

Workplace Spirituality as a Moderator in the Relationship between Soft TQM and Organizational Commitment

Wiwiek Rabiatal Adawiyah

Faculty of Economics Universitas Jenderal Soedirman
Jalan H.R Bunyamin Purwokerto Jawa Tengah Indonesia 53122
Email: wiwiekra@gmail.com

Mohd Noor Mohd Shariff (corresponding author)

College of Business Universiti Utara Malaysia
06010 Sintok, Kedah Malaysia

Mohammad Basir Saud

College of Business Universiti Utara Malaysia
06010 Sintok, Kedah Malaysia

Sany Sanuri Mohd Mokhtar

College of Business Universiti Utara Malaysia
06010 Sintok, Kedah Malaysia

Abstract

This study examined the moderating effects of workplace spirituality on the relationship between soft TQM and organizational commitment on Islamic banks in Central Java, Indonesia. The study was dependent on a survey conducted on 850 employees of Islamic banks using a random sampling technique. The tool of analysis used in this study was hierarchical regression analysis. The finding of the study showed that all Soft TQM dimensions, except education and training, have positive and significant influence on organizational commitment. Moreover workplace spiritual values appear to moderate empowerment and organizational commitment associations as well as customer focus linkage with employees' commitment towards Islamic banks. Based on the findings, implications to practice are offered.

Keywords: Soft TQM; organizational commitment, workplace spirituality, Islamic banking.

1. Introduction

TQM embodies a number of well established management precepts which suggest that TQM should have a desirable impact on job satisfaction, communication, and perceptions of the work environment (Morrow, 1997). Thus the success of TQM implementation programs relies heavily on the motivation, skills, commitment and extra-role behavior of the people involved within an institution. Most inquiries on TQM facets reveal that only the soft elements of TQM contribute to organizational performance. Furthermore the soft aspects of TQM seem to be more vital than do hard aspects in positively influencing individual worker's attitudes at work. What is surprising that so little research addresses the effect TQM has on people (Guimaraes, 1996) Moreover, literature examining the relationship between the institutionalization of TQM and work-related outcomes has been mainly anecdotal (Morrow, 1997).

Despite of TQM successful stories, few have shown disappointment which may occur as a result of missing variables on the research framework. In addition Kivimaki *et al.* (1987) suggests that future inquiries on the role of moderator on TQM and staff members' attitudes relationship should be performed systematically. Thus there is strong possibility that added aspect may moderate the linkage between TQM dimensions and work related outcomes (Morrow, 1997). Moreover, some past inquiries have suggested the importance of integrating workplace spirituality in order to initiate institutional transformation and reinstate social stability (Fairholm, 1991; Block, 1993; Palmer, 1994; Marcic, 1997; Vaill, 1998; Lewin & Regine, 2001). TQM as a management approach is intended at shortening the effect of negative human elements that go against employees' efficiency and effectiveness (Ehigie & Akpan, 2006). TQM adoption requires shift in workers job attitudes which later lead to positive business results.

Research on the function of workplace spirituality as the moderator on the relationship between soft TQM and organizational commitment are scarce. Majority of inquiries have scrutinized the integration of TQM with other organizational aspects. Moreover, a significant trend in business in the twenty-first century is focusing on employees' spirituality at the workplace (Shellenbarger, 2000). To date, workplace spirituality is perceived as a medium for converting limitations and establishing a higher functioning environment (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Fairholm, 1997 & 1998; Heaton, Schmidt-Wilk, & Travis, 2004; Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

Similarly Senge (1990) suggest the importance of establishing learning organizations that focusing on a change of mentality and the need for a joint vision so that workers feel unified and give contribution to an organizational victory. As such this study would initiate an investigation on the role of spirituality in determining TQM's impact on organizational commitment. A number of researchers suggest the need to terminate the Cartesian split (Overton, 1998) as a reflection of secular thought, which make counterfeit difference between soul and physical body, the certainty and uncertainty, the tangible and intangible (Rego & Pina e Cunha, 2007). As stated by Waddock (1999), including brains, feeling, spirit and physical body into union, personally and communally, allowing institutions to recognize the significance of society as a starting point to make achievement, even survival. A number of scholars emphasize that spirituality developed leaders are extra effective (Strack *et al.*, 2002; Fry, 2003; and Fry *et al.*, 2005).

An inquiry is noteworthy provided analysis is extended to evaluate employees' perception on how workplace spirituality helps explaining employees' attitudes/behaviors at work. This inquiry is crucial because past inquiries related to the topic frequently believed that spirituality would bring encouraging impact at the workplace. Nonetheless, they have not sufficiently hypothesized and empirically tested this presumption (Milliman *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, it is necessary to undertake research that assists scholars in comprehending the seemingly positive effects on workers' attitudes which possibly take place when managers reinforce individuals' requirements in the workplace on a spiritual level (King & Nicol, 1999; Milliman *et al.*, 2003). Thus this study is aimed at enhancing literatures in the field of soft TQM, organizational commitment and workplace spirituality relationship.

2. Literature Review

Total quality management (TQM) represents an integrated organization strategy for improving product and service quality. Any quality programmes requires employees commitment to organizational goals as its critical success factor (Deming, 1986; Jackson, 2004). Organizational commitment indicates the strength of connection along with devotion experienced by workers towards the business (Mowday *et al.*, 1979; Guimareas, 1997; Luthans, 1996). The success of TQM endorses employees commitment to achieve higher performance and hence to retain their employment status. Highly dedicated employees contribute more effectively towards companies' development and success (Karia & Abu Hassan Asaari, 2006).

Some scholars have evaluated organizational commitment for sometimes (Angle & Perry, 1981; Reichers, 1985; Becker, 1992; Meyer, & Allen, 1997). Allen & Brady (1997) compare workers' reactions from two different organizations, one implementing TQM while the other was not, and conclude that organizational commitment and perceived managerial supports were considerably superior in the company implementing TQM. Moreover, employees of this organization would demonstrate optimistic top-subordinate collaboration and better associates affiliations, in addition to high quality news. Thus TQM produce higher workers' organizational commitment.

TQM philosophers consider organizational commitment as the aspiration to perform what is considered mostly valuables (Deming, 1986) for the business (for instance Anderson *et al.*, 1994; Ross, 1993) covering emotional bond to the business and an interest to consider its dilemmas as of their own. Accordingly, commitment includes individuals' keenness to take into account their organization's concerns and to act upon some forms of actions needed for quality enhancement. TQM agendas are not able to perform successfully without commitment because (Brooks & Zeitz, 1999): TQM needs (1) plentiful ideas from the real work-performing people; and (2) persevering work performance according its formal specifications. Regulations and inspection are enforced only to ensure such performance due to their high cost and employees' negative reactions. Moreover, since quality work needs urgent and continuous awareness that cannot virtually be supervise by managers (Dean & Evans, 1994), organizational climate inspiring intrinsic work motivation is necessary to enhance employees' commitment that is vital to the success of quality adoption (Deming, 1986).

In spite of substantial inquiries on workplace spirituality and workers' attitudes associations, researchers have been unsuccessful to evaluate the direct impact of one's belief on their work behavior (see for example Roundy, 2009). Additionally, majority of past studies have only examined religious and spiritual belief in non-Islamic settings (see for instance, Weber, 1958; Simon & Primavera, 1972, Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi, 1975). Some have not even differentiated between groups of particular beliefs, instead looking at the level of religiosity (Chusmir & Koberg, 1988). Therefore it is necessary to validate the relationships in Islamic settings in order to come up with holistic view on workplace spirituality and work related outcomes linkage. Numerous inquiries on organizational spirituality supports its association with work related outcomes For instance, study by Giacalone & Jurkiewicz (2003) propose that spiritual institutions are constantly proven to influence one's stance towards their job.

As suggested by Rego & Pina e Cunha (2007) that a critical dimension of SW comprise nurturing profound link to, or association with, coworkers, which is known as a sense of community, which reinforces the connections and bind between staff members and their associates (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Thus organizational spirituality may reinforce one's bond to their work surroundings and associates (Roundy, 2009). Higher sense of connection resulting from spiritual organizations supports are proven to affect teamwork (Trott, 1996) to improve employment retention and attendance (Milliman *et al.*, 1999), and eventually, to promote loyalty towards organizations (Mitroff, 1999). Religious role involvement is deemed to be a good predictor of job satisfaction, job participation and life contentment for 193 nursing professionals (Parasuraman, Zammuto & Outcalt, 1984). Moreover the level of religious conviction had bigger effect on work dedication than other factors such as age, earnings or occupational status. Meanwhile the result of inquiry undertaken for five samples of Protestant and Catholic subjects in Australia, suggests no important distinction is evidenced in the achievement level or power motivation, however significant differences exist between Protestant believers and Protestant unbelievers, whereby unbelievers experience higher need achievement and 'Machiavellianism' but lower in dictatorial tendencies (Ray, 1982).

Vast majority of research on workplace spirituality and work related outcomes' association is derived from the study by Milliman *et al.* (2003), the pioneer in experimentally analyze how workplace spirituality elucidates organizational commitment. Moreover, Ashmos & Duchon (2000) develop and validate the measures items at three stages of examination: personal, group and institutional. They extort seven elements at personal level (neighborhood conditions, self-worth at work, internal life, blocks to spirituality, individual liability, affirmative acquaintances with other co-workers, and contemplation), two for the group stage (work-divisions community; favorable work-divisions values) and two for the institutional level (organizational values; individual and the organization). Milliman *et al.* (2003) examine how the three workplace spirituality elements (meaningful work, sense of community, value alignment) elucidate five work attitudes: emotional organizational commitment, employment retention, internal work contentment, work participation, and institutional based self-worth. While the first aspect denotes the extent to which individuals undergo a strong feeling of importance and purpose at work, the second refers to the way people perceive themselves as attached to others and that there is certain forms of relationship exist between one's spirit and that of others.

Moreover higher organizational commitment, a situation in which a person senses a connection with their institution and wants to remain in the business, reinforces motivation and reduce turnover (Mowday *et al.*, 1979). Three main elements of organizational commitment have been hypothesized as: continuance, normative and affective (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Affective has closer link to Mowday *et al.*'s (1979) initial conception. Other inquiries on spirituality suggest that work-unit performance is correlated to work-unit spirituality (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). Additionally, Fry *et al.* (2005) reveal affirmative association among spiritual leadership quality, spiritual endurance and business outcomes. Employees feeling of meaningful work are predicted to be interrelated to a person's manner to their institution. Attractive and demanding vocations are proven to have negative link to turnover and absenteeism (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Since this facet of spirituality is perceived as a profound and rather private thought than work trials, it is deemed to have favorable impact on workers feelings toward their institutions.

Numerous researchers have advanced the notion that a sense of community is related to employee work dedication and turnover. Trott (1996) propose that spiritual comfort, which comprises a feeling of neighborhood, will have positive association with teamwork and negatively related to turnover and absenteeism. Milliman *et al.* (1999) postulate that possessing a deep feeling of neighborhood and sturdy purposeful institutional objectives are linked to superior work dedication and lower turnover rates. Moreover, Brown (1992) alleges that feeling of neighborhood also result in higher workers' happiness.

Alignment with institutional values is also perceived to be connected to organizational. It is recommended that businesses which foster an environment where the institution is alert to workers' input and sense of values will have employees with: greater adaptability which helps to achieve business success (Catlette & Hadden, 1998); greater sense of esprit de corps (Channon, 1992); stronger commitment to help the business to succeed (Hawley, 1993; Catlette & Hadden, 1998). Similarly, Pratidhina (2007), in her study on workplace spirituality dimensions and organizational commitment in Indonesia concludes that workplace spirituality has stong association with affective commitment, nonetheless sense of community and alignment with organizational values are not significantly linked to affective commitment. In addition, Rahayu (2007), replicate the effort of Milliman to 267 respondents of profit and nonprofit organizations in Indonesia, concludes that workplace spirituality has significant relationship with organizational commitment.

Altogether this research suggests the following hypothesis:

H1: Soft TQM have positive and significant influence on organizational commitment (OC)

Corollary hypotheses:

H1a: leadership and top management commitment (LTMC) have positive and significant influence on organizational commitment

H1b: customer focus (CF) has positive and significant influence on organizational commitment

H1c: education and training (ET) has positive and significant influence on organizational commitment

H1d: empowerment (EM) has positive and significant influence on organizational commitment

H1e: reward and recognition (RR) has positive and significant influence on organizational commitment

H2: workplace spirituality moderates relationship between soft TQM and organizational commitment

Corollary hypotheses:

H2a: workplace spirituality moderate LTMC-OC relationship

H2b: workplace spirituality moderate CF-OC relationship

H2c: workplace spirituality moderate ET-OC relationship

H2d: workplace spirituality moderate EM-OC relationship

H2e: workplace spirituality moderate RR-OC relationship

3. Methodology

This study is hypothesis testing type which examine the association among latent, moderating and observe variables. Moreover, the nature of the investigation is cross-sectional whereby data is gathered on certain time using mail questionnaire survey. The survey instrument was six-page questionnaire divided into four sections. The first section was designed to obtain the respondent's profile and particulars of the company with regards to nature of business and mode of execution. The second section relates to the implementation of Soft TQM programmes and is divided into five parts. The research statements were developed by the researchers, taking into account the past literature and in consultation with experts in the industry. The third section in the questionnaire relates to employees work related outcomes, however only job satisfaction is presented in this study. The last section covers all measures items to reflect workplace spirituality from Islamic perspectives.

The variables measured in this study consist of five dimension of Soft TQM as the independent variables, namely: Leadership and Top Management Commitment (X1); Customer Focus (X2); Education and Training (X3); Empowerment (X4); and finally Reward and Recognition (X5). The observed variable in this study is Job Satisfaction while the moderator is workplace spirituality. Hierarchical regression analysis was applied to scrutinize the impact of workplace spirituality as the moderator on the relationship between soft TQM and job satisfaction in Islamic banks context. The methods of analysis used were descriptive statistics and hierarchical regression analysis and the respondents of the study were employees of Islamic banks located in Central Java Indonesia. The study was conducted between January until March 2010.

4. Analysis and Discussions

4.1 Description of Study Sample

Table 1 describes detail of responses from each Islamic bank's categories. Most respondents, 62.5 %, are employees of Islamic Commercial banks because the number of Islamic Commercial Banks (ICB) employees are greater than other banks. Islamic banking units only contributed 13.2 % in the study and 24.3 % responses came from Islamic rural banks.

Table 2 illustrates the sample and respondent responses category based on four demographic factors, namely respondents' age, gender, education level and work experiences. Almost 69 % of respondents who participated in the survey were at the age of 25-40 years old and majority of them, 96.2 %, had work experience between 1 to 10 years. Islamic banks are newcomers in the industry because the first Islamic bank in Indonesia was established in the 1992 and other Islamic banks came after it. This verity explain the fact why most employees of the banks had work experience less than ten years. The proportions of male and female participants were almost the same, which is 56.3 % male and 43.7 % female, with slightly male dominant. Meanwhile respondents education level were three categories namely senior high school graduates (13.5 %), Diploma (10.1 %), and bachelor degrees and above (76.4 %).

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

Before being analyze all variables measures items were tested for its validity and reliability. To test the validity of the instruments, item analysis was performed with Pearson Correlation Method. After performing the correlation between every item with its total value, the result indicated that almost all items, except one, are significant at 0.01 levels.

To perform the reliability test, the most common method used in previous study is Cronbach's alpha. The result of the pilot study showed that the Cronbach's alpha of the construct ranges from 0.7640 to 0.9297. Since the result of the reliability scores were more than 0.70, all items are considered reliable. To find out the role of workplace spirituality on the relationship between implementation of soft TQM and organizational commitment in Islamic banking hierarchical regression analysis was applied with the following results (Table 3). Initially the moderating effect of workplace spirituality was tested for the relationship between soft TQM and organizational commitment. The result of its direct and moderating effects on organizational commitment are as follows:

The result showed that the main hypothesis was supported; however, an analysis on the partial correlation found that the dimensions of soft TQM affected organizational commitment differently depending on the indicator used. Only one out of five indicators used did not have significant influence on organizational commitment, others showed significant relationship. The most influential variable in this model is Empowerment, with standardized beta coefficient of 0.240. The inclusion of workplace spiritual values into the equation in step 2 indicated that the additional variance resulted by the moderator was 7.3% and considered significant at $p < 0.05$. Thus workplace spiritual values had direct influence on organizational commitment.

The resultant model ($F = 1.894$, $p < 0.10$) for the relationship between soft TQM and organizational commitment indicated that statistically significant moderating effect of workplace spirituality on the proposed relationship exist. However only two interaction terms, customer focus*workplace spiritual values and empowerment*workplace spiritual values, were significant. Thus workplace spiritual values moderate the relationship between soft TQM and organizational commitment. The relationship between customer focus*workplace spiritual values (WSV) and empowerment*workplace spiritual values, can be better explained by portraying the interaction between WSV and customer focus as well as empowerment. The following graph showed the relationship between the interaction terms with organizational commitment.

4.3 Discussion

The finding of the studies showed that there was positive and significant relationship between soft TQM and employees' commitment towards organizations. According to Guimaraes (1996) job satisfaction and organizational commitment are also related but distinguishable attitudes while commitment denotes an effective response to the entire organization, job satisfaction represent an affective response to specific aspects of the job. The score obtained on employees' commitment in this study was 81.44 percent which is considered very good. In particular 94.1 percent claimed that they had attempted to take some steps in order to get along with other employees, while 90.4 percent responded that the employees were really care on the faith of the institution. In addition 87.3 percent felt glad to choose Islamic banks as institution to work for. From the descriptive analysis it can be concluded that employees of Islamic banks demonstrated strong commitment towards their institution. In fact employees' commitment towards the organizational goals is an essential component of any quality programme (Deming, 1986; Jackson, 2004). Organizational commitment refers to the level of affection and loyalty demonstrated by individual employees to the organization (Guimaraes, 1996; Luthans, 1996; Mowday *et al.*, 1979). Successful implementation of TQM raises the possibility that employees will be motivated to work well and remain with the company. Highly committed employees shall contribute more effectively to their companies' growth and success (Karia & Abu Hassan Asaari, 2006). The result of multiple regression analysis on the relationship between Soft TQM and organizational commitment indicated that four dimension of soft TQM, except education and training, had positive and significant effect on organizational commitment.

The result of this inquiry corroborated some previous research works on organizational commitment (Angle & Perry, 1981; Becker, 1960; Meyer, & Allen, 1997; Reichers, 1985). For example Allen & Brady (1997) compared responses of employees of an organization which was not implementing TQM with those who work for organizations that implementing TQM. The result of their study revealed that organizational commitment and perceived organizational support were significantly higher in the organizations implementing TQM. Employees in the organizations implementing TQM indicated better employee-management and coworker communication relationships. Moreover, the study also shows that employees of organization implementing TQM received more quality information from their top management. Thus, it is apparent that TQM produce greater employees' commitment towards Islamic banks in Indonesia. In short, the finding of this study confirms that the implementation of soft TQM by the Islamic banks in Indonesia certainly increase their employees' commitment at work.

TQM theorists view organizational commitment as the aspiration to do what is in the "best interests" of the organization (see for example Anderson *et al.*, 1994; Ross, 1993). This includes a psychological feeling of attachment to the organization and a willingness to consider the organization's problems as a personal matter. Thus, commitment involves employees' strong desire to regard the interests of their organization as necessary for quality improvement. As stated by Brooks & Zeitz, (1999) that TQM programs cannot work well without commitment, because TQM requires (1) bountiful suggestions from those who are actually performing the work; and (2) assiduous performance of work activities based on job specification. Furthermore, quality work requires urgent and continuous interest that cannot practically be monitored by managers (Dean & Evans, 1994). To this end, Deming (1986) is persistent about the importance of an organizational climate, total quality culture that encourages trust and intrinsic work motivation, since both factors are likely to increase employees' commitment that is prerequisite of successful quality program.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The role of spirituality at work has been proven to moderate the relationship between soft TQM and organizational commitment. This finding can be used as philosophy and basic concept to foster favorable attitudes of Islamic banks employees. The concept of workplace spirituality should be well understood hence it will be applied at individual, groups and organizational level. The findings of the research showed that soft TQM emphasized by Islamic banks in Central Java influence employees work behaviors. The research also found that some dimensions of workplace spirituality moderated the relationship between soft TQM and work related outcomes. Thus it can be concluded that the Islamic banks' managements may choose to focus on different dimension of soft TQM depending on the desired work related outcomes. For example, top management commitment was found to have negative and significant relationship with intention to leave; reward and recognition had positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction; empowerment had positive and significant relationship with OCB and employees' commitment towards organization.

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Notes

Table 1: Distribution of sample and responses for each category

| No | Categories | No of sample | %age | No of usable responses | %age of response |
|----|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Islamic Commercial Banks | 531 | 62.5% | 255 | 48% |
| 2 | Islamic Banking unit | 112 | 13.2% | 69 | 62% |
| 3 | Islamic Rural banks | 207 | 24.3% | 173 | 84% |
| | Total | 850 | 100% | 497 | |

Table 2: Demographic profile of respondents

| Demographic | Categories | Overall | | Early Response (Frequency) | Late Response (Frequency) |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------|------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | Frequency | %age | | |
| Age | < 25 years | 143 | 28.8 | 62 | 81 |
| | 25-40 years | 337 | 67.8 | 162 | 175 |
| | 41-56 years | 17 | 3.4 | 8 | 9 |
| Sex | Male | 280 | 56.3 | 121 | 159 |
| | Female | 217 | 43.7 | 111 | 106 |
| Work Experience | < 10 years | 478 | 96.2 | 231 | 247 |
| | 10-20 years | 17 | 3.4 | - | 17 |
| | >20 years | 2 | 0.4 | 1 | 1 |
| Education | Senior High | 67 | 13.5 | 19 | 48 |
| | Diploma | 50 | 10.1 | 10 | 40 |
| | Bachelor & above | 380 | 76.5 | 203 | 177 |

Table 3: Results of hierarchical regression analysis

| | Std (Model 1) | Beta | Std. Beta (Model 2) | Std. Beta (Model 3) |
|----------------------------------|---------------|------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Predictor Variables:</u> | | | | |
| Top Management Commitment (TMC) | 0.219*** | | 0.194*** | 0.294 |
| Reward and Recognition (RR) | 0.152*** | | 0.069 | 0.076 |
| Education and Training (ET) | 0.041 | | -0.030 | -0.216 |
| Empowerment (EM) | 0.240*** | | 0.185*** | 0.882** |
| Customer Focus (CF) | 0.098* | | 0.063 | -1.027** |
| <u>Moderating Variables</u> | | | | |
| Workplace Spiritual Values (WSV) | | | 0.352*** | 0.060 |
| <u>Interaction terms</u> | | | | |
| TMC*WSV | | | | -0.159 |
| RR*WSV | | | | -0.018 |
| ET*WSV | | | | 0.326 |
| EM*WSV | | | | -1.220* |
| CF*WSV | | | | 1.727*** |
| R ² | 0.396 | | 0.469 | 0.480 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.390 | | 0.462 | 0.467 |
| R ² Change | 0.396 | | 0.073 | 0.011 |
| F Change | 61.467*** | | 63.762** | 1.894* |

Note: * p < 0.10; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01