

ISLAMIC WORK ETHICS AS A DRIVER OF TRADE SUSTAINABILITY IN ALGERIA

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Abstract : This study aims to highlight the extent to which work ethics based on Islamic values contribute to the sustainability of trade among merchants in the M'zab region of Ghardaia, Algeria. To achieve this goal, a questionnaire was distributed to a random sample of 100 merchants, and 76 valid questionnaires were retrieved for analysis. Results show a significant relationship between elements of Islamic work ethics, such as religious commitment, honesty in work, truthfulness in work, good customer relations, and cooperation and sharing, but with varying degrees. Good customer relations and honesty in work showed a stronger correlation with the sustainability of trade among M'zab merchants. The survey results indicated that the elements of Islamic work ethics among M'zab merchants affect the sustainability of their trade, and 17.1% of the variation in trade sustainability in the study sample can be explained by different levels of Islamic work ethics elements.

Keywords: Islamic work ethics, business sustainability, religious commitment, honesty in work

Jel Classification Codes : M14, Z12, A13

1. INTRODUCTION

The ethics of society represent a strong foundation for work ethics because the business environment is a living and interactive one, and its values and ethical determinants influence its decisions, reputation, performance, organizational culture, employee commitment, and various operations. Adhering to ethical values and practicing positive behaviors at work is one of the key pillars of success in any professional setting (AMROUCH, 2024, p. 307). Work ethics, grounded in Islamic values, are a crucial element in building a strong and effective work culture, aimed not only at profitability but also at enhancing trust, cooperation, and consultation among workers on the one hand and between workers and customers on the other. Trade is considered one of the most vibrant and dynamic business environments, and the merchant's ethics play an important role in building her reputation and gaining customer trust, which can even lead to the sustainability of her business in the long run.

However, reality presents significant gap between the Islamic ethical framework that any Muslim society should embody and the actual practices of individuals and organizations within it. Some financial requirements, working conditions, or other factors can lead to behaviours in the workplace that contradict the work ethics that is aligned with Islamic values. Therefore, we chose to conduct our research at the national level in Algeria, focusing on a specific segment of society with a long-standing commercial heritage, sustainability, and good reputation in trade, known for their commitment to work ethics in their Islamic religion for centuries. This segment shows the Ben M'zab in the Ghardaïa region.

Through the above, we are trying to answer the following question:

Do Islamic work ethics contribute to Mozabite traders' sustainable in Algeria?

Several sub-questions emerge from this question:

- Does religious commitment play a role in the sustainability of trade among Mozabite traders in Algeria?
- Do good customer service play a role in the sustainability of trade among Mozabite traders in Algeria?

- Does honesty in work play a role in the sustainability of trade among Mozabite traders in Algeria?
- Does work honesty play a role in M'zab trade in Algeria?
- Do cooperation and collaboration in work play a role in the sustainability of trade among Mozabite traders in Algeria?
- Is there a significant impact of the dimensions of Islamic work ethics on the sustainability of trade among the participants?
- What are the most prominent opportunities and challenges facing Mezabian trade in Algeria in light of Islamic work ethics?

To answer these questions, we developed the following hypotheses:

Main Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant relationship between the dimensions of Islamic work ethics and the sustainability of trade among Mozabite traders in Algeria, from which the following sub-hypotheses branch out:

- Sub-hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant relationship between religious commitment and the sustainability of trade among Mozabite traders in Algeria;
- Sub-hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant relationship between good customer service and the sustainability of trade among Mozabite traders in Algeria;
- Sub-hypothesis 3: A statistically significant relationship between work integrity and the sustainability of trade among Mozabite traders in Algeria;
- Sub-hypothesis 4: A statistically significant relationship between work integrity and trade sustainability among Mozabite traders in Algeria;
- Sub-hypothesis 5: There is a statistically significant relationship between cooperation and collaboration in sustaining trade among Mozabite traders in Algeria.

Main Hypothesis 2: There is a significant impact of Islamic work ethics dimensions on the sustainability of trade among the participants.

Before delving into previous studies, research methodology, and results, we attempt to provide general concepts about M'zab traders in Algeria and the extent to which their trade is considered sustainable.

2- WHO ARE THE MOZABITE TRADERS IN ALGERIA?

The Beni M'zab are considered pioneers of trade in Algeria. The Beni M'zab, a branch of the Amazigh people of Algeria, live in the M'zab Valley region in the Ghardaïa province. They speak both the M'zab dialect and Algerian Arabic. The Beni M'zab are known for their trade, with their shops spread across all provinces of Algeria. Their trade is characterised by great diversity and aims to meet all customer needs. The trust between the M'zab and their customers resembles a social contract established by customs over generations (AHMED, 2024)

Sustainable commerce is when, in line with the basic ideas of sustainable development, the commercial exchange of products and services produces social, economic, and environmental advantages:

- The creation of economic worth;
- Reduce inequality and poverty;
- Environmental resource preservation and reuse (ENABEL, 2020)

2-1 SUSTAINABILITY OF TRADE AMONG BENI M'ZAB STATES OF ALGERIA

The socio-professional background of the Mozabite individual, the social capital with an ethnic character, and the religious belief among the Mozabites serve as spiritual nourishment and a value reference they rely on in their activities. These are considered the most important factors that motivate Mozabite individuals to engage in trade. Therefore, the Mozabites formed a strong economic network based on social capital, which was rooted in their ethnic and religious affiliations (DADI HAMMOU, 2021)

The sustainability of trade among the Bani M'zab may not significantly reflect the environmental aspect, but it is clearly embodied in the following:

2-1-1 SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

By eliminating unemployment and achieving zero unemployment, Beni M'zab has rarely seen unemployed individuals who are driven by trade. They raise their children in commerce from a young age, teaching them its principles, secrets, and accounting, among other things. It is well-known that university students study and work simultaneously, so you will find a university student continuing their studies while also practising trade. Once

they graduate, they start their own business. In the large commercial stores of Beni M'zab, you notice a significant number of salespeople, ranging from five to six, even though the store could be managed by just two people. However, their goal here is socio-economic: to absorb unemployment so that young people learn the principles of their trade and practice it in the future.

2-1-2 ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

By maintaining their name and reputation in the market, the principle of the Beni M'zab in their trade is honesty with the customer to ensure that they return again and focusing on long-term profit without any unethical business practices. What is known about them in Algeria is their good treatment of the customer, as they present all the goods to the customer tirelessly and with a smiling face and do not distinguish between customers regardless of their status. In their work habits, they start early and close late, and they do not sell during prayer times because religious commitment precedes professional commitment. Many researchers have attested this, such as the French researcher Guy de Maupassant in his book "Journey to the Land of the Sun," published in 1881, where he compared the Jewish merchant to the Mozabite merchant: "The Jew in the entire south only deals in usury and all possible vile means, whereas the real merchants are the people of M'zab. One notices when arriving at a village in the desert that suddenly a different race has taken control of affairs." (BOUKBA, 2024)

The success and spread of the Mozabite trade extended for centuries. Khaldun mentioned that since the end of the 13th century AD, Ouad M'zab managed to find its place on the axis of trade exchanges and became an important hub for trade caravans connecting the desert to the north. This was confirmed by T. Lewicki, who stated that Ouad M'zab had enjoyed significant commercial status since the 14th century AD and established strong trade relations with West Sudan. To this day, trade remains the profession passed down through generations in communities with the same values and principles, which affirms its sustainability (RAMDAN, 2024).

3- PREVIOUS STUDIES

The role of ethics in organising institutions and economic projects has not received much attention in economic and organisational theories. Sen (1987) points out that there is a separation between ethics and economics, which is considered one of the fundamental shortcomings of contemporary economic

theories. This is due to the lack of interest from economic theories and even managerial approaches in ethics until shortcomings in economic analyses and their resulting outcomes became apparent (Idrissi, 2022).

We present some recent studies that highlighted the importance of Islamic work ethics during the period 2011-2024 in various countries and institutions.

3-1 ABBASI .A, KASHIF. R, BIBI. A (2011)

The researchers identified business performance trends in rapidly growing telecommunications organisations in Pakistan by tracking the impact of Islamic professional ethics on managerial performance. They concluded that Islamic professional ethics have significant potential to improve business performance within the organisation, as the solution to the global economic crisis lies in adhering to work ethics values that should be integrated into the organisational culture to ensure sustainable business performance.

3-2 SURIYAPRAKASH & STEPHAN(2022)

The researchers conducted a qualitative study in which the main factors affecting the ethical behaviour of medical representatives at work were identified, considering them as a link between pharmaceutical companies, warehouses, and medical professionals and as the best source of information about the company's products. Their salaries and benefits depend on the amount of money they generate, which means that there are greater opportunities for unethical behaviours that could harm the reputation of pharmaceutical companies. The researchers identified the following factors: leader ethics, physician ethics, employee ethics, workplace ethical culture, workplace ethical practices, and personal values.

3-3 TOUIZA. B(2022)

This study aimed to identify the Islamic work ethics that influence the job performance of Al Salam Bank in Algeria and to determine the type and strength of the correlation between the independent study variables and the dependent variable. The study concludes that there is a strong significant positive correlation and statistically significant impact between the dimensions of Islamic work ethics and the job performance of Al Salam Bank in Algeria. The study also found that the dimensions of Islamic work ethics that most positively influence the job performance of Al Salam Bank in Algeria are sincerity and good treatment of customers, as their correlation coefficient exceeded 80% and their explanatory percentage exceeded 64%.

3-4 A. LIAS (2024)

The researcher in this study addressed the various types of standards issued by the Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI), which are: Sharia standards, accounting standards, governance standards, and ethics standards, and their role in regulating and controlling the work of Islamic financial institutions. Islamic banks have played an effective role in widely disseminating the jurisprudence of financial transactions by offering financing models that comply with Islamic law.

3-5 KHELFAOUI, A, CHETATHA, Z., & BENDENIDINA, S. (2024)

The researchers discussed the importance of adopting a new approach that differs from other banking marketing methods. This approach is based on modern foundations linked to Islamic jurisprudence and relies on a set of policies in the field of Islamic marketing that align with Islamic law to attract customers. Islamic marketing has had a positive impact on increasing the rate of attracting funds and granting loans for various forms of Murabaha.

➤ THE RESEARCH GAP

Based on a review of some literature, it can be said that despite the on-going research on work ethics within the values of Islam, there are significant gaps in the literature regarding the study of work ethics in the field of commerce. Most previous studies have been conducted at the level of Islamic banks and telecommunications companies.... This is because commerce, for us, is a very important and tangible field for dealing with high ethical values that earn customers trust and increase their loyalty. More importantly, the study of the role of Islamic work ethics in the sustainability of the trade of the Beni M'zab community in Algeria, which has lasted for centuries to the present day.

4- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To address the problem of this research, the descriptive approach was relied upon because it allows collecting data and facts about the phenomenon under study, In addition to the case study approach by distributing a questionnaire to a sample of individuals, and analysing it statistically using the SPSS program.

The questionnaire model was based on three axes: the first axis relates to the personal data of the employees (age, age group, educational level, and

income level). The second axis consists of a set of questions about the dimensions of work ethics with Islamic values, divided into five dimensions (religious commitment, good treatment of customers, honesty in work, truthfulness in work, and cooperation and sharing in work), noting that the determination of these dimensions was based on the study of: (Azharsyah, I, and Kamri, N, 2014) and (Touiza, 2022)

The final section of the questionnaire included a set of questions related to the success of trade among Mozabite merchants in Algeria. We also used a five- point Likert scale. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 Mozabite merchants in Ghardaïa Province, Algeria, and 76 questionnaires were retrieved, resulting in a 76% response rate. The Cronbach's alpha value of 0.833 for the 30 items in the questionnaire indicates a high level of internal reliability.

5- DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

To analyse the data, frequencies and percentages were used to study the demographic information of the respondents. The distribution of respondents according to gender showed that out of 76 participants, there were males (100%).

As for the distribution of the study sample by age group, 28.9% of the individuals are under 30 years old (22 individuals), 30.3% are between 30 and 39 years old (23 individuals), 27.6% are between 40 and 49 years old (21 individuals), and 13.2% were 50 years old and above (10 individuals). This reflects the diverse age distribution in the sample.

The distribution of the sample by educational level shows that 56.6% of individuals have a secondary education or lower (43 individuals), while 43.4% hold a university degree (33 individuals). This distribution may indicate that the field of commercial work does not necessarily depend on a specific educational level, as university graduates may rely on theoretical knowledge, whereas individuals with a secondary education or lower depend on experience and practical skills.

As for the distribution of the study sample members according to their professional experience in the institution, 15.8% of them have less than 5 years of service (12 individuals), 36.8% have between 5 and 10 years (28 individuals), 19.7% have between 10 and 15 years (15 individuals), and 27.6% have worked for 15 years or more (21 individuals). Individuals with

long experience may have a different perspective than those with seniority, which can contribute to a deeper understanding of the importance of Islamic work ethics in trade and its impact.

The distribution of the study sample members according to their income levels shows that 96% of them have an income ranging from average to high (73 individuals), while 4% have a low income. The disparity in income levels between average and high may be related to the nature of the business activity and its field, the size of the capital, etc. In general, the distribution of the sample according to income level is well represented because we are talking about the sustainability and success of trade among Mozabite traders in Algeria.

- To understand the opinions and attitudes of the study sample regarding the dimensions of work ethics with Islamic values in their business, we used arithmetic means and standard deviations for interpretation.

Table 1. Results Of The Means And Standard Deviations

Relative importance	Standard deviation	The arithmetic mean	
Strongly agree	0,34	4,85	Religious commitment
Strongly agree	0,58	4,55	Good customer service
Strongly agree	0,55	4,58	Honesty in work
Strongly agree	0,58	4,59	Honesty in work
Agreed	0,78	4,16	cooperation and sharing
Strongly agree	0,57	4,55	Average dimensions of work ethics
Strongly agree	0,78	4,25	Sustainability of trade

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the survey results.

It has become evident to us regarding the aspect of religious commitment among the study sample that there are strong opinions about the commitment of the Mozabite traders to their Islamic religious values, where the arithmetic mean was estimated at 4.85 with a standard deviation of 0.34. Their religious commitment is manifested in avoiding financial transactions that involve fraud or usury, as they are prohibited in Islam; their diligence in paying zakat on time; their, dealing with honesty and integrity; and their commitment to

applying Sharia rulings related to buying and selling. They also strongly believe that pleasing God comes before material profit. In general, the arithmetic means for this aspect indicate a significant religious commitment of the study sample traders.

The study results showed that most sample strongly agreed with the importance of honesty with customers, with a mean of 4.59 and a standard deviation of 0.58. Honesty was addressed from several aspects: their refusal to provide misleading or incorrect information to customers, their commitment to ensuring that transactions with customers are clear and transparent, their avoidance of swearing falsely in their business dealings even if they are truthful, and their words being consistent with their actions.

We also observed significant agreement among the study sample regarding the importance of honesty in work, where the arithmetic mean was estimated at 4.58 with a standard deviation of 0.55. The respondents agreed that it was necessary to avoid all forms of cheating and to accept any suspicious or illegal profits. They strongly agreed on the importance of maintaining the tools used in work, adhering to the timely delivery of goods, and utilising work time for diligent work while avoiding time-wasting activities. Overall, these averages indicate that the business climate among M'zab merchants is based on ethics, especially honesty and integrity, which they unanimously agree upon. This may reflect religious and ethical commitment in the community under study.

The study sample members strongly agree on the importance of good customer service in business, with a mean score of 4.55 and a standard deviation of 0.58, in terms of transparency to build trust with the customer, providing the best services, ensuring customer needs are met, and listening well to the customer

After cooperation and consultation, the respondents recorded an agreement with an average of 4.16 and a standard deviation of 0.78, where they agreed that the principle of cooperation enhances their commercial strength as M'zab traders and that they pass on practical experience and knowledge to future generations. Therefore, they could create a distinguished name for themselves at the national level. They also agreed that teamwork was more efficient than individual work.

Regarding the dependent variable, which is the sustainability of trade among the M’zabite traders in Algeria, the study sample strongly agreed on the sustainability of their M’zabite trade, with a mean of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 0.78.

- To test the study hypotheses, Pearson’s correlation coefficients will be calculated between the independent variables and the dependent variable to examine the mutual relationship between the variables, as shown in the following table.

Table .2 Shows The Pearson Correlation Coefficient Test Between Dimensions Of Islamic Work Ethics And Trade Sustainability Among Study Sample Individuals.

		Commitment	Dealing	The trust	Truthfulness	Cooperation	Sustainability of trade
Commitment	Pearson correlation	1	,267*	,432**	,460**	,262*	,219
	Sig. (bilateral)		,020	,000	,000	,022	,050
	N	76	76	76	76	76	76
Dealing	Pearson correlation	,267*	1	,527**	,590**	,342**	,369**
	Sig. (bilateral)	,020		,000	,000	,002	,001
	N	76	76	76	76	76	76
The trust	Pearson correlation	,432**	,527*	1	,680**	,315**	,343**
	Sig. (bilateral)	,000	,000		,000	,006	,002
	N	76	76	76	76	76	76

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	N	76	76	76	76	76	76
Truthfulness	Pearson correlation Sig. (bilateral)	,460**	,590**	,680**	1	,360**	,283**
		,000	,000	,000		,001	,013
	N	76	76	76	76	76	76
Cooperation	Pearson correlation Sig. (bilateral)	,262*	,342**	,315**	,360**	1	,289**
		,022	,002	,006	,001		,011
	N	76	76	76	76	76	76
Sustainability of trade	Pearson correlation Sig. (bilateral)	,219	,369**	,343**	,283*	,289*	1
		,001	,001	,002	,013	,011	
	N	76	76	76	76	76	76

*. The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).
 **The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).
Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the survey results.

It is evident from the table that there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between the dimension of religious commitment and the sustainability of the M’zab trade in Algeria. This leads us to accept sub - hypothesis 1, which states that there is a statistically significant relationship between religious commitment and the sustainability of trade among M’zab traders in Algeria.

Regarding the good treatment of customers and its relationship with trade sustainability, the results of the above table show that there is a statistically significant correlation, with a stronger correlation at (0.001 Sig =). This means that sub- hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant relationship between good customer treatment and trade sustainability among Mozabite traders in Algeria.

Regarding work integrity and its relationship with the sustainability of trade, we observe a somewhat moderate positive correlation that is statistically significant. Therefore, sub-hypothesis 3: There is a statistically significant relationship between work integrity and trade sustainability among Mozabite traders in Algeria. Regarding honesty in work, as well as cooperation and sharing, there is a statistically significant positive correlation at (0.01 = Sig). Thus, sub-hypothesis 4: There is a statistically significant relationship between honesty in work and the sustainability of trade among the Mozabite traders in Algeria, and sub-hypothesis 5: There is a statistically significant relationship between cooperation and sharing in work and the sustainability of trade among the Mozabite traders in Algeria.

More specifically, regarding the relationship between the dimensions with each other, the table above shows that the dimension of "religious commitment" has a strong and direct relationship with the dimensions of trustworthiness and honesty, at 0.432 and 0.460, respectively. This is indeed what Islam encourages. I will rely on the strongest argument for this, the Holy Quran. Allah Almighty said about embodying the trait of honesty: "Among the believers are men true to what they promised Allah." (Surah Al-Ahzab: Verse 23) This means that honesty in Islam is not just a virtue, but a condition of faith and a characteristic of the righteous that Allah praises in His Holy Quran.

Regarding trustworthiness, Islam has emphasised its importance among people, as Allah Almighty says: "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice" (An-Nisa: 58). This command includes trustworthiness in trade, in terms of fulfilling promises and not cheating, as Allah Almighty says: "And give full measure and weight in justice. Do not deprive people of their due and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption" (Hud: 85).

This verse also emphasises the necessity of trustworthiness in buying and selling by not manipulating weights or measures. Furthermore, Allah Almighty says: "O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful]" (An-Nisa: 29). This verse also emphasises the necessity of achieving satisfaction and fairness between parties in commercial transactions. Additionally, a Muslim trader must avoid cheating because it is one of the prohibited transactions and despicable traits that the Prophet warned against: "Whoever cheats on us is not one of us." This indicates that Muslims should be people of piety, righteousness, truthfulness, and trustworthiness, not cheating or deceiving others.

The dimension of "good customer service" showed a somewhat strong correlation with the dimensions of "honesty" and "trustworthiness," scoring 0.590 and 0.527, respectively. Given the importance of this dimension in Islamic religion, the verses from Surah Al-Mutaffifin (verses 1-3) warn against cheating in measurements, as Allah says, "Woe to those who give less and take full measure from others, but when they measure or weigh, they give less."

The relationship between cooperation and sharing was almost directly proportional and moderate with the other dimensions of work ethics.

- To test the impact of the dimensions of Islamic work ethics on business success, we use simple linear regression, as illustrated in the following table:

Table .3. Simple Linear Regression Test To Determine The Impact Of Islamic Work Ethics On Business Success

The Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Regression Coefficient (B)	Correlation Coefficient R	Coefficient Of Determination R ²	Calculated Value Of F	Level Of Significance (Sig)
Islamic Work Ethics	Sustainability Of Trade	0. 414	0. 414	0. 171	15,291	0.000

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the survey results.

We observe from the above table that Islamic work ethics contribute to the sustainability of trade among the study sample individuals, based on the correlation coefficient value of $R = 0.414$. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.171, indicating that Islamic work ethics contributed 17.1% to the sustainability and prosperity of Mezabian trade. The calculated Fisher value was 15.291 at a significance level of 0.000, indicating statistical significance. Therefore, we accept the main hypothesis 2: There is a significant effect of the dimensions of Islamic work ethics on the sustainability of trade among the study sample individuals.

5-1.The Most Prominent Opportunities And The Main Challenges Facing The M’zab Trade In Algeria In Light Of Islamic Work Ethics.

Mezabian traders face many challenges in applying Islamic work ethics, and at the same time, they are presented with numerous new opportunities that this ethical commitment can offer in the current era. These changes are due to various recent economic and technological transformations, as well as changes in customer behaviours and desires.

The following table (table 04) illustrates the most important opportunities and challenges faced by the study sample members according to their responses to the questionnaire.

TABLE .4 Opportunities & Challenges Of M’zab Trade Under Islamic Ethics

Available opportunities	Frequency (number of respondents: 76 individuals)	Percentage %
Expansion into local markets	50	65,79%
Expansion into international markets	24	31,58%
Cost reduction	32	42,11%
Interest-free loans	13	17,11%
Partnerships and mutually beneficial relationships with traders	34	44,74%

Transitioning to e-commerce to reach a wider customer base	37	48,68%
Innovation in products andor services	54	71,05%
Challenges	Frequency	Percentage %
Unfair competition	39	51.32%
Lack of financial resources	21	27.63%
Taxes and fees are charged.	36	47.37%
Customer retention	21	27.63%
Provide all products	36	47.37%

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the survey results.

It is clear from the table above that the majority of the study sample members find that innovation in the products and services offered to customers is the most important opportunity they can currently benefit from, at a rate of 71.05%, by attracting new customers, retaining old customers and improving their competitiveness. This is followed by the opportunity to expand into domestic markets at a rate of 65.79%. In fact, this opportunity is considered an advantage in the Mozabite community, which seeks to earn a living through trade throughout Algeria, due to their entrepreneurial mind set rather than a career path as a professional option. Additionally, the shift to e-commerce to reach a wider customer base represents an important opportunity for Mozabite traders, who agreed upon a rate of 48.68%.

According to the table above, M'zab traders face many challenges when applying Islamic business ethics in their trade, the most important of which is unfair competition at a rate of 51.32%, such as illegal imitation, exploiting their commercial reputation to achieve undeserved profits, or defamation..., followed by taxes and customs duties on imported goods at a rate of 47.37%. The challenge of providing all products to customers at the same rate.

6- DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Regarding the sustainability of trade among the Mozabite merchants in Algeria, they strongly agreed on the sustainability of their Mozabite trade, with an average of

4.25 and a standard deviation of 0.78, considering it an essential part of their identity. They believe they have managed to strike a balance between offering competitive prices to customers and the success and continuity of their trade. They also believe they have been able to acquire sustainable customers, and they consider their commitment to working in the trade sector an essential part of their Mozabite cultural identity. We previously determined the extent of their trade's social and economic sustainability.

Generally, the statistical results show that the sustainability of trade among the study sample individuals has positive correlations with all dimensions of Islamic business ethics, indicating that improving any of these dimensions may contribute to enhancing the sustainability and prosperity of Mozabite trade. It also became clear to us that the dimensions of good customer relations and honesty in work show a stronger correlation with the sustainability of trade among Mozabites, indicating the importance of prioritising them in improvement strategies.

The statistical results also showed a significant impact of Islamic work ethics on the sustainability of trade among the M'zab traders under study, at a rate of 17.1%. This means that the majority of trade sustainability among the M'zab in Algeria may be attributable to other reasons, such as their ability to understand market needs and study customer preferences, efficient inventory management, adapting to market changes, and effective marketing.

7- CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we deduce that the principles of Islamic work ethics are suitable for all fields of work, as confirmed by the study (Aida, 2024) , the study (Khelfaoui, 2024) , and the study (Belkacem Touiza, 2022). In the field of banking, as well as in the study by Abdus Sattar Abbasi, Kashif ur Rehman, and Amna Bibi (Abbasi, 2011) in the field of telecommunications, and even according to our study in the field of trade, the work ethics based on Islamic values have proven their impact on achieving sustainability. They are an important factor for the success of Banu Mezab trade and for earning a good reputation over many years.

Work ethics based on Islamic values in the Mezabian community are considered one of its features and key to its strength and cohesion from generation to generation for centuries. However, this does not mean that it is an ideal society to that extent, as there are individuals who do not

adhere to these ethical principles and are punished by their community for it with strict laws. However, the general atmosphere of the Mozabite community strives to maintain its principles and values. Considering this, Mozabite traders find themselves facing numerous opportunities arising from changes in the labour market and customer desires. They try to take advantage of these opportunities without abandoning or compromising their work ethics. They focus on adopting modern marketing methods such as electronic marketing to, expand their customer base. In addition, they strive to expand into domestic markets, as Mozabite traders are often found throughout the nation and its provinces.

At the same time, M'zab traders face many challenges when applying Islamic work ethics in their trade, the most important of which are unfair competition and the challenge of providing all products to customers as a form of loyalty. The M'zab trader considers his dealings with customers to be a moral contract, and any negligence, deceit, or delay in providing a product is considered a betrayal of this contract, which contradicts his work ethics.

Therefore, the application of Islamic work ethics in the business environment is not just a theory, but a behavioural strategy for individuals working in any field. It bears fruit, albeit after some time, as it focuses on directing individuals' behaviours in line with Islamic ethical values and principles and adhering to them over the years. This gives it a strategic character, contributing to the principle of sustainability in the business environment, building a good reputation and ensuring customer trust. The example of the Mozabite community and its trade embodies this.

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