

# Analysis of Religious Affiliation and Workplace Attitude as Predictors on Employees' Job Commitment: A Perspective from a Public University in Malaysia

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**ABSTRACT**— *Employees (N = 60) from a public university in the Northern Region of Malaysia participated in this study aimed at examining the level of religiosity and describing their workplace attitude to determine the level of commitment to their employer. The increased importance of religiosity and work attitude in the workplace environment served as a motivation of this study especially in the perspective of Malaysia. Religiosity is closely associated to the act of kindness, trust and honesty toward co-workers. Also, most studies claimed that workplace attitude enhances job commitment. A regression analysis is used to examine the relation among selected variables. The results showed that religiosity, workplace attitude are significantly influenced on positive job commitment outcomes in this study.*

**Keywords**— Religiosity, workplace attitude, job commitment

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Many studies on organizational behavior (OB) have becoming more significant as companies need to adapt to the fast changing business landscape in this competitive and fast-paced era. In business, managers put more focus on ways employees are reacting to various circumstances. Also, they regard organizational behavior as an intricate piece of training and development of the workforce. The corporations need to expand their understanding on attitude and behavior of individuals, groups in organization in managing a new workforce and coping with obstacles of new environment of business which often shifting (Abdul, Jusoh, Amlus and Halim 2013).

Successful organizations have employees who are committed and oblige to their job requirements and willing to sacrifice their time and effort to perform effectively. It is vital to continuously explore ways of instilling job commitment among employees in any organizations in enhancing individual, organizational as well as team performance. The crucial component of effective organizational performance denoted eagerness of the employees putting forth effort beyond the proper responsibilities of their positions (Katz and Kahn, 1978). Job commitment is able to enhance performance due to these behaviors by allowing effective ways of managing the association among employees of different work units and ultimately improve the accomplishment of the organizational or departmental final goals (Sikorsa-Simmons, 2005).

Previous studies have focused in discovering factors contributing to job commitment with the empirical proofs which contributes to organization and team effectiveness. However, there is still much to learn on factors that manipulate the performance (Penner, Midili and Kegelmeyer, 1997). According to Davidson and Caddell (1994), less research in social science was conducted on the influence of religiosity in the business environment, organizational condition as well as the economic performance. Assessment of current literature shows lack of studies in regard to religiosity, work attitude and job commitment particularly in Malaysia. The aim of this study is to synthesize these variables in effort to analyse the significant relations between them.

While the review of literature indicates less in this matter, there are some proclamations that religion may affect one's work orientation. A study by Davidson and Caddell (1994) reported that some influence of religiosity on perceiving work as a calling; and other studies concluded that religiosity serves to ultimate level of dedication to and level of satisfaction at work (Loveland, Sikkink, Myers and Radcliffe, 2005). In addition to this, Tamney and Johnson (1985) and Lynn, Naughton and Vander Veen (2011), past studies have dictated that strong religiously has inspired intention of one's work environment, and conclude that religious fundamentalists perceive their beliefs and values of being religious have significantly impacting on their work conditions. Importantly, individuals tend to perceive religiosity as building relations at the workplace, an action of being kind and honest toward colleagues.

### **1.1 Research objectives**

- a) To examine the significant effect of religious affiliation on job commitment among public university employees in Malaysia.
- b) To examine the significant effect of work attitude on job commitment among public university employees in Malaysia.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Religiosity**

Religion is referred as a group affiliation whereas religiosity or religiousness is the level of one's practices and lives by his or her faith values (King, Stewart and McKay, 2010). Religion is directed into a state of being a member; on the other hand religiosity establishes spirituality and the living of a specific religion's principles (Holdcroft, 2006). Religion is a prior condition towards religiosity in spite of the fact that an individual adherent to a specific religious group without practicing it.

According to McDaniel and Burnett (1990), religion is a set of belief in God along with obligation towards principles or rules set by God. It is a norm where the one of the central standpoint of an individual is religion and faith as well as emotional attachment or feelings toward religion. Religion is defined as a system of belief which involve the creator (God) as well as supernatural occurrence (Bernardin, 2006). The extent in which an individual is regarded as a religious person aside from one's distinct religious beliefs and the way those beliefs are manifested is classified as religiosity (Vitell, 2009). The inclination towards religious beliefs ought to denote one's correspondence towards a set of principles which provide some extent of social controls for individuals (Rohrbaugh and Jessor, 1975 in Rostovsky, Wilcox, Wright and Randall, 2004).

A study by Fukuyama (1960) dictated four dimensions of religiosity namely; cognitive, cultic, creedal and devotional. Further, Cardwell (1980) summarized that cognitive refers to what individual knows about religion (i.e. religious knowledge), cultic is concerned with how references are made by individual (i.e. religious practices), creedal pertains to a personal religious belief, and devotional involve feelings and experiences (i.e. the experiential dimension). Two distinctive aspects of religiosity were identified by Allport and Ross (1967 in Gyekye and Haybatollahi, n.d) are namely; extrinsic and intrinsic. The utilitarian stimulus which brings about religious behaviors is referred as extrinsic facet, involving the use of religious for personal interest specifically in gaining popularity, attaining business targets or to establish friendship.

Conversely, intrinsic dimension suggests the stimulus based upon the natural goals, leading a person to be more devout by means of abide by religious requirements such as saying prayers or engage in voluntary community services (Vitell, 2009), as well as fulfilling one's religious obligation (Allport and Ross, 1967 1967 in Gyekye and Haybatollahi, n.d). One of the elements involved in the prediction of individuals' dissimilarity in multiplicity of attributes and behavior has been acknowledged as religiosity (Lau, 1989 in Fontaine, Duriez, Luyten, Corveleyn and Hutsebaut, 2011).

### **2.2 Workplace attitude**

Attitudes are referred as state of feelings that determine on ways organizational members perceive their surroundings, reactions as well as behavior. Attitude is defined as an inner condition that tends to adjust on individual's preferences in regard to one's effort as well as reactions (Bianey and Stephanie, 2004). Organizational members have

various attitudes or a way of looking at matters related to their jobs, careers advancement, as well as on their employing organizations.

Michael (2008) asserted that job attitude does affect the overall performance of the workers. The attitude of the employees on their level of satisfaction and involvement are vital in attaining better performance (Velnampy, 2008). Lee and Chen (2013) mentioned, characteristic such as age, gender, job level, education level and job status have significant impact on job attitude. Employees' job attitudes are ultimate to obtain the individual and organizational objectives through their performance. Workers' job attitudes may alter their decision making process in the organization (Suleiman, 2013).

### **2.3 Job commitment**

In early research, commitment was tied to the emotional attachment of employees in relation to involvement (Allen and Meyer, 1990) then later expanded to include emotional aspects towards dedication to the organisation (Rhoades, Eisenberger and Armeli, 2001). Jaramilo, Mulki and Marshall (2005) identify employee commitment to an organisation as a continued committed service (Meyer, 1997) and as identification and involvement (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979 in Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnysky, 2002). Organisational commitment is how much a worker identifies with an organisation and the level of commitment that worker has when performing his or her duty.

Jaramilo et al. (2005) stressed that commitment derived from what makes an employee thinks of whether to retain or leave; and how an employee perceives the organisation (Spector and Fox, 2002). Meyer and Allen (1997 in Bansal, Irving and Taylor, 2004) have conceptualised three components model of commitment namely; affective; continuance; and normative found as distinguishable elements of commitment.

Brunetto and Farr-Wharton (2003) focused on affective commitment and found that past studies focused on aspects of job satisfaction and performance, workplace communication, stress levels, fairness and support of upper management, the perceived ability for promotion, turnover and the intention to switch jobs. Two concepts pertaining to employee attachment to an organisation are the concepts of continuance and normative.

Continuance refers to how much an employee wants to remain as a member and how much participation that employee is willing to give (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnysky, 2002). Normative refers to the emotional obligation of an employee to an organisation and this may explain the attendance level of employees (Meyer and Allen, 1991, in Bakker, Demerouti, de Boer and Schaufeli, 2003).

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research design**

A quantitative analysis served the purpose of this study. A survey questionnaire is used in obtaining the required information. Isaac and Michael (1990 in Kix, 2007) explained that surveys are the most widely used technique in the behavioral sciences in acquiring data to measure personal and social information of individuals or organizations. Babbie (2004) stated that one of the advantages of employing a survey research is the format of this research allows accurate, step-by-step development and testing of such logical explanation. Survey questionnaires were distributed to respondents in order to gather the needed information. The data were then analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0.

### **3.2 Population and sampling**

Population is represented by a group of people or organization in which interest the researchers on specific study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). The samplings in this study are the administrative officers ( $n = 60$ ) in a University in the Northern Region of Malaysia who are currently serving various departments. The respondents were voluntarily participated in this study. Their participation consists of filling up a survey questionnaire (20 minutes to complete) and that all data were collected and treated as confidential.

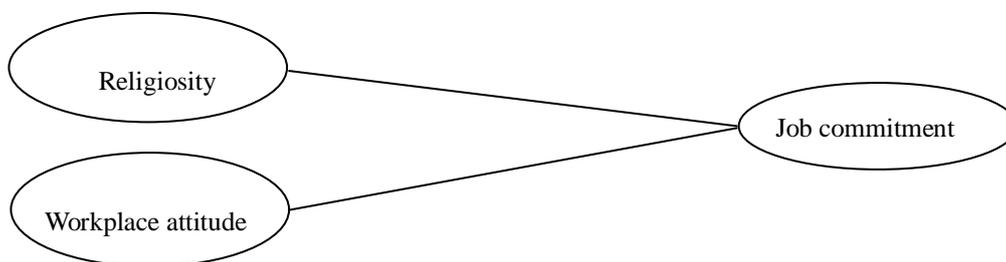
### **3.3 Instrument measurements**

There were several separate measures representing the study variables and comprising the data collection instrument. The instruments used were based on the past studies which are reliable.

- 3.3.1 Part A - comprised of demographic, characteristics, individual as well as religious identification items. Sequences of items are used to gather respondents' age, gender, marital status, ethnicity and religion.
- 3.3.2 Part B - demonstrates the respondent's being religious (religiosity). This instrument was adopted from Jessor's Value on Religion Scale which developed by Jessor and Jessor (1977). There are four items which anchored by 4 – Likert scale (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = often, and 4 = always). A study conducted by Wills, Yeager and Sandy (2003) has reported that the internal consistency reliability ( $\alpha$ ) was 0.78 to 0.81.
- 3.3.3 Part C – indicates the respondent's perceptions toward their current job. The instrument was adopted from the Job in General Scale which developed and validated in studies by Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson and Paul, 1989). The eighteen items were anchored by 4 – Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree). In this support, a study conducted by Rogelberg, Luong, Sederburg and Cristol (2000) has indicated that the consistency reliability ( $\alpha$ ) was 0.88 to 0.91.
- 3.3.4 Part D – indicates the job commitment. The instrument was adapted from (Meyer, Stanley, Hercovitch and Topolnysky, 2002) on the employees' job commitment toward their tasks. There are fifteen items altogether without any amendments or adjustments on the statements. A study by Abdul (2013) has concluded that the consistency reliability ( $\alpha$ ) was 0.71 to 0.75. The items were anchored by 4 – Likert scale (1 = very much disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = very much agree).

### 3.4 Research model

The test variables of this study are shown in **Figure 1** as follow:



**Figure 1:** Research framework

### 3.5 Hypotheses

From the above framework model, the following hypotheses were derived as follows:

- Ho1. There is no significant effect of religiosity on job commitment among public university employees in Malaysia
- Ha1. There is a significant effect of religiosity on job commitment among public university employees in Malaysia.
- Ho2. There is no significant effect of workplace attitude on job commitment among public university employees in Malaysia.
- Ha2. There is a significant effect of workplace attitude on job commitment among public university employees in Malaysia.

#### 4. FINDINGS

**Table 1** shows the correlational analysis between dependent variable and predictors namely workplace attitude and religiosity. A positive correlation coefficient,  $r = 0.601$  denotes both the religiosity and job commitment have a relatively strong relationship. The  $r$  value for workplace attitude and job commitment is 0.569, depicting that there is reasonably moderate relationship between both variables. The statistically significant correlation between the two variables is Sig. (2-tailed) value which is less than 0.05.

**Table 1:** Bivariate correlations test

Variables	Coefficient	Job Commitment
Religiosity	Pearson Correlation	.601**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	5
Workplace Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.569**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	5

Further, the regression analysis was conducted to identify the relative magnitude for each of the independent variable in the extrapolation of dependent variable. The  $R$  symbolizes the multiple correlation coefficients, denoting the relationship strength for a given independent variable related to the dependent variable. The closer the  $R^2$  to 1, signifying the regression model fits the data better as most of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the model.

The  $R^2$  value for two independent variables embedded in the regression model in **Table 2** is 0.451, indicating that 45 percent of the variance in job commitment is explained by variance of independent variables.

**Table 2:** Regression analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.671 <sup>a</sup>	.451	.387	.28110

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), Workplace Attitude and Religiosity  
Dependent variable: Job Commitment

As exhibited in **Table 3**, the element of religiosity has significance correlation (Sig.  $t = 0.022$ ) on job commitment. Religiosity ( $\beta = 0.417$ ,  $t = 2.442$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was found significance and indicated a positive association towards job commitment. Religiosity was found to be worthy element in determining the job commitment with the standard deviations of 0.417. Additionally, workplace attitude also indicated a significance positive relationship ( $\beta = 0.346$ ,  $t = 2.010$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) on the job commitment.

**Table 3:** Regression Coefficients

Model	Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.405	.633		.641	.527
	Religiosity	.413	.169	.417	2.442	.022
	Workplace Attitude	.442	.220	.346	2.010	.055

## **5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The study examined the job commitment of administrative officers in a public university in Malaysia affiliated with religiosity and workplace attitude. As indicated by the preliminary results, both the religiosity and job attitude with organizational behavior have a relatively strong relationship between each other. It denotes that religiosity and workplace attitude both have significant contribution in determining the employees' job commitment within the selected institution. The null hypotheses were rejected in this study due to significantly positive relationships between variables were statistically proven.

Religiosity does act as motivation in performing better in organizations (Nichols, 2004). It promotes as a medium of motivating individuals to work harder and perform better in the organizations. Being religious does not focused mainly on attaining success nevertheless the ability to learn, respect, appreciate and value other people's religion and belief (Mattison, Jayaratne, and Croxton, (2000).

In this relation, the inherent feelings and beliefs in employees greatly determine how they cope and perceive the surrounding environment, obligating themselves towards the intended motion and behavior. From a mental set point of view, attitudes shape the way people view on matters. Positive job attitudes exhibit among the employees are noteworthy in achieving organizations goals and objectives. As asserted by Micheal (2008), job attitude does affect the overall performance of the workers. Jahangir, Akbar and Haq (2004) stressed that success and longevity of organization in business depends on the positive behavior shown by their employees. This research enhances the understanding of religiosity and workplace attitude influences on job commitment, providing evidence in the Malaysian perspective.

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