and comprehensive as that offered by the Qur'an, risks not only administrative inefficiency but a deeper, more insidious moral decay that can compromise the entire social fabric. The quality of public service, it turns out, is inextricably linked to the spiritual health of its stewards.
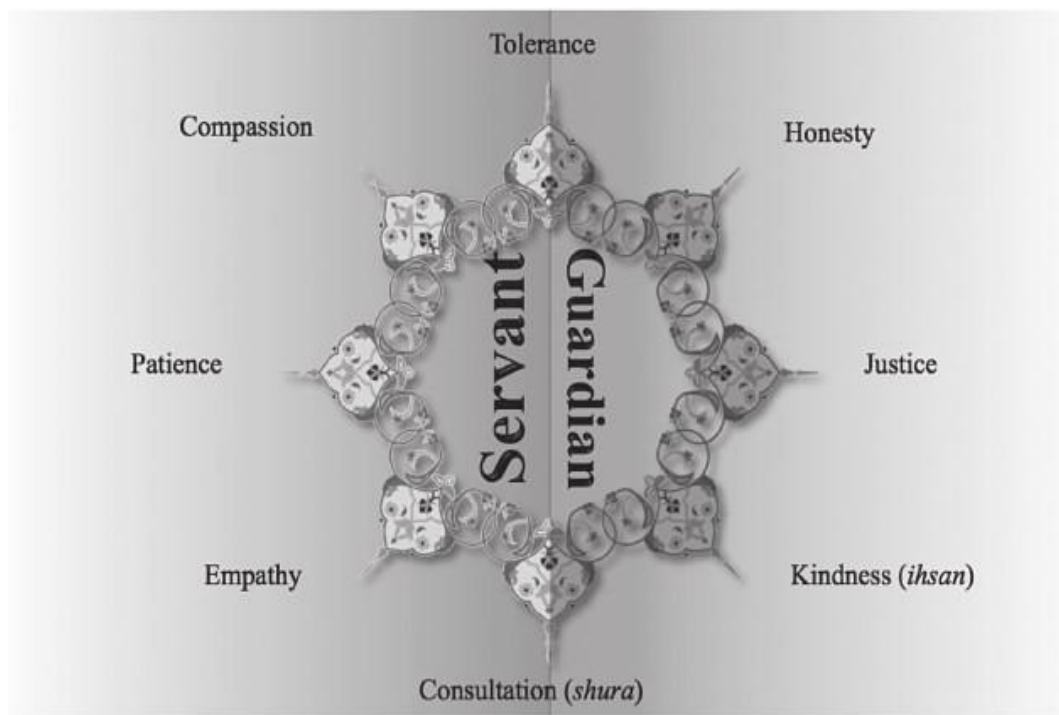
Fig.3: Qur'anic Character Model and Its Impact on Civil Servants' Job Satisfaction

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