



The Impact of Self-improvement (Etqan) on Employees Effectiveness Case of Jordan

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Abstract: This paper presents an analysis of the impact of the Arab Islamic culture self-improvement (Etqan) on employees' effectiveness in one of the important private sectors, Jordanian commercial banks, with depth from the employees' perspective. To achieve integration as the key to building noble beliefs and morals based on religious values, spiritual competencies can play a major role (Nasution, 2019). According to Ababneh and Avramenko (2016), it has been largely ignored in work organization the influence of religion on administration practices and its role in human behaviour. This paper tries to shed light by considering its impact on institutional performance and employee's effectiveness. In a reign as Jordan, religion is a core element in people daily base, as its support from the government. A benefit is a prevalent behaviour inside and outside the work environment (Buthina, Hefin, Brychan, & Caryn, 2020). The question is 'what is the degree of influence of practising religious practices? This study examines the impact of self-improvement (Etqan) on Arab Islamic culture and employees' effectiveness. This is one of the more critical areas to explore, as it plays a key role in communities and is arguably the most important private sector impacting the economy there. Data were analyzed from employees from five commercial banks in Jordan with a sample size of 174. Therefore, statistical tests were utilized to test the hypotheses of this study. The empirical results of the research show there is a statistically significant effect of Self-Improvement (Etqan) on HR performance in commercial banks in Jordan. Only a few studies focus on validating Western models through Islamic principles. The current study sheds light on the reality of the Western cultural impact on organizations and their apparent adaptation to Western management practices and exploring and reflecting on the impact on organizational performance in general and employees' effectiveness.

Keywords: HR performance, culture, Etqan, values, work environment

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INTRODUCTION

The attitude of community members can shape and influence by both dimensions (Dana, 2009). Muslim community is the second largest religious community worldwide and comprises 24.1% of the world (Pew Research Center, 2017). Its argue that there is no enough studies and literature about the impact of Islamic values and religious practices on in the Islamic society. Despite Islam's spread and an increased tension to study (see for example (Hoque, Mamun, & Mamun, 2014; Gümüşay, 2015; Ratten, Ramadani, Dana, & Gërguri-Rashiti, 2017; Tlaiss, 2015), Thus, this paper investigates the following research questions: Do self-improvement (Etqan) value influence employees effectiveness? Is this impact AZmediated by an individuals attitude towards employees effectiveness?

There are many studies focus on the impact of organizational and national cultures on organization performance (Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, & Sanders, 1990; Pool, 2000; Wilson, 2001; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta,

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2004; Silva, Roque, & Caetano, 2015). In particular HR effectiveness (Aycan et al., 2000; Denison & Mishra, 1995; Jaeger & Kanungo, 1990; Mendoza & Gempes, 2018; Mendonca & Kanungo, 1994; Stone & Deadrick, 2015).

However, the impact of religion on management practice and its role in relation to human behaviour has been largely ignored (Ababneh & Avramenko, 2016), and the association between religious beliefs, management practices and organizational outcomes has been conspicuously ignored in mainstream management research (P. S. Budhwar & Mellahi, 2010). Adding on, the modern day Islamic feud needs to be dealt with utmost concern by a person of a wide knowledge about the regulations and laws of the divine. The lack of such knowledge may lead organization to refrain from following through with the Islamic guidelines (Abdul Cader, 2017). As claimed by a worldwide survey an 80 percentage of respondents said that religion is an essential part of their lives, some add that religion also takes part in the demographical department (McQuillan, 2004; Sedikides, 2010).

According to Abbasi, Mir, and Hussain (2012) an interest has been increased in observing the influence of Islamic ethical values on different dimensions of organizational work environments with some suggesting that Islamic work ethics have contributed to organizational learning and innovation. It can have significantly affect overall performance of an organization as it has a positive influence on individual and collective learning (Abbasi et al., 2012). This positive impact of the ethics of Islamic work on job satisfaction and organizational commitment has perhaps been a given, yet. Rokhman (2010) argued that the impact of Islamic work ethics has no impact evidence on turnover intention. For its people Islam is a comprehensive approach not only a religion it focuses on individual private life acting as a guide for humans in their interactions and activities in their daily life (Sulaiman, Sabian, & Othman, 2014).

Most Jordanian organizations decided to adopt Western management practices in the belief they will enhance competitiveness because of the impact of globalization and liberalization. Furthermore, an attention has been paid to the important of study the culture as an explanatory variable from both researchers and practitioners. According to Aycan et al. (2000) human resource management practices and techniques may not be effective in other socio-cultural environments and critical of adapted as it has evolved in the context of Western cultural values. Only few studies focus on the validating Western models through Islamic principles (Abdul Cader, 2017). It is important to shed light on the reality of Western cultural impact on organizations and their apparent adaptation to Western management practices, and to explore and reflect on the impact on organizational performance in general and also employees effectiveness.

The explore of the relationship between cultural values and employees effectiveness from the religious perspective, and to explore the reality of this, will be the purpose of this paper in Jordanian commercial banks, one of the largest organizations in the private sector there. It plays an important role in financing and supporting different aspects in the economy and society, and the commercial banks in Jordan. The kingdom, with a dominant and historical religion, strongly supports religious practices and 92% of the countrys population are Muslims (Saleh & Zeitun, 2006).

Objective of the Study

The following objective achieved by conducted this study:

- To investigate if self-improvement, being one of the Arab Islamic values, has any type of impact on employees effectiveness from the employees perspective in the commercial banks in Jordan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

When developing management strategies religion and religiosity cannot be ignored in the workplace (Abdul Cader, 2017). According to Aba Al-Khail (2004), for its adherents Islam is a concenter, a holistic way of life. Islam as religion has an impact on human behaviour and actions as a result (A. J. Ali, 2010). To build balance in the life of human beings and social life in Islam work has been treated as an obligatory activity (A. Ali, 1988; Nasr, 1984). Labour and employees who engage in economic activities can get a noble position by Islam when work giving a religious, social and economic dimension (A. J. Ali, 2010).

It is argued that both Muslim migration to the West and conversions to Islam within the West are consolidating a new human Islamic presence since the second half of the twentieth century (Shuja, 2000). According to (Shuja, 2000) a quarter of the human race will probably be a Muslim in the twenty-first century as almost one out of every five human beings is a Muslim since the beginning of the twenty-first century. This may well be an indication, from a new demographic perspective, that Islamisation is now a major globalising force. According to the Pew Research Center (2015), the Muslim community accounts for 32.2 percent of the worlds population. Statistically, Catholicism is the number one religion while Islam is becoming the second most important religion. Furthermore, in Central Asia Islam now is currently the fastest growing religion (Shuja, 2000).

Islam is not just a religion to believers; it is a comprehensive way of life (Aba Al-Khail, 2004; Abbasi, Akhter, &

Umar, 2011; Abbasi et al., 2012; K. Ahmad & Ogunsola, 2011; A. J. Ali, 1992; H. Ahmad, 1976; Kumar & Rose, 2010). All aspects of Muslim life are regulated by Sharia, the main sources of which are the Quran (considered by Muslims to be the holy word of God), and the Sunnah (Hadith) (the sayings and deeds of the prophet Muhammad).

According to A. J. Ali and Weir (2005) from the Islamic management perspective it is important to pay attention to individuals on the basis of acting for the benefit of the all in society. Islamic philosophy places great importance also on the functioning or practice of management because individuals who carry out these roles have their values and belief systems structured by Islamic philosophy (Ababneh & Avramenko, 2016). Furthermore, Sulaiman et al. (2014) argue that all aspects of human life are covered by Islamic law, and this is the most remarkable characteristic of it. In spite of cultural differences, it transcends national and ethical differences as well as time and place, encompassing all activities, including social, political and economic. In the way in which organizations are managed Islam therefore has implications (Ababneh & Avramenko, 2016).

According to Zaman and Goschin (2015), it is ones sense of self-accountability which shapes their behaviour, whether they are in a managing position or in a subordinate position. Through this characteristic, one is able to carry out the responsibilities or tasks assigned to them in an honest and fair manner. The Prophet Muhammad (blessings of Allah and peace be upon him) said: no one eats better food than that which he eats out of the hard work of his own hand (Al-Bukhari, 1987).

The Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) stated that: His nation cannot agree upon an error, if a conflict persists be with the majority (Ibn-e-Majah). Within organizations, it is expected that managers or individuals in higher positions are to consult their workers prior to making decisions. Furthermore, it must be ascertained that the services or products of such organizations do not create any sort of harm or infliction.

Also, matters such as completion, consumption and product allocation must also be legitimate, and cooperation and teamwork are encouraged and emphasized (Ababneh & Avramenko, 2016). The Quran (5:2) also states: Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancor. According to A. Ali (1988) in Islamic work ethics, the evaluation of ones work is taken from the intentions rather than the actual outcome. He also puts forward the idea that the aspects of generosity and justice within the workplace are indispensable in order for society to benefit and progress, and that no individual should be denied their rightful salary. The Quran strongly encourages people to learn and to develop themselves through acquiring skills, and highly commends those who seek to earn their own living. In fact, the Quran deplores those who are idle and unproductive. The Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) stated: Who uses his knowledge in work; he will be granted more knowledge from God This highlights the idea that Islam highly encourages and commemorates hard work and the acquisition of knowledge. God states in the Quran (28:26) O my (dear) father! Engage him on wages: truly the best of men for thee to employ is (man) who is strong and trustworthy. From this, one can understand that Muslims are encouraged to gain skills and to always be motivated in order for them to progress, which will in turn enable them to succeed in employment.

Islamic cultural value deserves serious inquiry as it is the ideal that Muslims seek to realize (Nasr, 1984). In addition, Islam is one of the most influential factors shaping current Arab value systems (A. Ali, 1988). According to King Jr, Bell, and Lawrence (2009) religion is among the most significant factors in human behaviour and interaction.

Finally, K. Ahmad and Ogunsola (2011) argued that Islamic work values stand not for life denial but for life fulfilment and hold business motives in the highest regard (Yousef, 2001). According to Yousef (2001), those who believe in Islam and its practice are more likely to be further committed to their organizations and presumably more satisfied with their jobs.

According to Branine and Pollard (2010), there is a gap that exists between theory and practice of Islamic management in Arab countries despite the importance of Islam in Arab countries, in general and Jordan in particular.

Therefore, the important question which one should ask is: to what extent are the above principles and values of Islamic culture practiced in commercial banks in Jordan and what is their influence on human resource performance? The answer seems to be that there is in fact very little evidence suggesting that such principles and values are being carried out by Jordanian managers, and this seems to be due to the fact that management in general, and particularly human resource management, are also highly influenced by non-Islamic traditions and principles, and by Western management conventions and theories, as will be discussed in the following section.

Research Hypotheses

After reviewing the literature, this study provides the following hypotheses:

H1: *There is no statistically significant effect of Self-improvement (Etqan) on employees effectiveness in the commercial banks in Jordan.*

Research Model

Figure 1 below is the research model of the study. It illustrates independent variables (Arab Islamic values: self-improvement (Etqan)) and their impact on the dependent variable of employees effectiveness in five of the commercial banks in Jordan.



Figure 1 *Analysis Framework*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research design was used in this study, the population and sampling, data collection methods, validity and reliability are now considered.

Population and Sampling Method

The target population for this study includes permanent workers in five commercial banks in Jordan who agreed to be part of this study. The data sampling strategy involved a questionnaire survey distributed to 174 managers, manager assistants, division heads, branch heads, and employees. To ensure enough participation of employees in the study the questionnaire, it was randomly distributed. Some 160-questionnaire survey forms were returned of which 155 were useable. The total response rate was 95%. To find out the association between Islamic culture values and employees effectiveness by applied descriptive statistics, Correlation and Regression analysis,

SPSS version 22 has been used to process the data gathered by the questionnaire survey.

Collection of Data Methods

Two types of data collection method, primary data: through questionnaire survey design, and data from literature including books, articles reports and information about Jordanian commercial banks from their websites, were used in this study. The questionnaire was developed through a literature review and pilot study, which took place prior to main data collection with two human resource managers in the commercial banks in Jordan. As the Arabic language is the official language in Jordan, the questionnaire was initially developed and distributed in Arabic, and all the population are able to read and write it. An English-language expert (Assistant Professor in English Language teaching in the English Department in an Islamic private university in Jordan and Arabic his mother language) translated from Arabic to English after the Associate Professor in the Arabic Language in a public university in Jordan checked for grammatical errors.

The language of questionnaires in research can affect not just attitudes, but also behaviours (Akkermans, Harzing, & Van Witteloostuijn, 2010).

The questionnaire contained three sections, a covering letter that included the aim of the study that politely and respectfully asked the participant to answer the questionnaire. The researchers contact information was provided at the end of this section.

Section two included general information (Demographic Characteristics) about the respondents. The last section included questions related to Arab Islamic values (self-improvement (Etqan)) and employees effectiveness.

Research Validity

Joppe (2000) defined validity from quantitative study as : Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are (Golafshani, 2003). To establish the validity of the questionnaire and the criteria of analysis these were checked by a jury of two professors - one an associate professor from Mutah University/Jordan and the other from the Tafilah Technical University/Jordan. To facilitate this,

the staff and managers task of responding to the questionnaire and interviews enable them to respond without having to worry about understanding the meaning of the question. The questionnaire was in Arabic, as it is the mother language for the participants.

The validity measures indicate that the Pearson correlation values between each item and the total of the dimension, in a statistical perspective. This kind of correlation that could be achieved is an integer one (1) so generally all of this value will be considered as a good correlation value (i.e., 0.50 or higher). Regarding the results, all values provided in this research were between (0.5050.839) which means > 0.50 suggesting good construct validity for each dimension and its related items.

Research Reliability

Quoting from Joppe (2000) reliability is defined as: The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. This research can be deemed reliable and well-founded according to many grounds: the first to be is that the participants were sure that their information and review would be protected by the University of South Wales policy and will be kept undisclosed to other parties under any kind of circumstances. Secondly, to rule out any possibility of misinterpretation, the interview questions and the questionnaire were in Arabic, which might have ensued with the people who spoke English as a second language. Finally, adopting a proper mechanism results to a better outcome and reduces any potential risk of unreliability and biased actions. From a statistical perspective, according to Cronbach's alpha values for Arab Islamic culture were (0.932), and (0.928) for the employees productiveness.

DATA ANALYSIS

SPSS-22, an extremely comprehensive package, has been used for the statistical analysis,

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows evident from the results summarized that the mean and standard deviation values and the subscales representing Arab Islamic culture (Self-improvement (Etqan)) indicated general agreement.

Table 1 *THE MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR THE SUBSCALES REPRESENTING ARAB ISLAMIC CULTURE*

No.	Islamic Cultures Sub Scales	Mean	SD	Level	Rank
1	Self-improvement (Etqana)	4.11	0.64	High	1

Means description (11.8 v. low, 1.81-2.60 low, 2.61-3.40 moderate, 3.41-4.20 high and 4.21-5 v high)

As seen in Table 1, Self-improvement (Etqan) was ranked first as it recorded the highest mean (3.93 ± 0.71). The overall Arab Islamic culture evaluated mean was (3.62). This expresses a high degree of agreement.

Hypotheses Testing

The results of a four multiple regressions test, that was carried out in order to test the hypotheses for this research, are presented in the following Tables 2.

Table 2 *MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS TO TEST THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-IMPROVEMENT (ETQAN) AND THE EMPLOYEES' EFFECTIVENESS IN THE JORDANIAN COMMERCIAL BANKS*

Variable	β	Sem	<i>t</i>	Sig(<i>t</i>)	Result of H1
Self-improvement (Etqan)	.302	.085	3.570	.000	Rejected

Relying on the results mentioned in Table 2, as a result the subsidiary hypothesis is rejected.

The impact value of Self-improvement (Etqan) represented by β coefficient was (0.302). This value was statistically significant because the significance level (sig) value (0.000) was < 0.05 .

DISCUSSION

Providing valuable insights into the influence of Arab Islamic values on employees effectiveness through exploring the reality of the situation in some of the largest private organizations in Jordan, is one of the hit ones in this paper. This helps decision makers pay more attention to the way they try developing and improving polices increasing their employees effectiveness. The study findings showed that self-improvement (Etqan) have significant effect on employees effectiveness in five of the commercial banks in Jordan from the respondents perspective. It is argued that It is argued that there is a lack of knowledge and understanding Islam as a concept in Arab countries, which has damaging the impact on organizations management and has bad impact on the development of the system of Islamic management (Branine & Pollard, 2010). Furthermore, a conflict between economic reality and religious instruction is expected since the majority of countries with Muslim majority societies have adopted the capitalist system, (A. J. Ali, 2010). According to (Altarawneh & Lucas, 2012) the keep using of a Western accounting approach and the failure to detect an effect of Islam on accounting in Jordan. As a result of Jordans integration into the international capitalist economic system. This has been enforced by Western countries and their agencies such as the World Trade Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and US Agency for International Development. Jordan, as a result is heavily influenced by Western culture style and values, the impact of negative globalization and wide use of Western management practices. It's argued that there is no evidence shows that applying the Western management principles in Arab countries organizations have an impact in performance improvement. However, in case there an performance improvement in downsizing, intensification of work, the increased managerial control is still unknown, or if the result of improved work commitment and pay more attention for the motivation from empowerment, work development opportunities, and internal communication improved (Al-Husan, Brennan, & James, 2009).

CONCLUSION

Providing a theoretical empirical tested analysis about Arab Islamic culture in general focusing on one of the main values: Self-improvement (Etqan), and their impact on employees effectiveness from the manager, manager assistant, division head, branch head, and employee perspective in five of the commercial banks in Jordan was the aim of this research paper. The outcomes of this research pinpointed that there is a statistically significant effect and positive impact of Self-improvement (Etqan) on the effectiveness of employees in the commercial bank in Jordan, which is a country with 92% of the population Muslim (Erkekolu & Madi, 2017). Furthermore, 78.7% of the survey respondents in this study were Muslims and the results were somewhat expected. These findings are broadly in line, and harmony, with researchers such as Ababneh and Avramenko (2016), and the argument about the way organizations operate in an Islamic country. Additionally, these findings are consistent with previous research by Branine and Pollard (2010) who indicated that a gap exists between theory and practice for Islamic management in Arab countries. They further suggest that the problem of management in Arab countries is influenced by traditional and non-Islamic norms and values of different cultures of Arab countries. This gap exists as a result of the impact of globalization on the younger generation who represented 49% of the survey respondents. It is argued that globalization has increased the ignorance of the younger generation with their tradition, habits and customs, as they care only about new fashion, media, internet, fast food, and advanced technology more than caring about their national culture, social problems, or their countrys needs. Furthermore, globalization has affected the young generations identity since they have abandoned Islamic and Arabic identity and replaced this with Western culture. Moreover, globalization has decreased national, social, and moral values that characterize Jordanian society (Al-Zyoud, 2009). Additionally contemporary management can be shaped in Arab countries influenced by Western style and culture (A. J. Ali, 1990; P. Budhwar & Mellahi, 2007; Dadfar, 1993).

The respondents in the current research considered that there is an impact from the conscientious of self-improvement (Etqan) and patience (Sabar) on human resource performance. Consequently, this research argues that their responses show that the impact of Etqan on HR performance is a result of their Arab Islamic orientation; it is true that some expressed that part of Arab Islamic values is influenced directly by Islamic law, but is not the case as this study found. Therefore, a relationship can be seen between culture and how employees view their religion in commercial banks if we look at the system. Hence, it can be argued that this derives from the systems and the

legitimacy of Islamic rules, which are derived in turn from the Quran and the Hadith. An impact on performance from other cultures in the commercial banks.

Research Limitations

There is no doubt that any human beings work or project has limitations, and this research is no exception. One of the main limitations is that the data and information was gathered from only five commercial banks. The study did not include another eight commercial banks in Jordan as they refused to cooperate.

Suggestions for Future Research

To gain a deeper understanding of the role Islam plays in the workplace, Much more research is needed. Specifically, how Islamic ideas, culture, values and norms are used in practice and the implications for the workplace environment and overall organizational performance. In addition, it is important to mention that empirical research in this respect will be more crucial for developing countries, as there are few empirical studies in this specific field in Muslim countries in general, and Jordan in particular.

The research was carried out within the specific context of the private sector. This makes the research unique, but this may also limit the generalizability of the findings to the rest of the commercial banks or other organizations in different fields.

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