

## Work Motivation among Muslim Public Health Employees in Pattani Province, Thailand

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### Abstract

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This paper is based on research conducted on Public Health sector in Pattani Province, Thailand. Public Health is a basic principle of the health care system to reduce the causes of disease and injury. Public Health Center in Pattani is governed under the Thai Public Health Ministry to promote a healthier lifestyle among the population in Pattani province. The study examines the factors influencing work motivation among Muslim Public Health Employees. Specifically, it will examine the importance of the factor of Islamic Workplace Accommodation and Nature of Work toward Work Motivation. Based on a questionnaire survey of 242 employees, this study applies the correlation approach to investigate the research model. The results showed that that the relationship between the Islamic Workplace Accommodation and Nature of Work are positive toward Work Motivation.

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**Keywords:** Work Motivation; Islamic workplace accommodation; Nature of work; Public health employee; Muslim.

### 1. Introduction

Nowadays human resources management plays an important role in managing an efficient workforce by getting the right employees to work for the organization. Several strategies focus on keeping the right workforces while the plan serving this strategy is to have a loyal and motivated workforce in order to meet the organization's successfulness.

The perception of work motivation has been defined as the force that drives employee to perform a particular action to achieve personal and his organization goals (Vroom, 1964). While recent scholars defined work motivation as the concept of employee enhancing and maintaining effort toward some

expected goal (Humphreys and Einstein, 2004). Similar to Berman, Bowman, West and Wart (2010) defined work motivation as the power that drives employees to deal with some actions to accomplish some goals.

The lack of motivated employee tends to reduce their job satisfaction which allows the number of employee turnover increasing. In this relation, the study found that the job turnover among Healthcare in Thailand southernmost provinces (Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat) is increasing in current years (“พฤษภาคม3จว,” 2013).

In particular, the study also found that the number of Muslim Public Health employees’ turnover in Pattani Province is increasing since 2010 (Source: Pattani Public Health Center Database, received June, 2015).

### *1.1 Problem statement*

There have been several of the previous studies explored the factors which influence work motivation however it remains unexplored to some extent when it comes to study in dissimilar work environment such as religious diversity at workplace issue.

The study also found that there are a limited number of researches related to work motivation among Muslim employees in Thailand. Hence, there is a gap with regard to the problem of the Islamic workplace accommodation toward work motivation for organizations in Thailand.

This research will begin to fill this gap by studying further the interactions between Islamic Workplace Accommodation and Work Motivation among Muslim employees in Pattani province where it is one of the southernmost provinces of Thailand which the majority of the population is Muslim (Campbell, 2013).

### *1.2 Theoretical background and hypothesis*

Religion faith is one of the most important social foundations that are significantly related with human’s mind-set and behaviours. Religion determines respectively the impacts to the organization matters including the management and employees’ decisions (Rafiki and Wahab, 2014).

The study of Sulaiman, Ahmad, Sbaih and Kamil (2014) revealed that it is necessary to follow the Islamic perspective toward Muslim employees’ career achievement because religion is one of factors which impact on Muslim employees’ motivation and expectations.

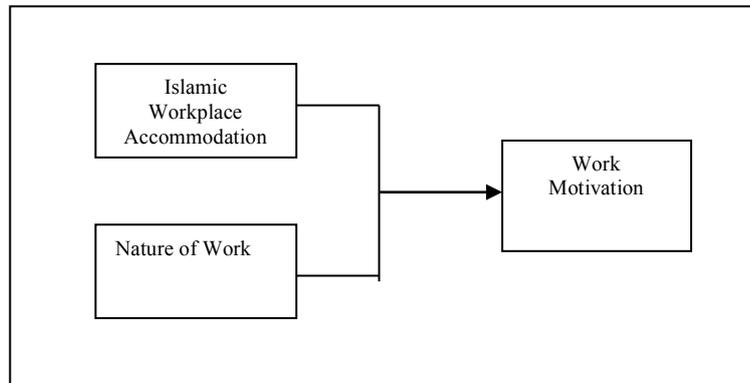
The study of Ahmad (2009) found that one of the most important factors that impact on Muslim employee motivation is work itself which is typically gather with an act of the worship of God.

With regards to Muslim employees, Kelly (2008) described that to involve Islamic practices in the workplace deals with a challenge in the recent workplace environment along with the spiritual needs, food needs and specifically the dress code of women workforces. The study of Ball and Haque (2003) found that the most religious need of Muslims is the obligatory prayer five times a day which the prayer is not an informal thing but it has to be performed at particular times of the day.

Existing researchers have found a relationship between other various factors toward work motivation. However, nature of work was cited as one of the most factors impact work motivation

among healthcare employees in Thailand. Therefore, this study also has been focused on the impact of nature of work toward work motivation.

On the basis of above study reviews, the conceptual framework in this study is drawn as following figure 1:



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework of the study

The framework expressly tests the following two hypotheses,

- H1: There is a positive relationship between Islamic Workplace Accommodation and Work Motivation.
- H2: There is a positive relationship between Nature of Work and Work Motivation.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Sample and data collection

The population was defined as 657 and the unit of analysis is Muslim Public Health employees who work in Pattani Public Health Center. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the samples size in this study is 242 respondents. Simple Random Sampling is used as a sampling technique in this study.

A self-administered questionnaire has distributed to the respondents. The questionnaire was designed based on prior literatures. However, the questions has carefully translated and worded into Thai language, reviewed by an expert in both Thai and English language thus it would be easily understood and consistency in expression by the respective respondents.

### 2.2 Analysis

All dependent variable and independent variables are measured by multiple items. The results of variables measurement have accepted when Cronbach's alpha values, ranging from .73 to .97.

Data is analyzed using statistical methods based on the research hypotheses. It is processed using the "Statistical Package for the SocialSciences" or SPSS. Pearson correlation technique is used to

determine the relationship between Islamic Workplace Accommodation, Nature of Work, and Work Motivation.

### 3. Result and discussion

The majority of the respondents were female (78.9%) from the age ranged between 18 to 50 and above, most of the respondents were married (68.6%), and holding a bachelor degree (78.9%). There were 39.3% of the respondents who work at professional level, and 35.5% were experienced level, however, only 13.2% were operational level.

Based on Table 1, Hypothesis 1 is accepted after the study found that there is a relationship between Islamic Workplace Accommodation and Work Motivation ( $P < 0.001$ ). However, the positive value of Pearson correlation shows the weak strength of relationship between Islamic Workplace Accommodation and Work Motivation ( $r = 0.228$ ).

This is similar to Hypothesis 2; it is accepted after the result shows that there is a relationship between Nature of Work and Work Motivation ( $P < 0.001$ ). However, the positive value of Pearson correlation shows the weak strength of relationship between Nature of Work and Work Motivation ( $r = 0.281$ ).

**Table 1.** Correlation between Islamic Workplace Accommodation, Nature of Work, and Work Motivation

Variable	Pearson Correlation, R	Significant, p	Mean, $\bar{x}$	Results
Islamic Workplace Accommodation	0.228	0.000	4.28	Accepted
Nature of Work	0.281	0.000	4.33	Accepted

Numerous studies shown the similar findings as Bergen and Mawer (2008) attending worship, wearing religious attire or symbols, displaying religious objects or other forms of religious expression are impact toward employees' motivation. Whereas Borstorff and Cunningham (2013) also found that one of the sources of work motivation among employees is the facility of religious practices in workplace.

Meanwhile the study of Ahmad (2009) found that one of the most important factors that affect Muslim employee motivation is work itself which is tied together with an act of the worship of God.

The study of Sav, Harris and Sebar (2013) also believed that when employer gives a freedom for Muslim workforces to perform their own religious duties at workplace, it naturally produces a higher positive motivator which finally improves a quality of their own work.

### 4. Implications of the study

The importance of the study findings strengthens the previously found theoretical support (Zaman, Nas, Ahmed, Raja and Marri, 2013). Previous studies had examined religious practices in Islamic context. However, this study implication does not only support the past findings between Islamic

context and work motivation. It also focuses attention on the other factor including nature of work toward work motivation among Muslim employees.

The findings of this study also present practical implications for employees, especially Muslim employees who work in the southernmost of Thailand provinces in regard to the importance of offering Islamic religious accommodation in workplaces to enhance work motivation.

An introduction to the Islamic practices in Human Resources management might create a challenge for organizations as Muslim employees generally requires several religious accommodations compared to other religious believes. However, this knowledge would be advantageous to organizations when applying the Islamic approach in managing Muslim employees, while non-Muslim management team will have a better understanding of the expected practices of their Muslim colleagues.

## 5. Conclusion

Work Motivation is a fundamental concern to any organizations. This study focuses an understanding of the determinants of work motivation among Muslim employees. The study showed that healthcare staff plays important role in determining the efficiency of healthcare systems. Specifically, the study showed that Islamic practices accommodated in workplace were positively impact work motivation among Muslim employees. The study believes that work motivation ensures the quality of healthcare, as dissatisfied and less motivated healthcare workforces are more likely to give low quality and less proficient care. Hence, it is important to identify what encourage the healthcare workforces and to what extent they are motivated with their job.

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