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MUSLIM WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PERFORMING PRAYERS AT WORKPLACES AND ITS IMPACTS ON THEIR WORK PERFORMANCES

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Studies have shown that employees performing prayers at workplaces has raised several controversial issues relating to their working performances. As such, this study was carried out to examine Muslim workers' perceptions of the positive impacts of performing obligatory prayers at their workplaces.

Methodology: This study was based on a quantitative approach using an online survey based on *Google form* through which 200 Muslim workers, whose ages ranged from 18 to 50 years, were randomly selected to be the respondents. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) (version 23.00) was used to analyze the data descriptively in terms of frequency and percentage.

Findings: Revealingly, the findings showed that most Muslim workers perceived performing obligatory prayers had significant impacts on making them more disciplined, punctual, able to work more independently, productive, and competitive. Equally revealing, they perceived strict observance of obligatory prayers had profound impacts on their perseverance to adhere to rules and to avoid committing a breach of trust. Such promising findings should inform employers the inalienable rights of Muslim employees to pray in their premises, which is enshrined in

Malaysia's federal constitution, and the positive impacts of prayers on their workers' discipline, motivation, and ability, which collectively can help improve the productivity and profitability of their organizations.

Significance: On a positive note, the above findings can help dispel several negative perceptions of some employers that Muslim workers performing prayers at workplaces will adversely affect their productivity, which was found in this study to be completely unfounded and untrue.

INTRODUCTION

From the Islamic standpoint, performing the five obligatory daily prayers and working to earn an honest living are inseparable in Muslims' lives to ensure their earnings will receive Allah's blessings. In this regard, the failure to perform compulsory prayers is detrimental to the ecological structure of the lives of those who consciously neglect this duty. In an article published in the mainstream daily on 16 May 2019 (BeritaHarian, 16 May 2019), Shahrizal (2019) and Yunus (2015) assert that decline in such ecological structure has led to a myriad of abuses, such as embezzlements, corruptions, abuses of power, misappropriations, poor discipline, and low commitment, among others. Thus, every able male and female Muslim must observe this important pillar of the Islamic faith throughout their entire lives. According to Muhammad Mustakim et al. (2014), all Muslims must understand that performing the five obligatory daily prayers with perfection is a key to attaining success in their lives from the physical and spiritual perspectives. As such, those who consistently observe this obligatory religious duty are in the correct path that leads to success in this world and hereafter. Moreover, Sri Jumini and Munawaroh (2018), assert that prayers performed with perfection can help develop responsible, disciplined, religious, and positively-minded workers, which collectively contribute to the betterment of organizations.

Nonetheless, not all organizations perceive workers with strong religious values as an asset. On the contrary, they tend to see workers who take some of their time to pray as those who lack discipline, mistakenly believing that the time spent for prayers can adversely affect the performance of their organizations. According to Zulaihdan Abdul Munir (2019), some employers tend to harbor negative feelings about their workers taking some time to pray, seeing such persons as moonlighting, or taking unnecessary breaks. Hence, these negative perceptions beg a question: "Does performing compulsory or obligatory prayers in premises negatively affect a company's business performance?"

Admittedly, all investors in the industrial and service sectors aim to maximize profits in a particular timeframe. Usually, they have short- and long-term targets in accruing high revenues, entailing the management to organizations to put in place strategies and rules deemed appropriate in such a period to improve productivity. Surely, a pool of competent human resources is required to help realize such an aim. From the social perspective, the religious needs of workers have to be respected and acknowledged, but occasionally the

management of companies and firms have overlooked this important aspect of their workers. For example, some organizations do not provide opportunities for their employees to offer their five daily prayers, which are made obligatory in Islam as decreed in Holy Koran in *Surah An-Nisa* (verse 103) as follows: *And when you have completed the prayer, remember Allah standing, sitting, or [lying] on your sides. But when you become secure, re-establish [regular] prayer. Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.*

As vouched by Part 11 of the Malaysia's constitution, every Malaysian citizen is entitled to freely profess his or her religion. In particular, a closer examination of the Part 9 of Section 20 of the Islamic Legal Enactment (Selangor) (1996) reveals that every able Muslim who has reached the age of puberty is required to offer fivedaily prayers, including the congregational Friday prayer. In other words, male and female Muslims whose ages are 15 and above have to observe this important Islamic duty at their prescribed time. As such, any Muslim who fails to abide with this injunction can be prosecuted. Likewise, any person who tries to prevent any Muslim from performing his or her obligatory prayers can also be prosecuted. It is, therefore, evidently clear that Section 20 of the Islamic Legal Enactment (Selangor) guarantees the rights of every Muslim to practice his or her faith without any interventions from any party or individual.

According to Yunus (2015), prayers are an important, special religious duty compared to other duties, such as the pilgrimage to Mecca or alms, as the holy Prophet Muhammad SAW received the command for prayers directly from Allah SWT during the heavenly ascension to *Sidratulmuntaha* without the presence of Angel Gabriel. Given this special, direct command, the holy prophet Muhammad SAW would never tolerate any Muslim to abandon this duty so much so that even the sick were required to observe the five obligatory daily prayers. Those who fail or refuse to adhere to this Islamic injunction without reasons would be deemed guilty of committing a serious sin.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Over recent years, the Department of Work (JTK) has carried out numerous investigations into allegations that some employers have prohibited their employees from performing the obligatory prayers. In some cases, workers who went against this prohibition would havetheir salaries deducted. A case in point would be the incident that happened in Kampar, Perak where Muslim workers were denied of their rights by their employer to perform prayers during working hours (BeritaHarian Online, 1 August 2019). According to Shahrizal (2019), such an incident highlights a lack of respect accorded to employees by their employers and simply the indifference of employers toward their Muslim workers' rights to perform their religious obligations, which are enshrined and guaranteed in Malaysia's federal constitution.

All employers should be made aware of the guideline titled *Performing Solat During Working Hours* (2018) that stipulates Muslims workers should be given at least 20 minutes and one-and-half hours to allow them to offer their obligatory and Friday prayers, respectively. In fact, these time allocations do not contravene with the Section 60A(1) of the Work Act 1955, specifying that workers who have been working for 5 hours or more be given a resting period of 30 minutes. The same Act also specifies that no worker should be forced to work for more than 8 hours per day or for more than 40 hours per week. Given these clauses, employers must therefore respect their Muslim workers' inalienable rights by allowing them some space and time in their organizations to offer obligatory prayers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the respondents' perceptions on the impact of performing prayers on their discipline and work punctuality.
2. To identify the respondents' perceptions on the impact of performing prayers on their motivation to work hard.
3. To identify the respondents' perceptions on the impact of performing prayers on their integrity.
4. To identify the respondents' perceptions on the impact of performing prayers on their productivity and competitiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many Muslim scholars have been intrigued by the question on how much important are prayers to Muslims. In this regard, Mohd.Hashim (2011) asserts that performing prayers is the second pillar of the Islamic faith after syahadah or the testimony of faith, clearly signifying the former's importance in Islam, unrivalled by other religious rites. According to Muhammad Zakariyya (2005), a leading Islamic scholar, the consistent act of performing obligatory prayers has many virtues, such as cleansing one's sins, redeeming one's faith, comforting those in distress, and paving the way to heavens. Equally important, Noraini and Nor Asmira (2018) argue that prayers are the first deed or act that will be accounted for by Allah SWT in the hereafter, as narrated in one of the prophetic sayings as follows:

"The first deeds of a slave to be accounted for in the hereafter will be his prayers. If his prayers are good, then the rest of his deeds will be deemed good. On the other hand, if his prayers are bad, then the rest of his deeds will be deemed equally bad."

(Narrated by at-Thabrani)

In his will, the holy prophet Muhammad SAW enjoins all Muslims to observe this duty throughout their entire lives in whatever situation they are in,

as commanded by Allah SWT as revealed in the Surah al-Baqarah (verses 238 – 239) of the holy Koran as follows:

Be watchful over the Prayers, and over praying with the utmost excellence, and stand before Allah as would utterly obedient servants. And even if you face the state of fear, still perform the Prayer whether on foot or riding; and when you are secure, remember Allah in the manner that He taught you, the manner that you did not know earlier.

Based on the narration of al-Tirmizi (2016), when Prophet Muhammad SAW was asked by his companions about the punishment for those who consciously delay the obligatory prayers, he replied that such a sinful act would incur 15 punishments, six of which would take place in this world, with the other three at the time of their deaths and the remaining three on the Day of Judgment. In addition, Mubarkafuri (2001) asserts that Prophet Muhammad SAW warned that those who do not pray would result in their earnings become devoid of Allah's blessings. Even though they may be extremely wealthy, their properties and monies would be nothing but a curse, and such persons are called *istidraj*.

As explicitly implied by the above Koranic verses, Allah SWT commanded all Muslims to observe the obligatory five daily prayers at the prescribed time. In particular, the evening prayer is singled out as one of the most important prayers as most people will be busy attending their worldly affairs at this time of the day. Hence, Muslims must acknowledge that prayers are their salvation in time of distress, as all humans are not immune to all sorts of problems or tribulations. Likewise, prayers must also be recognized a means for Muslims to attain a sense of inner tranquility or spiritual ecstasy. In the Imam Bukhari's and Muslim's collections of prophetic sayings, Huzaifah narrates that Prophet Muhammad SAW would quickly offer several optional prayers when he experienced some hardships, signifying that Allah's blessings would come as some form of assistance to help those who will pray in times of need (Abdullah, 2012). The importance of offering prayers is made clear in several Koranic verses, including Surah Hud (verse 114) as follows:

And establish prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night. Indeed, good deeds do away with misdeeds. That is a reminder for those who remember.

According to Norazah (2011), performing prayers can help an individual to overcome work stress or pressure, as such an act will be blessed by Allah SWT. Moreover, the hearts of those who observe this duty will be illuminated spiritually, extracting them from the darkness of ignorance. As such, it is the duty of every Muslim to consistently perform the obligatory daily prayers with patience and diligence. Such a call is exemplified by a prophetic saying in the Muslim's (1995) book of hadiths (prophetic sayings) that states Allah SWT promises that those who pray at the prescribed time will enter the paradise with His blessings. The paradise longs those who pray. On the other

hand, as narrated Abu Daud and IbnuMajjah, those who procrastinate or neglect to pray will be devoid of Allah's blessings.

THE POSITIVE IMPACTS OF PERFORMING PRAYERS

The holy Koran has several verses that highlight the benefits of performing prayers that help a person to avoid committing immorality and wrongdoings, an example of which can be found in *Surah al-Ankabut* (verse 45) as follows:

Recite, [O Muhammad], what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do.

According to some Muslim scholars, the term 'immorality' mentioned in the above Koranic include gambling, murder, fornication, taking drugs, and consuming liquors, which constitute a big sin. On the other hand, the term 'wrongdoings' refer to acts that go against the Islamic law, such as a breach of trust, corruption, bribes, embezzlements, stealing, and murders, among others. Thus, those who pray will be guided to follow a path that prevents them from committing such immorality and wrongdoings. Figuratively, such a path symbolizes the true teachings of Islam that are based on the Holy Koran and prophetic sayings. Essentially, in the five obligatory daily prayers, Muslims are in supplication for 17 times, asking Allah SWT to make them a humble servant who will be spared from any immoral or wrong acts. Admittedly, avoiding oneself from such acts is challenging due to the temptation of worldly affairs. Only through a constant act of praying can help shield Muslims against such temptation.

From a health perspective, studies have shown the act of performing prayers has several health benefits. According to Wan Abu Bakar (2008), the bodily movements and postures involved such an act, such as standing, bending, and prostrating, can help strengthen and invigorate one's muscles. Thus, by performing prayers consistently and correctly, Muslims can maintain a strong, healthy physique. In this respect, the findings of a study by Fatimah (2008) help shed some light into the understanding of the bodily composition of humans, which essentially consists of four main components, namely active tissues, bone tissue, water, and fats. According to Fatimah (2008), attaining a well-developed bodily composition entails a person to do the following acts, namely praying five times a day, understanding the meaning of the verses of prayers, praying in congregation, bending the body properly, and bending the toes when in a sitting position. Interestingly, the findings of Wan Abu Bakar's (2008) study showed that participants who prayed in congregation were generally more fit than their counterparts who prayed alone. Apparently, in congregation, their shoulders were touching with one another, effectively forming some sort of a circuit that neutralized the negative charges of their

bodies. Thus, it can be reasonably argued that, compared to individual prayers, congregational prayers can make a person healthier or fitter.

Many researchers have been fascinated with the potential benefits of performing prayers in other aspects of human health, such as the relationships between the bodily postures in prayers and illnesses. For example, many physiotherapists have recommended patients with back pains to perform certain bodily movements that mirror the movements in prayers to ease their pains. In this regard, the findings of a landmark study by Fatimah (2008) provide strong evidence to support the above claim. In her study, several probes and sensors were attached to the back of a patient with back pains to detect and record the signals of working tissues. After a month of therapy involving a series of prayers, the patient made a remarkable recovery as the intensity of his back pain had decreased considerably.

Hence, it is recommended that those with early symptoms of back pains use such a therapy to prevent such a health problem from getting worse. In addition, expecting women, who typically experience some discomfort at their backs, can also practice such this therapy to reduce the pains on their backs. According to Hamdan, Mokhtar, and Imas (2019), performing prayers can help improve the blood circulation to male's genitals, which can be of a huge benefit to those suffering from erectile dysfunction. Studies have shown that patients with such a health problem were able to regain their fitness to have a better relationship with their spouses after undergoing such a therapy for almost two months. Overall, the above findings highlight the positive impacts of performing prayers on individuals' spirituality, emotions, and physiques.

METHODOLOGY

This study was based on a quantitative approach involving a survey, which is an effective method to elicit relevant information from a large pool of subjects (Azizi, 2017). The sample study consisted of factory workers, mall employees, fast-food restaurant workers, and petrol kiosk attendants, all of whom were randomly selected to represent male and female workers in the industrial and service sectors, with their ages ranging from 18 to 55 years. The survey questionnaire consisted of two main parts to elicit information on their demography and perceptions on praying at their workplaces and its implications on their working performance. Their responses to the questionnaire items were rated along a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from '5' (*strongly agree*) to '1' (*strongly disagree*). Two highly experienced academics were recruited to verify the face validation and content validation of the research instrument.

The researchers carried out a pilot study in Hulu Bernam in Selangor in which 10 respondents were selected to test the face validity and reliability of the research instrument. Overall, the computed values of Cronbach's Alfa for the constructs of the study ranged from 0.7 to 0.8, which were deemed moderately high (Konting, 1990; Sekaran, 1992). The Statistical Package for

the Social Science (SPSS) (version 23.00) was used to analyze the data descriptively in terms of frequency and percentage. To examine the levels of agreement to the questionnaire items, their responses were divided into three categories only, namely 'agree' (by combining 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses), 'not sure', and 'disagree' (by combining 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' responses), as recommended by Hushaini, Osman, and Sarudin (2020). The main study was conducted in nine districts in Selangor, given that this state has the highest population in Malaysia with 6.38 million peoples and 3.36 million workers (Jabatan Statistik Malaysia, 2017). Table 1 summarizes the number of respondents in the selected districts in Selangor.

Table 1 The distribution of respondents based on district

| No. | District | Number of respondents |
|-------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Sabak Bernam | 39 |
| 2. | Klang | 185 |
| 3. | Kuala Langat | 126 |
| 4. | Sepang | 225 |
| 5. | Hulu Langat | 239 |
| 6. | Hulu Selangor | 213 |
| 7. | Kuala Selangor | 137 |
| 8. | Petaling | 492 |
| 9. | Gombak | 344 |
| Total | | 2000 |

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Overall, the findings showed that a majority of the respondents agreed that prayers had positive impacts on their working lives, as evidenced by more than 80% of them agreeing with the statements of the questionnaire items. Table 2 summarizes the percentages of respondents agreeing with the statements of the questionnaire items.

Table 2 The percentages of respondents agreeing with the statements of questionnaire items

| Statement | Percentage (%) | | Total (%) |
|---|----------------|-------|-----------|
| | Strongly agree | Agree | |
| a) Prayers can help workers become more disciplined, punctual, and able to work with minimum supervision. | 46.0 | 39.8 | 85.8 |
| b) Prayers can help motivate workers to work harder. | 25.5 | 65.6 | 91.1 |
| c) Prayers can help workers to adhere to rules and to not commit a breach of trust. | 19.3 | 73.5 | 92.8 |
| d) Prayers can help workers become more productive and competitive. | 45.1 | 35.9 | 81.0 |

The Impacts of Prayers on Workers' Discipline, Punctuality, and Ability to Work Independently with Minimum Supervision

The discipline and appreciation of praying on time have a close relationship, as prayers are an important duty that Allah SWT commanded on all Muslims. Hence, those who regularly observe prayers tend to have high self-discipline that helps them not to waste their time unnecessarily. Also, they tend to be more trustworthy, which is an important attribute as they will be able to work independently, virtually eliminating the need for supervision. Table 3 summarizes the respondents' perceptions of the impacts of prayers on workers' discipline, punctuality, and ability to work independently.

Table 3 The respondents' perceptions of the impacts of prayers on discipline, punctuality, and ability to work independently

| Level of agreement | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | 12 | .6 |
| Disagree | 99 | 5.0 |
| Not sure | 174 | 8.7 |
| Agree | 919 | 46.0 |
| Strongly agree | 796 | 39.8 |
| Total | 2000 | 100.00 |

As shown, almost a half (46.0%) of respondents agreed that prayers had positive impacts on workers' discipline, punctuality, and ability to work independently, which was closely followed by 39.8% of respondents who strongly agreed with such a claim. In contrast, only 0.6% and 5.0% of respondents registered their strong disagreement and disagreement, respectively. In addition, 8.7% of respondents were uncertain about such positive impacts of prayers.

According to ArifMohamad (2014), people who regularly pray have high discipline but ironically they seem oblivious to the importance of work punctuality and only work to a bare minimum. Hence, Muslim workers need to emulate the work ethics of non-Muslim workers, especially Japanese workers, who are highly vigilant of going to work on time. Compared to the former, the latter has a higher regard for time as a valuable aspect of their working lives. As such, they will focus on their work without wasting time unnecessarily, which eventually helps maximize the productivity of their organizations.

Based on a study by MohdSubki (2011), congregational prayers can help workers to become more disciplined and respectful of their leader, especially in the management of time. As such, Muslim workers must seek a fine balance in utilizing their time for worldly and heavenly matters such that they can perform their daily routines optimally. In this respect, Yunus (2015) argues that Muslim workers must appropriately use the time allowed by their employees for prayers without sacrificing their work. Surely, their observance of time will earn the respect of employees. Similarly, Zulaiha and Abdul Munir (2019) argue that Muslim workers must practice high discipline in managing time. For

example, during a break, they can pray, read magazines, and watch the news on televisions, among others.

The Impacts of Prayers on Workers' Motivation to Work Hard

Working diligently to achieve success in this world is a noble act that is demanded on every Muslim, as Allah SWT will surely reward those who steadfastly strive in any field of work. Muslim workers, therefore, must always try to continually improve their knowledge and skills to not only advance their careers but also contribute to the well-being of their organizations. In this regard, workers' consistent acts of offering prayers can have a huge impact on their motivation to work hard for personal and organizational betterment. Table 4 summarizes the respondents' perceptions of the impacts of prayers on their motivation to work hard in their respective workplaces.

Table 4 The respondents' perceptions of the impacts of prayers on motivation

| Level of agreement | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | 16 | .8 |
| Disagree | 21 | 1.1 |
| Not sure | 141 | 7.1 |
| Agree | 510 | 25.5 |
| Strongly agree | 1312 | 65.6 |
| Total | 2000 | 100.00 |

As highlighted, 65.6% and 25.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that prayers had a huge impact on their motivation to work hard in their organizations, respectively. By contrast, only 0.8% and 1.1% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed that prayers had such a positive impact.

Additionally, a small percentage (7.1%) of the respondents were unsure about such an impact. These findings mirror those of a study carried out by Syed Mohammad (2017), who found those consistently prayed showed a strong commitment and motivation in carrying out their duties and strongly disapproved unlawful acts. Admittedly, not all who consistently pray exhibit this positive attribute as they still lack the desire to work hard or to improve their careers, which may be attributed to a lack of concentration in performing their prayers (Abdul Rashid, 1995).

The Impacts of Prayers on Workers' Adherence to Rules and Avoidance of Breach of Trust

As discussed previously, the act of performing prayers can help prevent an individual from committing immoral and unlawful acts, such as gambling and bribery, respectively. Table 5 summarizes the respondents' perceptions of the impacts of prayers on their adherence to rules and avoidance of a breach of trust.

Table 5 The respondents' perceptions of the impacts of prayers on their adherence to rules and avoidance of a breach of trust

| Level of agreement | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | 32 | 1.6 |
| Disagree | 32 | 1.6 |
| Not sure | 81 | 4.1 |
| Agree | 385 | 19.3 |
| Strongly agree | 1470 | 73.5 |
| Total | 2000 | 100.00 |

As depicted, an overwhelming majority (92.8%) of the respondents opined that prayers had a huge impact on them in adhering to rules and in avoiding a breach of trust, as evidenced by 73.5% and 19.3% of the respondents strongly agreeing and agreeing to such an impact, respectively. Only a small percentage of the respondents indicated otherwise, with 3.2% of them disagreeing with such a claim. Additionally, a small percentage (4.1%) of the respondents were unsure about such an impact. Such findings are consistent with Afzainizan's (2017) assertion that those who regularly pray are generally more trustworthy than those who seldom pray. Certainly, prayers carried out consistently and promptly with full concentration and sincerity can train individuals to appreciate the importance of time and develop a strong personality. Eventually, they become more disciplined and virtuous, effectively preventing them from committing any wrongdoings or offenses (Suhaila Nadzri et al., 2018).

In particular, according to Al-Edenat and Alhawamdeh (2018), Muslim workers who regularly observe prayers will never be tempted to take bribes, as they understand that such an unlawful act will tarnish not only their dignity but also their family's reputations. Likewise, they will not waste their time in indulging vainly acts that can adversely affect the productivity of their organizations. The same researchers argue that the preparation required before performing prayers, such as coming early to the prayer room, taking ablution, ensuring that the prayer room and their attires are clean, and arranging prayer mats in neat rows, helps them develop strong characters, which when practiced in their workplaces can surely bring many benefits to their organizations. From the Islamic standpoint, those with a strong commitment to performing prayers have more awareness of the consequences of their actions, as there are angels who will record all their deeds, either good or bad (Amran, 1991). With such awareness, they will be very cautious in their every undertaking, and, in the context of work, they will not break any rules or regulations enforced in their workplaces. In other words, they will always adhere to all rules and avoid any form of breach of trust.

The impacts of prayers on workers' productivity and competitiveness

Undoubtedly, performing prayers helps workers to be trustworthy, productive, and steadfast, which are attributes that can significantly contribute to their organizations' profitability. As emphasized by Hasna (2016), workers

who consistently pray will not commit any unlawful, illegal, and unethical acts, such as taking bribes or violating a company's trust or simply being lazy. Their abhorrence may stem from their realization that such acts will surely incur the wrath of Allah SWT (Haron, 2003). Table 6 summarizes the respondents' perceptions of the impacts of prayers on their productivity and competitiveness.

Table 6 The respondents' perceptions of the impacts of prayers on their productivity and competitiveness

| Level of agreement | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | 42 | 2.1 |
| Disagree | 76 | 3.8 |
| Not sure | 264 | 13.2 |
| Agree | 901 | 45.1 |
| Strongly agree | 717 | 35.9 |
| Total | 2000 | 100.00 |

As shown, 35.9% and 45.1% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that prayers had a huge impact on their productivity and competitiveness, respectively. In contrast, only 2.1% and 3.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed that prayers had such a positive impact, respectively. Additionally, a small percentage (7.1%) of the respondents were unsure about such an impact. As such, these findings showed that a majority of the respondents perceived prayers had a profound impact on helping them to be productive and competitive. Overall, all the above promising findings signify that prayers are one of the Islamic pillars, without which can weaken the foundation of the Islamic faith. The importance of obligatory five daily prayers as one of the Islamic faith is emphasized by the prophetic saying of Prophet Muhammad SAW as follows:

"Islam is built by five pillars, namely stating the testimony of faith that there is no god worthy of worship except for Allah SWT and Prophet Muhammad SAW is a messenger of Allah SWT, performing prayers, giving alms, fasting in the month of Ramadan, and making a pilgrimage to Baittullah"

(Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim)

CONCLUSION

As revealed in this study, most Muslim workers fully acknowledged the importance of obligatory prayers in their lives that have to be carried out five times a day at their prescribed times, thus entailing them to pray at their workplaces. They were also fully aware that it was their duty to work diligently and lawfully to earn an honest living, the act of which is highly regarded and rewarded in Islam. The findings showed that most Muslim workers perceived

performing obligatory prayers had significant impacts on several aspects of their working lives. By consistently performing obligatory prayers, they believed they could become more disciplined, punctual, and able to work more independently. Likewise, prayers were positively perceived to be able to help motivate them to work hard, adhere to rules, and avoid committing a breach of trust. They also opined that prayers when performed consistently with full concentration could make them more productive and competitive. Surely, such promising findings may have several implications at the personal and organizational levels.

From the personal perspective, the findings suggest that most Muslim workers regard prayers as an integral part of their lives, which can help them develop strong moral and religious characters that can make them become diligent and honest workers. From the organizational standpoint, the management of firms or companies will find workers with sound religious and ethical values will be able to work diligently and responsibly, which can significantly improve the productivity and, consequently, the profitability of their organizations. As such, employers should view these findings more favorably by allowing their Muslim workers to take time to pray in their organizations, as the benefits of such allowance far outweigh the risk of workers misusing their time.

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