
An Empirical Investigation on Religious Diversity Practices at Malaysian Private and Public Sectors

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Abstract

This research investigates religious diversity practices at Malaysian public and private sectors. Among the important aspects that have been examined are company policy, dress code, religious symbols or artifacts, recruitment, promotion, training, religious observances, and facilities. Quantitative methodology is adopted to achieve the research objective where a total of 759 employees from both public and private sectors are surveyed. Based on statistical analyses performed in this research (descriptive and factor analysis), religious freedom is practiced in most of the public and private sector workplaces in Malaysia with multicultural and multi-religious society. Results of this study may indicate that there were no issues of religious discrimination among workers of public and private sectors in Malaysia. As this research is conducted from the workers' perspective, there is always scope of further research on the same matter from the employers' point of view.

Keywords: Religious Diversity, Malaysia, Survey, Private and Public Sectors, Factor Analysis.

1. Introduction

Background of Research

Malaysia is a multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-religious country (Mohd Arip et al., 2015). People of numerous cultures, race and religion have been living here in peace and harmony since the independence in 1957. Religious tolerance in Malaysia is recognized by many and argued by a few. The existence and preservation of religious tolerance and coherence among Malaysian multi-religious and multi-racial citizens is one of the many factors contributed towards economic development and growth in Malaysia (Abubakar, 2013).

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census of Malaysia (Census 2010) conducted by the Malaysian Department of Statistics, out of the total population 61.3 percent are Sunni Muslims; 19.8 percent are Buddhists; 9.2 percent are Christians; 6.3 percent are Hindus; 1.3 percent are followers of traditional Chinese religions, such as Confucianism and Taoism; and 0.4 percent are the believers of 'other religions', including indigenous religious practices (Department of Statistics Malaysia, Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristic Report 2010). The Federal Constitution of Malaysia offers broad protections for freedom of religion or belief. Although it establishes Islam as the national religion, it also assures that other religions shall be practised in peace and harmony (The Federal Constitution of Malaysia).

The diversity of races in Malaysia also contributed to diversity of religion practices in the workplaces as people from different religions are employed in public and private sector workplaces. As the workforce in Malaysia is becoming more diversified in terms of religion, many individual values are carried over to the workplace. Therefore, employees are most likely to bring their religious beliefs with them to the office (Messarra, 2014). Studies suggest that organizations that frankly encourage their employees to express their religious belief tends to become more successful (Arnaldo, 2004). But, to what extent religious diversity practices are allowed in public and private sector workplaces in Malaysia? Whether there is discrimination in workplaces based on religion, whether the employees are satisfied with the current diversity practices inside their organizations, whether religious diversity practices increase productivity. These are million-dollar questions yet to be addressed in the context of Malaysia. Till date, there is a very few scholarly works worldwide that focuses on religious diversity practices within organization, probably none in Malaysia. Thus, purpose of this study is to identify the extent of religious diversity practices in public and private sector workplaces in Malaysia with regard to several aspects, i.e. company policy, dress code, religious symbols or artifacts, recruitment, promotion, training, religious observances, facilities etc. The study opens with a literature review on the nature and extent of religious diversity and religious freedom in Malaysia in general and at workplaces in particular. Then, the methodology is presented followed by data analysis, a discussion of the results, findings and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

The current study concerns about religious diversity practices at public and private sector workplaces in Malaysia including employee's freedom to profess and practice his religion. There are many studies, research and discussions about rights of workers at their workplaces. These rights are already in the law, be it domestic legislation or international standards and conventions. Nonetheless, there is not much literature on the diversity practices of workers at the workplaces in the context of Malaysia. To answer the research question and finding out the research objectives, it is necessary to review relevant literatures so that the existing gaps are identifies and filled up. For the purpose of the research, numerous statutes, international treaties, law journals, reports of national and international organizations and government agencies, books etc. have been reviewed.

According to Lucy Vickers (2015), although freedom of religion is well established as a fundamental right, to what extent it should be enjoyed in the workplace is still the subject of some debate. Some may argue that religion is a private matter that has no place at work. However, most of them believe that work is a forum in which a significant part of life is lived. It is where people meet others, engage with wider society, gain economic benefit, undertake personal and professional development, and to some extent, express their personality. If considered that way, religion should not be excluded from the workplace. However, studies also shown that protecting religious freedom at work can lead to tension; tension between equality rights and tension between religious and other interests such as the economic interests of employers. So, she found both positive and negative impacts of religious diversity practices at the workplaces. In every multicultural society in the world including Malaysia, religious tolerance and religious diversity practices is one of the important aspects in all sectors. Religious diversity in Malaysia is acknowledged by many and disputed by few. One of the many factors contributed to Malaysian economic development and growth is the existence and maintenance of religious diversity, tolerance and harmony among Malaysian multi-religious and multi-racial citizens in both public and private sectors (Abubakar, 2013).

In Malaysia, religion is not a basis or criterion for employment unless the employment is connected to or related with the affairs of any religion or any religious institution or body managed by a particular religious group. For example, an imam or leader in a mosque must be a Muslim and a Christian in a church and a Buddhist in a Buddhist temple and a Hindu in a Hindu temple (Abubakar, 2013). The Federal Constitution of Malaysia states that there shall be no discrimination against citizens on the ground only of religion, race, descent, place of birth or gender in any law or in the appointment to any office or employment under a public authority or in the administration of any law relating to the acquisition, holding or disposition of property or the establishing or carrying on of any trade, business, profession, vocation or employment (The Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Article 8(2)). So, religious diversity at workplaces is well recognised by the Federal Constitution of Malaysia.

The Federal Constitution also assures that every person has the right to profess and practice his religion, and to propagate it (The Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Article 11(1)). There are also limitations of the right to profess and practice one's religion on the ground of public order, public health and morality (The Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Article 11(5)). So far there is no decision made by the court that touches on the right to profess and practice one's religion in the workplace. But there are cases like *Meor Atiqulrahman Ishak & Others V. Fatimah Sihi & Others* (Atiqulrahman Ishak & Others V. Fatimah Sihi & Others [2006] 4 CLJ 1), and *Halimatussadiyah v Public Services Commission* (Halimatussadiyah v Public Services Commission [1994] 3 MLJ 61) dwelled into issues about the right to wear "Islamic" dress. The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) has identified a number of challenges to maintain religious diversity in Malaysia. In a recent paper they identified six key issues concerning the implementation in practice of

constitutional provisions, federal laws and Islamic laws in the context of freedom of religion or belief:

1. Discrimination against religious minorities;
2. Limitations on the rights of children relating to personal matters governed by Islamic law;
3. Discrimination against persons who wish to change or adopt a new religion;
4. Criminalization and prosecution of proselytism among Muslims; and
5. Prohibitions on the use of the word 'Allah' by non-Muslims; and
6. Relationship with freedom of expression and the crime of sedition.

To help address these concerns and assist the Government of Malaysia to ensure that its legal framework is implemented in accordance with international human rights law and fully protects freedom of religion or belief in all sphere of life including workplaces, the ICJ offered some recommendations which includes becoming party to major international treaties, withdrawing reservations to CEDAW, CRC, CRPD etc, implementing the provision of the Constitution, amend or repeal relevant laws, and others. A study by Kadiresan and Javed (2015) on discrimination in employment and task delegation at workplaces in Malaysia have touched on many aspects of employment discrimination including religious discrimination at workplaces. Empirical survey conducted on employees from various private organizations in the state of Kuala Lumpur have revealed that the existence of discrimination at the workplace in Malaysia regarding age, race, religion and gender are still felt in subtle forms. Most of the respondents felt that race is a major factor although the other factors like age, religion and gender hold significance as well. This study is somewhat familiar with the current research but only limited to state of Kuala Lumpur whereas the current study covers all the states of Malaysia.

Although it is expected that employees in an organization should have freedom to profess his religious faith, studies suggest that religious freedom in workplace may also affect the working environment. In a study on organizational behaviour Messarra surveyed 548 employees working in religiously diverse organizations. The findings suggested that when workers perceive religious discrimination in their group, their dedication and participation are affected. The study suggested that managers should devise strategies and develop management interventions to mitigate the negative organizational and personal consequences of religious discrimination in the workplace. Messarra defined religious discrimination as “valuing or treating a person or group differently because of what they do or do not believe or because of their feelings towards a given religion (Messarra, 2014). Based on the religious tolerance and harmony found in major religions of the world, it is very clear, evident, reasonable and sound to deduce that in Malaysia followers of every religion have preferred the religious tolerance and harmony found in their respective religions in every sector including public and private sector workplaces. They are able to maintain and nurture

This religious diversity because they are strongly supported by the constitutional and other legal provisions as well as by some policies implemented by government (Abubakar, 2013: 92). According to Abdul Rahmam and Mohd Khambali@Hambali (2013), religious diversity is a reality that must be acknowledged. The varieties in religion contain claims and needs to be judged properly. A good approach would result in a good situation and *vice versa*. Tolerance is a culture

that founded the co-existence of pluralistic society in Malaysia. The culture of tolerance can only be built if ethnical tolerance and religious tolerance is accepted as a common practice, i.e. all alike irrespective of their religious belief. The studies cited above provide a lot of information on religious freedom, religious diversity, tolerance and practices in Malaysia as a whole and its positive and negative impact. But none of these literatures could either answer the research questions or fulfil the objectives of the current study, i.e. religious diversity practices in public and private sector workplaces in Malaysia. It is also observed that there are a very few studies on religious freedom at workplaces in the context of Malaysia. Thus, the current study is unique in nature and one of its kind in Malaysia. It explores the extent of religious diversity practices in public and private sectors in Malaysia based on different variables such as, company policy, dress code, religious symbols or artifacts, recruitment, promotion, training, religious observances, facilities, and also employees' satisfaction towards religious practices at their workplaces and also considers the necessity of a separate legislation dealing with this particular area.

3. Research Methodology

This research is done quantitatively where the empirical data is gathered through survey of 759 employees from public and private sectors in Malaysia. In terms of analysis, descriptive and factor analyses is conducted to achieve the research objectives. A total of 10 numerators is employed to disseminate survey to all states in Malaysia. They were briefed on the targeted group of sample and industry concerned.

Sampling

Overall, 14 states in Malaysia have involved in this research and a total of five variables is explored on the religious treatment at workplaces which are company policy, dress code, religious symbols or artifacts, recruitment/training, religious observances, and facilities.

Research Instrument

Survey instrument were basically formed by adopting and adapting past literatures' instrument which including by European Network against Racism (2015) and Abdullah et al. (2016). All the instruments is divided into specific variables and sections in the survey form. Apart of the instrument, the survey form also consists of demographic and work-related questions.

Data Analysis

Background of Respondents

Descriptive Analysis is conducted to observe respondents' background including gender, age, ethnic, religion, marital status, and education level. Overall, 61 percent of the respondents were female and the rest 39 percent were male. Majority of them were belong to 21-35 years old age group (61 percent), Malay (88 percent), Muslim (92 percent), and married (52 percent). In terms of educational level, 36 percent were degree holder, and diploma and upper school level share similar percentage which is 21 percent. Details background of respondents is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Background of Respondents

No.	Background	Frequency	Percentage	
1	Gender	Male	299	39.4
		Female	460	60.6
		Total	759	100.0
2	Age	Under 20 years old	40	5.3
		21-25 years	198	26
		26-30 years	163	21.5
		31-35 years	101	13.3
		36-40 years	94	12.4
		41-45 years	49	6.5
		46-50 years	51	6.7
		51-55 years	40	5.3
		56-60 years	17	2.2
		Above 60 years	06	0.8
		Total	759	100.0
3.	Ethnicity	Malay	671	88.4
		Chinese	35	4.6
		Indian	16	2.1
		Other Bumiputra	30	4.0
		Others	07	0.9
		Total	759	100.0
4.	Religion	Islam	698	92.0
		Buddhism	30	4.0
		Hinduism	13	1.7
		Christianity	17	2.2
		Others	01	0.1
		Total	759	100.0
5.	Marital Status	Single	346	45.6
		Married	395	52.1
		Divorced	07	0.9
		Widowed	11	1.4
		Total	759	100.0
6.	Education Level	PhD	16	2.1
		Master	60	7.9
		Degree	278	36.6
		Diploma	159	20.9
		Certificate	57	7.5
		Upper Secondary	156	20.6
		Lower Secondary	22	2.9
		Primary	07	0.9
		No Schooling	03	0.4
		Others	01	0.1
Total	759	100.0		

Workplace Information

Detailed analysis is also conducted to observe respondents' workplace information that includes their workplace location, work sector, work industries, role at work, total duration of work, duration of work in Malaysia, and duration with current employer. Highest 13 percent employees work in KL and lowest 0.3 percent in Sarawak while other states represent an average range from 47 to 53. Majority of them work in private sectors (63.9 percent), in service industries (71 percent), in diversified roles including clerical, sales, executive and others and work 6-8 hours a day (61.4 percent). 36 percent have been working for 10 years or more in Malaysia out of whom 26.6 percent with the same employer. Details workplace information of the respondents is summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Workplaces Information

No.	Workplace Information	Frequency	Percentage	
1.	Workplace Location	Johor	53	7.0
		Kedah	51	6.7
		Kelantan	49	6.5
		KL	99	13.0
		Melaka	48	6.3
		Negeri Sembilan	47	6.2
		Pahang	51	6.7
		Perak	52	6.9
		Perlis	50	6.6
		P. Pinang	51	6.7
		Putrajaya	52	6.9
		Terengganu	51	6.7
		Sabah & Labuan	50	6.6
		Sarawak	02	0.3
		Selangor	53	7.1
	Total	759	100.0	
2.	Work Sector	Public	207	27.3
		Private	485	63.9
		NGO	20	2.6
		Others	47	6.2
		Total	759	100.0
3.	Work Industries	Manufacturing	84	11.1
		Services	539	71.0
		Others	136	17.9
		Total	759	100.0
4.	Role at Work	Clerical	134	17.7

		Sales	105	13.8
		Design	12	1.6
		Marketing	33	4.3
		Executive	148	19.5
		Production	34	4.5
		Others	293	38.6
		Total	759	100.0
5.	Work Duration	5 hours & less	20	2.6
		6-8 hours	466	61.4
		9-11 hours	239	31.5
		12 hours & more	34	4.5
		Total	759	100.0
6.	How long working in Malaysia	1 year or less	124	16.3
		2-5 years	236	31.1
		6-10 years	126	16.6
		10 years or more	273	36.0
		Total	759	100.0
7.	How long working with same employer	1 year or less	226	29.8
		2-5 years	227	29.9
		6-10 years	105	13.8
		10 years or more	201	26.5
		Total	759	100.0

Religious Diversity Practices

In this section, descriptive analysis is conducted to observe respondents' religious diversity practices on five variables, for example, company policy, religious symbols or artifacts, recruitment, promotion, and training, religious observances and religious facilities at their workplaces. In case of all the variables, the respondents agree that they are satisfied with the religious diversity practices within their workplaces. Detailed responses of the respondents are summarized in Table 3-7 below.

Table 3: Company Policy

No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation
CA1	There are clear written policies and practices in dealing with religious freedom at my workplace such as the religious dress codes, religious harassment, etc.	3.6640	1.11083
CA2	I am aware about the do's and don'ts regarding religious freedom at the workplace.	4.1555	.79879
CA3	My organization offer guidelines to me in relation to religious tolerance at workplace.	3.7576	.95919
CA4	My employer gives the right to me to manifest my religion either alone or in groups.	3.9065	.91913
CA5	The company policy at my workplace has effectively allows me to reconcile their religious needs.	4.1357	.82429
CA6	I am committed to comply with the legislation outlined in relation to the religious freedom at my workplace.	4.0711	.83315
CA7	Company policy does not restrict to hire only those who have certain religious background.	3.638	1.1687

Note: Scale 1=Strong Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Table 3 shows that statement CA2 titled 'I am aware about the do's and don'ts regarding religious freedom at the workplace' has the highest mean value (4.156). This indicates that the workers are mostly aware about the rules regarding religious freedom at their workplaces. Further, most of them agree that the company policy at their workplaces has effectively allows them to reconcile their religious needs (mean = 4.136). Hence, they are a bit neutral about the statement in CA7 titled 'company policy does not restrict to hire only those who have certain religious background' which has the lowest mean value (3.638). Overall, it is observed that most of the workers are positive in terms of inclusion of religious freedom and religious practices in the company policy.

Table 4: Religious Symbols

No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation
CB1	My employer respects my freedom of dressing according to my religious beliefs.	4.0922	.94265
CB2	My employer give freedom to me to display religious decorations in the workplace.	3.5823	1.11159
CB3	I am free to wear any religious symbols at workplace.	3.6219	2.84110
CB4	My employer does not impose restrictions on the wearing of religious dress such as headscarves or turbans.	4.0501	1.00664
CB5	I am free to use any religious words at my workplace.	3.8669	1.02190
CB6	I am free to discuss any religious matters or activities with my colleagues at my workplace.	3.8748	0.98076

Note: Scale 1=Strong Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

As per Table 4 above on religious symbols, the statement contained in CB1 titled ‘my employer respects my freedom of dressing according to my religious beliefs’ got the highest mean value (4.0922) while statement in CB2 titled ‘my employer give freedom to me to display religious decorations in the workplace’ has the lowest mean value (3.5823). This means although they are satisfied about freedom of dressing as per religious belief, they show neutral or divided opinion on displaying religious decorations. As a whole, the workers somewhat agreed that they have freedom regarding religious symbols at their workplaces.

Table 5: Recruitment, Promotion, and Training

No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation
CC1	My employer applying laws that provide equal employment and promotion opportunity for all employees regardless of their race, skin colour, religion, gender, etc.	3.8801	.96788
CC2	My employer does not discriminate on grounds of religion in terms of recruitment and work conditions.	3.8603	.96727
CC3	My employer only employs staff with their favourable religions.	2.4348	1.26997
CC4	My employer organises talks on religious tolerance.	3.1199	1.11128
CC5	My employer allows staffs to conduct activities and training on religious belief and practices.	3.3426	1.10703

Note: Scale 1=Strong Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

In terms of recruitment, promotion and training, the respondents get divided and show neutral opinion in almost all the statements in Table 5. Among the statements, CC1 titled ‘my employer applies laws that provide equal employment and promotion opportunity for all employees regardless of their race, skin colour, religion, gender, etc.’ got the highest mean value of 3.8801, whereas, statement CC3 titled ‘my employer only employs staff with their favourable religions’ got the lowest mean value of 2.435. As none of the statements achieved scale of agree or strongly agree, it is observed that the workers neither deny nor fully agree on religious freedom in case of recruitment, promotion and training. However, the shared that their employers did not practiced discrimination for the employment purposes.

Table 6: Religious Observants

No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation
CD1	I was given a time off to perform my daily prayer or other religious observance.	4.3017	.84864
CD2	My employer accommodates my requests to be excused from performing particular duties that seems to be contradicted with my religious norms.	4.0993	.93183
CD3	My employer gives support to any religious celebrations of important events.	4.0725	.84483
CD4	I was granted to apply leave for my religious festivals.	4.0922	.87440
CD5	I was allowed to promote and debate my religious doctrine among colleagues at the workplace.	3.4638	1.07794

Note: Scale 1=Strong Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Table 6 shows that in case of religious observance, most of the items were reported to have agreement from the respondents especially with regards to statement 'I was given a time off to perform my daily prayer or other religious observance' with the highest mean value of 4.302. This indicates that most of the workers agreed that they were given time to perform prayers or other observance. On the other hand, statement in CD5 titled 'I was allowed to promote and debate my religious doctrine among colleagues at the workplace' has the lowest mean value of 3.464. This indicates that they neither agree nor disagree on this statement. However, the overall result shows that most of the workers were satisfied with the freedom they got from their employers to perform religious observance.

Table 7: Religious Facilities

No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation
CE1	Space for prayer and meditation is provided at my workplace.	4.227	.93550
CE2	I am satisfied with the facilities provided at my workplace to perform daily prayer or other religious observance.	4.1989	.91813
CE3	When workplace events are held, my employer are aware of food restrictions and offers meal that can accommodate all employees' beliefs.	4.2678	.87318
CE4	I am aware the staff is allowed to contribute anything on the cultures, religions and ethic celebrations in the company's social media facility.	3.9306	.91188
CE5	My employer provides special leaves facilities for me to perform religious obligations (umrah, hajj, vanares, etc).	4.1889	.95052

Note: Scale 1=Strong Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

In terms of religious facilities provided by the employer, almost all the workers give positive responses in all the statements in Table 7. Out of the five statements, CE3 titled ‘When workplace events are held, my employer are aware of food restrictions and offers meal that can accommodate all employees’ beliefs’ has the highest mean value (4.268) while statement CE4 titled ‘I am aware the staff is allowed to contribute anything on the cultures, religions and ethic celebrations in the company’s social media facility’ has the lowest mean value (3.931). Hence, the workers are satisfied with the religious facilities provided by their employer.

Exploratory Factor Analysis for Religious Diversity Practices

In order to estimate the data normally distributed, Skewness & Kurtosis standard error analysis is done and the value should be less than 2 (Skewness Std. error < 1.96) and Kurtosis standard error < 1.96). According to the analysis, all the items did not exceed 2 for both skewness and kurtosis standard error. Therefore, the data were normally distributed. Further than that, based on sampling adequacy test (KMO and Bartlett’s Test), the values represent that the sampling of this research is adequate for further analysis which is 0.922 (significant at 0.000).

Table 8: Sampling adequacy test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.922
Approx. Chi-Square		14717.041
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	820
	Sig.	.000

Factor analysis is then conducted to confirm all measurement items used to measure each of the religious diversity practices in Malaysia which are company policy, religious symbols, recruitment, promotion, and training, religious observants, and facilities. Results of factor analysis is presented in Table 9 and 10 below.

Table 9: Total Variance explained

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	12.066	43.093	43.093	12.066	43.093	43.093	5.770	20.607	20.607
2	2.755	9.840	52.933	2.755	9.840	52.933	5.664	20.230	40.837
3	2.050	7.323	60.256	2.050	7.323	60.256	3.325	11.876	52.713
4	1.512	5.401	65.658	1.512	5.401	65.658	2.759	9.853	62.566
5	1.179	4.212	69.870	1.179	4.212	69.870	1.588	5.673	68.239
6	1.077	3.847	73.717	1.077	3.847	73.717	1.534	5.477	73.717
7	.881	3.145	76.862						
8	.791	2.826	79.688						
9	.715	2.554	82.243						
10	.639	2.281	84.524						
11	.560	2.001	86.525						
12	.524	1.871	88.395						
13	.474	1.694	90.089						
14	.432	1.541	91.631						
15	.383	1.367	92.998						
16	.331	1.183	94.181						
17	.301	1.075	95.256						
18	.212	.757	96.012						
19	.197	.703	96.715						
20	.175	.624	97.339						
21	.158	.564	97.903						
22	.136	.487	98.390						
23	.114	.407	98.797						
24	.106	.377	99.174						
25	.083	.295	99.469						
26	.067	.238	99.707						
27	.045	.159	99.866						
28	.037	.134	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 10: Communalities

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
CA1	1.000	.663
CA2	1.000	.604
CA3	1.000	.654
CA4	1.000	.565
CA5	1.000	.621
CB1	1.000	.560
CB2	1.000	.676
CB3	1.000	.701
CB4	1.000	.572
CB5	1.000	.731
CB6	1.000	.713
CC1	1.000	.784
CC2	1.000	.781
CC4	1.000	.747
CC5	1.000	.720
CD1	1.000	.654
CD2	1.000	.582
CD3	1.000	.617
CD4	1.000	.545
CE1	1.000	.689
CE2	1.000	.492
CE3	1.000	.583
CE5	1.000	.617
CE4	1.000	.547

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Based on the results of EFA in Table 9, there are six factors with eigenvalues more than 1 which represents 73.71% of total variance explained. Its means, from total of 28 measurements items, it seems to measure six underlying factors for diversity religious practices as measured in this study which are company policy, dress code, religious symbols or artifacts, recruitment/promotion/training, religious observances, and facilities. Further than this, results of communalities indicate that all items have high communalities where the value of r square are more than 0.5. It thus signifies the measurement items used in this study is strong enough to observe the religious diversity among public and private employees in Malaysia.

4. Findings and Conclusion

The current study attempts to reveal the extent of religious diversity practices at Malaysian public and private sector workplaces from the workers' point of view. After detailed analysis of the data from the respondents of all states of Malaysia, it is found that public and private sector workers in Malaysia enjoy freedom of religion in their workplaces irrespective of their religious belief. In this case, it is certain that religious tolerance is highly considered in Malaysian workforce environment. Hoffman (2020) have illustrated that the major influence of religious tolerance are religious behaviour and practices. Even though there are diversity of religion practices in Malaysia, the

findings suggest that there were no issue for both public and private sectors to allow their employees to practice their religion (positive religious tolerance). This basically contradict with the results of Hoofman (2020) study on the Arab country where the author found that religious practices or attendance have reduced tolerance attitude among the Arab people as frequent attendance for communal worship have increased distinct from members of other groups or religions.

In almost all workplaces there are written policies and practices to deal with religious freedom and the employees are aware about these rules. Moreover, in most workplaces the employer offer guidelines in relation to religious tolerance and give the right to manifest workers' religion. In most cases, company policies do not allow to hire people from certain religious background only (Table 3). The employers also recognize the workers' freedom of dressing according to their religious belief and in limited cases allow the workers to display religious artifacts though most of the workers opined that they are free to wear any religious symbol at workplace. It is also found that the employers usually do not impose restrictions in wearing certain religious dress such as headscarves or turbans. The workers are also free to use religious words and discuss religious matters with the colleagues (Table 4). In case of recruitment, promotion and training the employers usually apply equal opportunity principle though in some cases they employ staff from their favourable religion. In some workplaces the employer organizes talks on religious tolerance and allow staff to conduct training on religious belief and practices (Table 5). Almost all the employers allow their workers to perform their religious chores, even give them time off or leave for religious events or festivals. (Table 6). In most of the workplaces, there are space for prayers and meditation and the workers seem satisfied with such facilities. The employers respect the religious belief of workers in case of food supplies too. Special leaves are also allowed to workers to perform certain religious obligations, such as umrah, hajj, vanares etc. (Table 7).

In conclusion, it can be said that religious freedom is practiced in most of the public and private sector workplaces in Malaysia. Malaysia has achieved this tremendous quality of religious diversity practices from it decades old multicultural and multireligious society. However, absolute religious freedom may also be a boomerang for the organization and may involve the workers from diverse religious background in conflict, and thus resulting adverse effect for the organization. Hence, religious diversity would lead to many advantages to the organization which including innovation where they work together regardless their background and create the atmosphere that can accommodate all idea (Hicks, 2002). It is also proven by previous researchers that when employees feel comfortable to practice their religious at work and feeling welcome to share their religious identity it may reduce burnout, increase job satisfaction, and commitment (Gelb & Longacre, 2012). Religious diversity should be handled rather than wished away by barring the whole topic from discussion. As this research is conducted from the workers' perspective, there is always scope of further research on the same matter from the employers' point of view.

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