

THE IMPACT OF ISLAMIC WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATION TOWARDS JOB SATISFACTION AMONG MUSLIM PUBLIC HEALTH EMPLOYEES IN PATTANI PROVINCE, THAILAND

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Abstract

Organizations that have employees professing differing religions face managerial challenges in providing support and fulfilling job satisfaction among their employees. Various studies have found that Muslim workplace discrimination is increasing in recent years while employees practicing Islam in the workplace deals with a challenge in the workplace environment along with their spiritual needs, halal food needs and specifically the dress code of workforces. Within the context of Islam, it is important to understand the Islamic perspective toward Muslim employees' career success because religion and God would impact on Muslim employees' motivation and expectations. The objective of this paper is to examine the relationship between Islamic workplace accommodation and job satisfaction among Muslim Public Health Employees in Pattani Province, Thailand. The research work was done through a survey method among 242 respondents. The correlation analysis by SPSS revealed that there is a significant relationship between Islamic Workplace Accommodation and Job satisfaction among employees.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Public Health, Islamic Workplace Accommodation.

2015 GBSEJournal

Introduction

The perception of job satisfaction has been defined from recent scholars as Rad and Yarmohammadian (2006) defined job satisfaction as an attitude that employees have about their job and the organization in which they work, while Alavi and Askaripur (2003) defined job satisfaction as a perception that specifies the psychological and spiritual enjoyment which employee gets from their job through the fulfillment of needs, interests and expects.

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Job satisfaction is a fundamental concern to any health organization, a higher of job satisfaction among healthcare employees will lead to higher productivity gains and quality improvement. On the other hand, low job satisfaction can cause high staff absenteeism and turnover which will be affected the efficiency of healthcare services as a whole.

The shortage of healthcare human resources has been concerned in many countries around the world (Alameddine, Saleh, El-Jardali, Dimassi & Mourad, 2012). This is similar to Thailand, it has been reported that the number of healthcare employee's turnover in Thailand southernmost provinces (Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat) is increasing in recent years (พยาบาลสามจังหวัด [Nurse in the southernmost provinces], September 2013).

In particular, the statistic data figure 1 shown that the number of resigning among Muslim Public Health employees in Pattani Province is increasing since 2010.

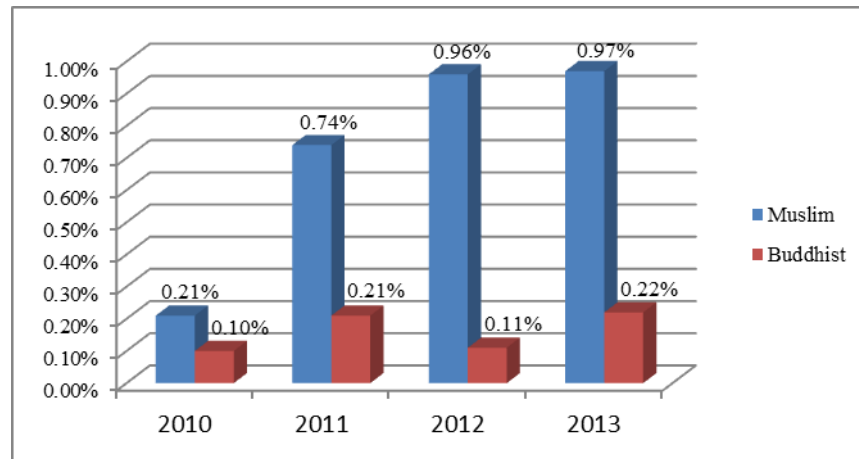


Figure 1: The percentage of resigning among Muslim Public Health employees in Pattani Province

Source: Pattani Public Health Center Database (Received June, 2015)

As the study revealed there was an issue on the number of resigning among Muslim employees who work in Pattani Public Health Center, therefore the impact of Islamic Workplace Accommodation toward employee perception has been examined in this study.

The study found that although the majority of workforces in Thailand southernmost provinces are Muslim, still there was an issue regard to inadequate religious accommodation at workplace as some organizations do not provide a proper prayer room for their employees, therefore they need to pray at rest room or even if they need to pray at the fire escape zone (Sutheravut, 2005).

According to Hassan, Mohammad, Mohd, Rozilah, and Ali (2015) Religion plays an important key in the values that employees hold, while lack of religious accommodation at workplace is one of the reasons may lead employees leave the organization even if they are happy with their work itself. This is consistent with the study of Kelly (2008) some employees are willing to leave their job due to religious accommodation is not feasible.

The Society for Human Resource Management Report (2011) reported that employee retention was most influenced by having a workplace which accommodating religious practices for its employees. In this context, religious practices refer to worship and prayer attending, religious symbols wearing, religious objects displaying, or other forms of religious expression.

However, Ritter (as cited in Kelly, 2008) explained that an employer is required to understandably accommodate the religious faiths of their employees at workplace which the intensity should not create an undue hardship on the business. While Kelly (2008) further described undue hardship is considered as any religious accommodation that would be excessive costly, or would primarily break the operation of the business.

Grim (2015a) found that regardless of an organization's range, employees whose organization offers religious education programs and flexibility for religious practice (Grim, 2015b) tend to be having a higher job satisfaction level than employees in organizations that do not offer such programs. Hence it's very important for the organization to concern on effective strategies and facilitates the religious practices at workplace for their employees.

The study also found that to provide effectively religious practice accommodation is one of the strategies to improve employee work motivation (Kelleher, 2015). Kelly (2008) believed that employees may ask for their faiths and practices which would be accommodated in the workplace while Gelb and Longacre (2012) supported that permitting employees to express their religion could enhance their work motivation and productivity thus the value could be finally returned to increase employees job satisfaction (Grim, 2015a).

Theoretical Background and Hypothesis

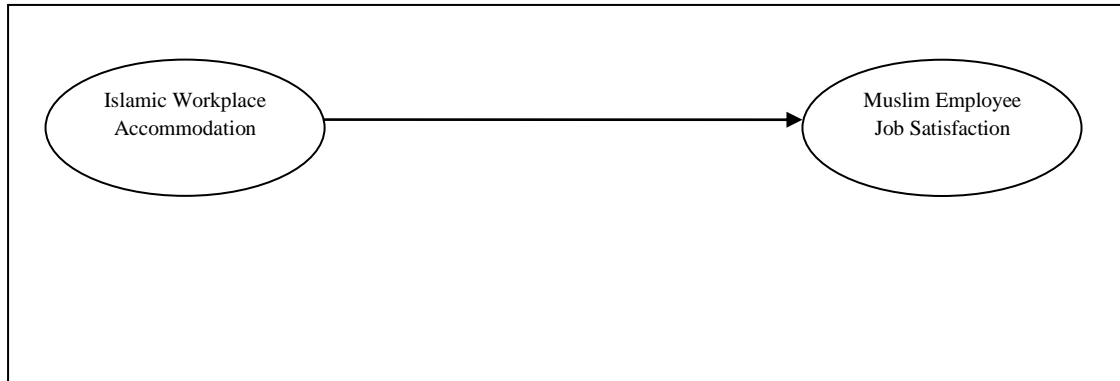
The impacts of Islamic workplace accommodation toward employee job satisfaction have been reviewed in several studies. Ghazzawi, Smith and Cao (2012) suggested that the degree of individual religious intensity does have an effect toward job satisfaction. The study also found that employee who believes in religious faith might be more satisfied on the job than non-religious employee, and the stronger of the religious faith lead to increase the level of job satisfaction.

Ghazzawi and Smith (2009) also explained that religious faiths are the value systems which the individual's religious faith could influence employee work attitudes. Employees who believe on their faiths might see hard-working work as a way to help mankind growth; In Islam, Prophet Mohammed moralized that "hard work caused sins to be absolved" (Yousef, 2001) hence it is a powerful motivator for Muslims who work to obey God. An employee who perceives work as a means to express their faith will be more likely to build an effort to be a good employee. In returns, employers will respond positively which leads to increase level of employee job satisfaction.

In addition, Sa-U, Nik Ab. Rahman and Nordin (2008) explained that Islamic work ethics (IWE) is a form of Islamic's expectations with respect to employees' activities at work which includes his duty, effort, collaboration and social relations. The study found that those who practice Islam

in workplace tend to be more dedicated to their organizations, motivated toward their work and probably more satisfied with their jobs (Yousef, 2001).

On the basis of above study reviews, the theoretical framework in this study is drawn as following model:



The model specifically tests the following hypothesis,

H₁: There is a positive relationship between Islamic Workplace Accommodation and Job Satisfaction among Muslim employees.

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

The samples size in this study is 242 respondents of Muslim Public Health employees in Pattani Province. Distribution a self- administered questionnaire to the respondents by helping from the management in Public Health Center in Pattani is conducted as the data collection in this study. The questionnaire was designed based on prior literatures, and distributed as a Thai language version.

Measurement

Islamic Workplace Accommodation is measured through five question items developed by Borstorff and Arlington (2011). The items are including “The organization has policies in place regarding attire accommodations if an employee’s religious practice conflicts with the dress code”, “The organization has a definite policy regarding my religious holiday (Aidilfitri-Aidiladha Celebration)”, “The organization holds holiday events, and takes into account the faiths of the employees when planning workshops, meetings, trips”, “The organization holds special events involving food and drink which accommodate religious and ethical needs of employees (Halal Food)” and “The organization provides a proper room to perform my prayer”. The Cronbach’s alpha of this scale is 0.82.

Job Satisfaction is measured through three items developed by Jaidee (2007). The items are including “I am happy with my job”, “In general I am satisfied with my job”, and “If I could choose the career again I would make the same decision”. The Cronbach’s alpha of this scale is 0.85. While both Islamic Workplace Accommodation and Job Satisfaction is used a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Analysis

The study analyses the data using program SPSS. Means and Standard Deviations are calculated to present a broader view of the data and determine the level of employee job satisfaction. Correlation analysis is carried out to determine the strength of relationship between Islamic Workplace Accommodation and Job Satisfaction.

Result and Discussion

The sample included 242 participants (78.9 percent female and 21.1 percent male). Age ranged from 18 to 50 and above, the majority of the participants (68.6 percent) were married, while 28.9 percent were single, 2.1 percent divorced, 0.4 percent indicated being widowed. 78.9 percent of the participants were classified as holding a graduate degree, 18.2 percent of the respondents were college education level and only 2.90 percent were master degree holders. 39.3 percent of participants were at professional level, 35.5 percent were experienced level, 13.2 percent were operational level and the rest were practitioner and senior level.

Based on Table 1, H_1 is accepted after Pearson correlation test was conducted. Based on the significant level at 0.01, it indicates that there is a relationship between Islamic Workplace Accommodation and Job Satisfaction. However, the positive value of Pearson correlation indicates the strength of association between Islamic Workplace Accommodation and Job Satisfaction is weak ($r = 0.233$), while the correlation coefficient is very highly significantly different from zero ($P < 0.001$). In addition, Islamic Workplace Accommodation found to be the independent variable with a significant impact on Job Satisfaction ($P < 0.001$) when the variables were entered into the regression equation.

Table 1: Correlation between Islamic Workplace Accommodation and Job Satisfaction

Variable	Pearson Correlation, R	Significant, p	Results
Islamic Workplace Accommodation	0.233	0.000	Accepted

There are several studies indicated the similar result as Hassan et al. (2015) found the positive relationship between accommodations religious belief and employee job satisfaction while employees were satisfied with organizations which determined a clear policy and procedure on

religiosity, providing space for prayer and respect employee dress code according to their religious beliefs.

The study of Yousef (2001) also found that employees in an Arab culture with the practice of Islam tend to be more motivated to work hard and that would be a source of satisfaction among those employees.

While Ali, Khan, Mushtaq, Khan and Naqvi (2013) studied the moderating role of Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) on the relationship between employee commitment and job satisfaction among employees in Pakistan banking sector. The results of the study showed the Islamic Work Ethic directly affects both employee commitment and employee job satisfaction and the Islamic Work Ethic moderates the relationship between employee commitment and job satisfaction.

Conclusion

The ability of religious practices in workplace among employee is one of the factors impact job satisfaction. Several studies indicated it is important to understand the Islamic perspective toward Muslim employees' career success because religion and God would impact on Muslim employees' expectations. The study believed that when organization offers a freedom for Muslim employees to practice their own religious roles at workplace, it would generate positive motivator that ultimately enriched their work. The study also believed that work itself which is tied with an act of Ibadah or the worship of God is the practice to fulfill Muslim employee expectation which lead to impact the level of job satisfaction.

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