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Exploring the Link Between Religious Practices and End-User Acceptance Among Muslim Seafarers Using SEM

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Abstract: This study addresses the limited empirical evidence on the role of religious practices in maritime human resource management (HRM), particularly in relation to the performance and workplace acceptance of Muslim seafarers in multicultural shipping environments. This study aims to examine the relationship between Muslim seafarers' religious practices and their job performance, adaptability, and end-user acceptance in the global shipping industry. A quantitative survey design was employed, and data were collected from 50 Muslim seafarers using a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0. The results indicate that religious practices significantly improve job performance ($\beta = 0.844$, $p < 0.001$) and adaptability ($\beta = 0.592$, $p = 0.028$). However, religious practices do not have a significant direct effect on end-user acceptance ($\beta = 0.024$, $p = 0.344$), and adaptability also has no significant effect on end-user acceptance ($\beta = -0.012$, $p = 0.564$). In contrast, job performance has a positive and significant effect on end-user acceptance ($\beta = 0.478$, $p = 0.034$). These findings suggest that while religious adherence enhances individual effectiveness and social adjustment, professional competence—particularly job performance—remains the primary factor shaping acceptance by shipowners and international stakeholders in the maritime sector.

Keywords: Muslim Seafarers, Religious Practices, Job Performance, Adaptability, End-User Acceptance, Structural Equation Modeling.

INTRODUCTION

The global shipping industry increasingly depends on multinational crews, making human resource management (HRM) a critical function for maintaining operational efficiency, safety, and coordination across culturally diverse work environments (Huang, 2022; Talmor, 2020). Driven by globalization, cost pressures, and open-registry systems, contemporary shipping companies recruit seafarers from major labor-supplying countries such as the

Philippines, China, India, and Indonesia (Tang & Zang, 2021; Tenold, 2019; Zhang & Tang, 2022). As a result, shipboard operations are no longer shaped solely by technical competence, but also by the ability of crew members and managers to work effectively across differences in language, culture, and religion (Ahola et al., 2017; Ghosh et al., 2023).

Within this global context, Indonesian Muslim seafarers face a specific challenge. Their religious practices, including daily prayers, halal dietary requirements, and abstention from alcohol, may not always align with standard routines or social norms on international vessels (Wang & Yeo, 2016; Mohd Yasin et al., 2021). In multicultural crews, these differences can affect not only personal well-being and social integration, but also how seafarers perceive their professional acceptance by shipowners, supervisors, or managers (Syed et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022). Although shipping companies often promote tolerance and diversity, practical accommodation of religious observance at sea remains inconsistent, creating potential tensions between religious identity and workplace expectations (Ahola et al., 2017; Ghosh et al., 2023).

Existing studies in maritime settings have largely examined multicultural crewing, communication, safety, and general job performance, while giving limited empirical attention to religion as a factor shaping work-related outcomes. More specifically, the relationship between Muslim seafarers' religious practices and key organizational outcomes—such as job performance, adaptability, and end-user acceptance—remains underexplored in maritime HRM research. This gap is important because current management discussions tend to prioritize technical competence and cross-cultural adjustment, while overlooking whether religious discipline may function as a resource that strengthens performance or influences workplace acceptance. In this study, end-user acceptance is treated as a self-reported perceptual measure reflecting how seafarers believe they are accepted by shipowners or managers, rather than as an externally verified HR outcome.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the effect of Muslim seafarers' religious practices on job performance, adaptability, and end-user acceptance in the global shipping industry by using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Specifically, the study examines whether religious practices contribute directly to performance and adaptability and whether these factors, in turn, shape perceived acceptance in multicultural maritime workplaces. By integrating religious practices into a maritime HRM model, this study offers a more focused perspective on how faith-related behavior relates to professional outcomes in a globalized shipping environment.

Table.1. Estimated five largest seafarers supply countries

For All Seafarers	For Officers	For Ratings
1. China	1. China	1. Philippines
2. Philippines	2. Philippines	2. China
3. Indonesia	3. India	3. Indonesia
4. Russian Federation	4. Indonesia	4. Russian Federation
5. Ukraine	5. Russian Federation	5. Ukraine

Source: Table from (Tang & Zang, 2021)

METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative-descriptive research design under the positivist paradigm, aiming to examine the relationship between Muslim seafarers' religious practices and their job performance, adaptability, and end-user acceptance in the global shipping industry. The research employs survey-based data collection to capture perceptions and behaviors across multiple constructs.

a) Instrument Development

The survey instrument was developed by adapting validated scales from existing conceptual and empirical literature (Hair et al., 2020). The instrument consists of 20 Likert-

scale items (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), distributed across four key constructs:

1. Religious Practices (Var RP): 5 items
2. Job Performance (Var JP): 5 items
3. Adaptability (Var Adap): 5 items
4. End-User Acceptance (Var EUA): 5 items

Demographic information such as age, gender, marital status, and religious affiliation was also collected to describe the sample.

b) Sample and Data Collection

Data were collected from 50 Muslim seafarers working on international vessels, using purposive sampling based on accessibility and relevance to the study's objectives. Respondents were selected based on their active service in global shipping and adherence to Islamic practices. The survey was administered electronically over a two-month period (June–July 2024).

c) Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach with SmartPLS 4.0 software. Prior to model testing, descriptive statistics were generated using SPSS version 24 to understand the data distribution. The SEM analysis involved both:

1. Outer model testing (to assess construct validity and reliability using AVE, Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha),
2. Inner model testing (to examine path coefficients and hypothesis testing using bootstrapping with 1,000 resamples).

The model's convergent validity, discriminant validity, coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and effect size (f^2) were also calculated to ensure robustness of the measurement and structural models.

This methodological approach allows for rigorous testing of the interrelationships among the study variables, ensuring that the influence of religious practices is accurately assessed in relation to performance and acceptance outcomes in a multicultural maritime context.

Respondents and Sampling Technique

The respondents in this study were 50 Muslim seafarers working or having recently worked on international vessels. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that the selected respondents were relevant to the research objectives. The respondent criteria were as follows: (1) they identified as Muslim, (2) they had experience serving on international or multicultural vessels, (3) they were actively involved in shipboard work operations, and (4) they were willing to complete the questionnaire in full. These criteria were applied to ensure that all respondents had direct experience with the religious, social, and professional conditions examined in this study.

The use of purposive sampling was considered appropriate because the study did not target seafarers in general, but specifically Muslim seafarers whose religious practices could be meaningfully examined in relation to workplace outcomes. Data were collected electronically during June–July 2024.

Sample Size Justification

The sample size was evaluated based on the minimum requirement for PLS-SEM. Following Hair et al. (2020), PLS-SEM is appropriate for exploratory and prediction-oriented models and can be applied to relatively small samples when model complexity remains limited.

In this study, the structural model is relatively simple, with the largest number of structural paths directed at one endogenous construct being two. Based on the minimum sample size logic commonly applied in PLS-SEM, the required sample is therefore substantially lower than the final sample used in this study. Accordingly, the total of 50 respondents exceeds the minimum requirement and is considered adequate for estimating the proposed model.

Instrument Development

The questionnaire was developed by adapting measurement items from relevant conceptual and empirical literature (Hair et al., 2020). The instrument consisted of 20 items measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The items were distributed across four constructs:

1. Religious Practices (5 items)
2. Job Performance (5 items)
3. Adaptability (5 items) and
4. End-User Acceptance (5 items)

Demographic information, including age, gender, marital status, and religious affiliation, was also collected to describe the respondent profile.

Common Method Bias Consideration

Because the data were collected using a single self-reported questionnaire, the study considered the possibility of common method bias. Procedurally, this issue was minimized by ensuring respondent anonymity, using clear and non-leading wording, and separating the measurement items by construct. In the analytical stage, common method bias can be assessed in PLS-SEM through full collinearity diagnostics, in which variance inflation factor (VIF) values below the conservative threshold indicate that common method bias is unlikely to be a serious concern. This consideration was included to strengthen the methodological rigor of the study.

Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 4.0. This technique was selected because it is suitable for examining complex relationships among latent variables, especially in exploratory studies and models with predictive purposes (Hair et al., 2020). The analysis involved two stages: measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation.

In the measurement model, convergent validity was assessed using outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while internal consistency reliability was examined using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), with values below the recommended threshold indicating adequate distinctiveness between constructs (Hair et al., 2020). In the structural model, the analysis examined path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), effect size (f^2), and hypothesis testing through bootstrapping with 1,000 resamples.

This methodological approach provides an adequate basis for testing whether religious practices contribute to job performance, adaptability, and end-user acceptance among Muslim seafarers in multicultural maritime workplaces.

Instrument Items

Table 2. Instrument items for research variables

Construct	Item	Assertive
Religious Practise (Var RP)	P1	I can perform the 5 daily prayers regularly while on the ship.
	P2	My compliance with Halal food is maintained effectively at sea.
	P3	The ship management accommodated my needs to carry out religious services.
	P4	Not drinking alcohol is supported by the daily culture and social interactions of the ship's crew.
	P5	Performing the 5 Prayers My time does not interfere with my ability to fulfill my work responsibilities.
Job Performances (Var JP)	P6	My 5 Times Prayer practice has had a positive impact on my focus and dedication towards work.
	P7	I am able to complete my tasks efficiently while carrying out my religious obligations.
	P8	My adherence to the practice of 5 Daily Prayers as well as not Drinking Alcohol has helped me improve my time management skills.
	P9	Religious Practices have had a positive influence on my stress management.
	P10	My job performance meets or exceeds the expectations of my supervisor/leadership on board
Adaptability (Var Adap)	P11	I feel comfortable working with people from different cultural and religious backgrounds.
	P12	My religious values encourage me to be respectful and cooperative in multi-ethnic, multicultural and multicultural Teams.
	P13	I can communicate effectively with colleagues, regardless of their cultural or religious background.
	P14	I was able to adapt to various crew dynamics and cultural practices on board.
	P15	My religious beliefs positively influence my teamwork and collaboration skills.
End User Acceptance (Var EUA)	P16	My religious practices contributed positively to my acceptance among international ship owners and managers.
	P17	The shipping company supports and respects my religious practices on board.
	P18	My adherence to religious practices has enhanced my professional reputation among supervisors.
	P19	My work performance and professionalism are appreciated by my superiors despite my religious commitments.
	P20	I believe my religious practices have not hindered my career advancement in the global shipping industry.

Data collection was carried out in June and July 2024, by applying the questionnaire with seafarer's.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0 to evaluate the relationships among Religious Practices, Job Performance, Adaptability, and End-User Acceptance. In line with Hair et al. (2020), the results are presented through two stages: measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation. This approach ensures that the constructs are statistically sound before the hypothesized relationships are interpreted.

Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was first assessed through indicator reliability, convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity. Indicator reliability was

examined using outer loading values. Following Hair et al. (2020), outer loadings of 0.708 or higher indicate that the indicator explains a substantial proportion of the variance in its construct. In this study, the outer loading values for the indicators of Religious Practices, Job Performance, Adaptability, and End-User Acceptance should be reported in detail in the results section to demonstrate that the retained indicators adequately represent their respective constructs. Indicators with acceptable loading values support the adequacy of the measurement model and strengthen the interpretation of the structural relationships.

Table 4 presents the summary of convergent validity and reliability. All constructs achieved Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50, indicating sufficient convergent validity. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values also exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming satisfactory internal consistency reliability (Hair et al., 2020).

Table 3. Convergent Validity and Reliability

Constructs	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	R ²
Religious Practices (Var RP)	0.60	0.88	0.83	0.78
Job Performance (Var JP)	0.63	0.85	0.85	0.331
Adaptability (Var Adap)	0.74	0.92	0.91	0.167
End-User Acceptance (Var EUA)	0.73	0.90	0.90	0.704

Table 4. Outer Loading Values of Measurement Indicators

Construct	Item	Outer Loading
Religious Practices	P1	0.640
Religious Practices	P2	0.834
Religious Practices	P3	0.804
Religious Practices	P4	0.695
Religious Practices	P5	0.792
Job Performance	P6	0.852
Job Performance	P7	0.772
Job Performance	P8	0.708
Job Performance	P9	0.788
Job Performance	P10	0.811
Adaptability	P11	0.911
Adaptability	P12	0.797
Adaptability	P13	0.866
Adaptability	P14	0.900
Adaptability	P15	0.797
End-User Acceptance	P16	0.803
End-User Acceptance	P17	0.876
End-User Acceptance	P18	0.872
End-User Acceptance	P19	0.798
End-User Acceptance	P20	0.888

The inclusion of outer loading values improves the transparency of the measurement model because it allows readers to assess the contribution of each indicator to its latent construct. If all retained items show loadings above the recommended threshold, the indicators can be considered reliable measures of their respective constructs. If some items fall slightly

below the threshold but are retained, their inclusion should be justified based on theoretical relevance and the adequacy of AVE and Composite Reliability values (Hair et al., 2020).

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), which is recommended by Hair et al. (2020) as a more sensitive criterion than traditional approaches. HTMT values below 0.90 indicate that the constructs are empirically distinct. In this study, the HTMT ratio should also be reported to confirm that Religious Practices, Job Performance, Adaptability, and End-User Acceptance measure different conceptual domains.

Table 5. HTMT Ratio

Constructs	RP	JP	Adap	EUA
Religious Practices (RP)	—	1.055	0.643	0.491
Job Performance (JP)	1.055	—	0.825	0.568
Adaptability (Adap)	0.643	0.825	—	0.501
End-User Acceptance (EUA)	0.491	0.568	0.501	—

The reporting of HTMT values is important because it demonstrates that the four constructs are not statistically overlapping. When all HTMT values remain below the recommended cut-off, the discriminant validity of the model is supported. This strengthens confidence that the observed structural relationships are not caused by conceptual redundancy among the constructs.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

After the adequacy of the measurement model was established, the structural model was assessed to test the proposed hypotheses. The results indicate that Religious Practices have a positive and significant effect on Job Performance ($\beta = 0.844$, $p < 0.001$) and Adaptability ($\beta = 0.592$, $p = 0.028$). These findings suggest that religious discipline may contribute to stronger work focus, time management, and behavioral consistency, while also encouraging respectful interaction in multicultural work settings.

However, Religious Practices do not have a significant direct effect on End-User Acceptance ($\beta = 0.024$, $p = 0.344$), and Adaptability also does not significantly influence End-User Acceptance ($\beta = -0.012$, $p = 0.564$). In contrast, Job Performance has a positive and significant effect on End-User Acceptance ($\beta = 0.478$, $p = 0.034$). This result indicates that acceptance by shipowners or managers is primarily shaped by observable professional competence rather than by religious identity or perceived adaptability alone.

Table 6. Path Coefficient Analysis

Hypothesis	Path	Coef.	p-value	Conclusion
H1	Adaptability → End-User Acceptance	-0.012	0.564	Not supported
H2	Job Performance → End-User Acceptance	0.478	0.034	Supported
H3	Religious Practices → Adaptability	0.592	0.028	Supported
H4	Religious Practices → End-User Acceptance	0.024	0.344	Not supported
H5	Religious Practices → Job Performance	0.844	0.000	Supported

Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that religious practices operate more strongly as an internal behavioral resource than as a direct determinant of external workplace recognition. The significant effect of Religious Practices on Job Performance supports earlier arguments that structured religious routines may strengthen self-discipline, punctuality, self-control, and commitment in demanding work settings (Dougherty et al., 2019; Mohd Yasin et al., 2021). In

the context of seafaring, regular prayer schedules and abstention from alcohol may help create behavioral consistency and sharper task focus, both of which are closely linked to safe and reliable shipboard performance. Thus, the present result is not merely descriptive; theoretically, it indicates that religious practices may function as a form of personal regulation that indirectly contributes to organizationally valued outcomes.

The positive effect of Religious Practices on Adaptability also deserves a more critical reading. This finding suggests that religious values do not necessarily produce withdrawal from multicultural settings. Instead, they may encourage respectful coexistence, patience, and cooperative interaction with colleagues from different backgrounds. This interpretation is consistent with studies emphasizing that multicultural shipboard life requires not only technical competence but also interpersonal adjustment and mutual respect (Ahola et al., 2017; Ghosh et al., 2023). In this sense, religious identity should not automatically be viewed as a source of rigidity; under certain conditions, it may provide an ethical basis for constructive adaptation.

However, the non-significant direct effect of Religious Practices on End-User Acceptance is theoretically important. This result suggests that religious observance, by itself, is not a criterion through which shipowners or managers evaluate seafarers. A plausible explanation is that organizational evaluation systems in the global shipping industry prioritize measurable outputs, reliability, and operational effectiveness over socio-cultural attributes or personal identity markers. This interpretation is consistent with the pragmatic logic of maritime HRM, where performance indicators are more visible and institutionally relevant than individual religious commitments (Syed et al., 2020; Ghosh et al., 2023). Therefore, even when religious practices contribute positively to individual discipline, these practices may remain largely invisible in formal or informal evaluation unless they are translated into observable work outcomes.

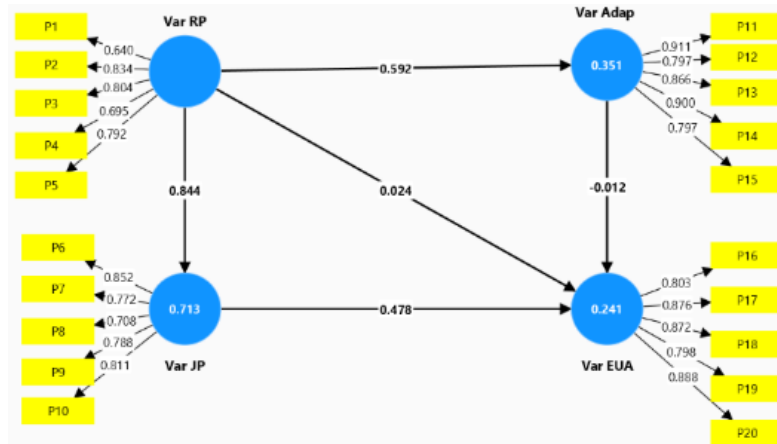
The non-significant relationship between Adaptability and End-User Acceptance can also be interpreted more critically. Although adaptability is important for day-to-day interaction in multicultural crews, it may not be sufficient to influence managerial judgments in a strong or direct way. This may indicate that adaptability functions more as a background condition for smooth teamwork than as a primary basis for professional recognition. In other words, being socially flexible may help seafarers avoid conflict and maintain harmony, but such behavior may not automatically produce stronger acceptance from end users if it is not accompanied by clear performance contributions. This finding is in line with the view that technical competence and dependable execution often outweigh interpersonal adjustment alone in maritime settings (Mejia, 2021; Syed et al., 2020).

Most importantly, Job Performance emerges as the only significant predictor of End-User Acceptance. This finding strengthens the argument that professional legitimacy in the global shipping industry is built mainly through demonstrable competence rather than through identity-based characteristics. Compared with prior studies that emphasize multicultural inclusion and accommodation as important dimensions of maritime work (Ahola et al., 2017; Nguyen et al., 2022), the present study suggests a more selective mechanism: inclusion may matter, but acceptance is ultimately filtered through performance. In theoretical terms, this indicates that religious practices may influence acceptance indirectly, through their contribution to better job performance, rather than directly as an independent source of recognition.

This pattern helps explain why some relationships are significant while others are not. Religious practices appear to matter when they shape behaviors that are operationally meaningful, such as discipline, focus, and consistency. By contrast, when religious practices or adaptability are assessed in relation to acceptance without passing through performance, their explanatory power becomes weak. This is because the acceptance construct in this study reflects perceived evaluation by organizational actors who are likely to judge seafarers according to output-oriented standards. The result therefore supports a theoretical distinction between

personal-value mechanisms and organizational-evaluation mechanisms: the former may shape how seafarers behave, while the latter determine how they are ultimately judged.

Figure 1. Structural Analysis Model



Source: Research Results

From a practical perspective, the findings imply that accommodating religious practices should not be seen only as a diversity or welfare issue. Such accommodation may also have performance value when it supports discipline, concentration, and work stability. At the same time, the non-significant direct paths caution against assuming that tolerance alone will generate professional recognition. Recognition appears to depend on whether supportive practices can be converted into improved performance outcomes that are visible to supervisors and shipowners. This makes the study relevant not only to religious inclusion debates but also to broader HRM discussions on how personal values are translated into measurable organizational contributions.

From a methodological perspective, the inclusion of outer loading values and HTMT ratios strengthens the credibility of the results because it demonstrates that the measurement model is both reliable and discriminantly valid. Reporting these indicators more explicitly also responds directly to reviewer expectations for more rigorous PLS-SEM reporting in line with Hair et al. (2020).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Muslim seafarers' religious practices contribute significantly to job performance and adaptability, but do not directly influence end-user acceptance in the global shipping industry. Instead, job performance emerges as the main factor shaping acceptance by shipowners and managers. These findings indicate that religious adherence is not, in itself, a determinant of workplace recognition; rather, its value becomes meaningful when it supports behaviors that improve professional effectiveness. In this sense, the study shows that religious practices function more strongly as an internal source of discipline, consistency, and social adjustment than as a direct basis for organizational evaluation.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to maritime human resource management (HRM) literature by extending the discussion of multicultural crewing beyond technical competence and cross-cultural interaction to include religious practices as a relevant behavioral factor. The findings suggest that religion should not be understood merely as a private identity attribute, but also as a potential source of self-regulation that may influence work-related outcomes. At the same time, the absence of a direct effect on end-user acceptance

highlights an important distinction between personal-value mechanisms and organizational-evaluation mechanisms. This means that religious practices may strengthen individual work behavior, yet organizational acceptance remains largely determined by measurable performance.

From a practical perspective, the study offers implications for maritime HRM and ship management. Shipping companies should view religious accommodation not only as a matter of inclusion or compliance, but also as a potential support mechanism for employee performance. Practical steps may include providing greater flexibility for prayer schedules where operationally feasible, ensuring more consistent access to halal food, and strengthening multicultural orientation programs for onboard crews and supervisors. These efforts may help Muslim seafarers maintain religious commitments while also enhancing concentration, discipline, and cooperation in multicultural work environments. However, the findings also suggest that such accommodations are most likely to strengthen acceptance when they are aligned with clear performance expectations and operational standards.

This study also offers several recommendations for future research. First, future studies should involve larger and more diverse samples of seafarers in order to improve generalizability across nationalities, ranks, shipping sectors, and religious backgrounds. Second, future research could examine whether job performance mediates the relationship between religious practices and workplace acceptance more explicitly. Third, qualitative or mixed-method approaches would be valuable for exploring how religious practices are negotiated in everyday shipboard life and how managers interpret them in actual evaluation processes. Finally, future studies may compare Muslim seafarers with other religious or cultural groups to develop a broader understanding of how faith, identity, and professional assessment interact in global maritime workplaces.

Overall, this study reinforces the argument that in the global shipping industry, religious practices matter most when they are translated into credible professional performance. Accordingly, effective maritime HRM should not frame religious identity as a constraint, but rather as a potentially constructive element that, when properly accommodated and managed, can support both individual effectiveness and organizational outcomes.

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