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The Issues and Perceptions of Muslim Employees Concerning Religious Accommodation in the Workplace

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Daniel W. White

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Walden University
2018

Abstract

The Issues and Perceptions of Muslim Employees Concerning Religious Accommodation
in the Workplace

by

Daniel W. White

MA, St. Mary's University, San Antonio Texas, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy & Administration

Walden University

August 2018

Abstract

Religious accommodation in the workplace has been a growing issue in the business community, partly as a result of an increasing number of religious discrimination cases in the United States. The focus of this qualitative phenomenological study was to investigate Muslims' perceptions concerning religious accommodation using pluralism and religious pluralism as the theoretical frameworks. Data were collected via an online survey of Muslims from different regions throughout the United States with a sample size of 28 participants. Data from the online survey were analyzed using the Moustakas method of phenomenological analysis, which consists of epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and the synthesis of meanings and essences. Results showed the Muslim employees perceived there was a severe lack of religious accommodation provided by their companies. A plurality of the respondents stated their companies did not take any action toward providing them with religious accommodation. Findings also showed prayer to be one of the most important forms of religious expression in the workplace. The implications for positive social change are that companies begin to communicate more effectively with their Muslim employees. With the hope that leaders and public policymakers will implement changes that are beneficial to American society.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this to my very supportive and loving wife, Clotia, who has stood by me all the way to the end. I would also like to dedicate this to my late sister, Eleanor Obi, who always encouraged me to pursue my dreams, my oldest sister, Faye, who always holds me up in prayer, and my oldest brother, James, who encouraged me to be a man and do my very best.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Religion has been a part of the fabric of the United States from its earliest beginnings. Prior to the War of Independence, 11 of the 13 colonies had state-supported churches (O'Malley, 2006). Virginia legally recognized the Anglican Church of Virginia until the arrival of the Quakers in 1657, which opposed the state's authority over the church's affairs (O'Malley, 2006). During the late 18th century, dissension continued to grow among religious groups such as the Presbyterians and the Baptists who opposed the Colony's authority to license clergymen and certify legal marriages in 1699; this would ignite the Presbyterians' demand for religious toleration among those who resided in the colonies (O'Malley, 2006).

The Importance of Religion

The importance of religion has been well documented, from George Mason's initial request for toleration of religion to James Madison's *Memorial and Remonstrance*. Madison (1785) said that men should be able to freely exercise their religion without being forced or pressured to do so. Madison's treatise concerning religion would later lay the foundation for the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which states there shall be no laws that support the endorsement of religion or prevent anyone from freely exercising his or her religion.

Religion is representative of an individual's beliefs and is supported by an institutional establishment with ordinances and practices (Greenwald, 2005; Hicks, 2002;

Shureen, 2004). According to Gotsis and Kortezi (2007), this view is also held by some in the corporate world. Hicks (2002) noted the secular attitude of indifference toward religion is prevalent in many of today's workplaces.

According to Weber (1920), Protestant religions helped to influence capitalism. At the height of the Industrial Age during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Protestant work ethic was the norm for many U.S. workers who believed it was their duty and calling to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities because they believed it would bring glory to their God and honor to their faith. Within the last 20 years, this feeling changed with the recognition of spirituality in the workplace (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007). One challenge inherent with spirituality is that it deals with the invisible, or what cannot be seen with the natural eye. Transcendence must be experienced as it relates to Abraham Maslow's peak experience, which includes "experiences of joy bliss and everyday life" (Hoffman, 2012, p. 483) such as the birth of a child, falling in love, or watching the sunset. The natural eye cannot see destiny, interconnectedness, or concepts and elements that define spirituality. Many Americans believe religion and spirituality are the same (Schlehofer, Omoto, & Adelman, 2008). Religion continues to be present in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2015a). The phenomenon of spirituality continues to grow in the United States and is gaining new followers, though it lacks the legal position that religion holds within the Constitution of the United States. The gap in the existing literature relates to a lack of information that can provide assistance to employers

when their organizations begin taking measures toward providing religious accommodation for employees within the workplace. Some of the existing literature contains details of the adversarial relationships that can exist between an organization and its workers. Therefore, the current study was driven by the need to identify and report on the perceptions of Muslims concerning religious accommodation in the workplace.

Because it is an individual's constitutional right under the First Amendment to freely exercise his or her religion without restriction, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 lays the foundation through which an employee can file a lawsuit on the grounds of religious discrimination in the workplace. Title VII states that no person can be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin (42 U.S.C. 2000e). In 1972, Congress amended Title VII with Section 701, affording employers the right to refuse religious accommodation if it results in undue hardship for the organization (42 U.S.C. 2000e). Undue hardship is defined as the costs the employer would incur above the bottom line in attempting to meet employees' requests for religious accommodation. The law holds the employer responsible for providing proof of an attempt to resolve an employee's request under Title VII. If the employer cannot provide such proof, he or she risks a court order to provide religious accommodation for the employee. Under the *de minimis* standard, the employer is required to minimally accommodate the religious needs of employees in the workplace. The accommodation

needs to fall within the company's guidelines and should not bring any undue hardship to the company as a business organization (42 U.S.C. 2000e).

In the case of *Bradley Baker v. Home Depot* (2006), Baker, who worked as an associate for Home Depot, believed he should be given Saturdays off because it was his day of rest and Sundays for religious worship. For several years, Baker was adamant about his faith and each subsequent supervisor allowed him to have weekends off until a new supervisor informed him that he would have to work weekends like his fellow employees or risk termination. The situation escalated when Baker refused to show up for work on a Saturday and was terminated. During this time, Home Depot had offered Baker a flexible work schedule when it came to the weekends, but Baker refused (Kurz & Sleeper, 2009). The court, in a further examination of Baker's complaint of religious discrimination, found that Home Depot had allowed for reasonable accommodation in offering a flexible schedule (Kurz & Sleeper, 2009). As a result of the court's decision, Baker's employment was terminated because the court decided Home Depot had reasonably met his request under Title VII's de minimis clause. Issues such as this clearly support the need for more research to decrease these occurrences in the workplace, as this case could have possibly been settled without ever appearing before the court.

It is an individual's constitutional right under the First Amendment to freely exercise his or her religion without restriction. Another case was *Ansonia Board of Education v. Philbrook* (1986), in which a schoolteacher and active member of the

Worldwide Church of God requested 6 days off a year to comply with his religious obligations (Kaminer, 2009). The school board agreed to give him 3 days of paid leave off and 3 days of unpaid leave. Philbrook contested the board's decision and later filed a religious discrimination suit. Similar to the Baker case, the court decided Philbrook's request was reasonably accommodated and the 3 days of unpaid leave was sufficient. This resulted in Philbrook's termination from the Arizona school system. In conducting this study, it was my objective, to encourage positive social change by opening a dialogue between employers and employees within their organization.

Von Bergen (2013) stated the newest and most prevalent type of diversity in the United States involves religion and spirituality. Traditionally, in the United States, it has been unfathomable to mention or bring God into the place of work (Von Bergen, 2013). The current study was driven by the need to identify and report on Muslims' thoughts and perspectives on the issue of religious accommodation in the workplace, as there has been a steady increase in the number of religious discriminations suits filed by Muslims over the last 10 years. Religious observance practices can include a holy day off that conflicts with work schedules; the topic is not just relevant to Muslims, but all other religions and faiths in the United States.

Religious manifestation takes place when a religious follower requests to practice their religion during working hours (Von Bergen, 2013). It was this researcher's hope to add to the body of knowledge concerning Muslims' perceptions toward religious

accommodation for Muslim employees in the workplace to provide information and assistance to employers who seek to improve the ways in which they accommodate the religious needs of their employees. This may help generate social change by providing education and assistance for employers who are willing to accommodate the religious needs of their employees.

Background

In an increasingly diverse workforce, one challenge for many companies is how to accommodate religious employees who claim protection under Title VII. From 1992 to 2003, there was an 82% increase in the number of religious discrimination cases, although claims involving racial discrimination decreased by 3.5% (Fotlin & Standish, 2004). According to Fotlin and Standish (2004), there are five primary reasons for the growing number of religious discrimination cases in the United States: First, some companies are now asking employees to work longer hours to maintain their production schedules. These shifts may necessitate working unusual hours, leaving employees with a minimal amount of time to participate in religious activities. In addition, some employers are unaware of the religious needs of a diverse workforce. Third, the religious backlash after September 11, 2001 may have given rise to fear and mistrust toward Muslim and Sikh communities. Also, some employers fail to recognize their employees' spiritual needs over materialism (Fotlin & Standish, 2004). Finally, the number of hours

employees spend at work leaves them little time for their religion, resulting in workers who know more about their coworkers than about their own families (Morgan, 2005a).

The U.S. Constitution supports religious practice, unlike spirituality. It is against the law to take action against a person because of his or her religion. Repeated violations of this law have resulted in an increase in the number of religious discrimination suits filed after 9/11 (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC], 2015a).

The current study was driven by the need to address the gap in the literature related to Muslims' perceptions concerning religious accommodation. Additionally, a number of academic scholars have been reluctant to conduct research about religion and employment because they do not want to be associated with controversial activists in the political and religious arenas (Cunningham et al., 2011). The number of religion-based cases has steadily increased within the last 10 years. In 2005, there were 2,340 reported cases of religious discrimination; that number increased to 3,502 cases in 2015 (EEOC, 2015b).

The monetary costs for Title VII violations in the United States increased from \$88 million in 1997 to \$230 million in 2015 (EEOC, 2015c). Issues such as rising legal costs and increased problems with employees requesting religious observation outside of and at work during working hours support the objective of identifying and reporting the perceptions of Muslim employees in the United States concerning religious accommodation (Von Bergen, 2013).

Problem Statement

When employees are not allowed to practice their faith during working hours, it can lead to conflicts in the workplace (Cunningham et al., 2011). Moreover, it is difficult to separate the individual from his or her religious beliefs (Cunningham et al., 2011). The United States has an estimated 1,500 legally recognized religions with 80 organized religions that have a minimum of 60,000 followers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). . Additionally, the number of religious discrimination suits doubled within the time period between 2000 and 2010 (Ghumman, Ryan, Barclay, & Markel, 2013).

The lines of separation between religion and work had been kept in place from 1900- 1965 based on the fact that not all U.S. workers shared the same beliefs and therefore an invisible wall was necessary for maintaining religious separation in the employment arena (Flake, 2015).

The separation between religion and work toward religion was not conducive to Muslims. The Quran serves as a written religious guide to serve God, whom they call Allah. The Quran is comparable to the Torah for Jews and the New Testament of the Bible for Christians. The Quran requires its devoted followers to pray five times a day. This practice can interfere with an organization's ability to adjust work schedules to meet the religious needs of some Muslim employees.

Ramadan is a religious period where Muslims do not eat any food until sunset. It is a time of fasting, consecration, prohibition from sexual intercourse, and dedication to

their faith. Many followers of Islam throughout the world observe it. Those who are pregnant, sickly, and traveling long distances have the right not to participate in Ramadan. Muslims have filed religious discrimination suits on the basis of accommodation of their work schedules. One example is the case of JBS, meat packing company that tried to reasonably work with its more than 200 Muslim employees during Ramadan to accommodate their practice of unscheduled prayer breaks and evening meal during Ramadan (Kaltner, 2003). Later JBS realized that by adjusting their schedules it would degrade the meat they were selling to supermarkets and reduce productivity, resulting in an undue hardship for the company (Fowler-Hermes & Gierbolini, 2014).

Other issues include a company's dress policy toward Muslim women and the post-9/11 attitudes toward Muslims in the United States, which many Muslims believe have had a negative effect on them as a people (Pew Research Center, 2015a). Other issues include the wearing of the headscarf by Muslim women while at work, along with their practice of prayer at the workplace, which is an integral part of their religion. The practice of prayer is protected by Title VII of the Civil Rights legislation of 1964, as is church attendance, the wearing of religious symbols and clothing, the display of sacred objects, special diets, and refusal to engage in certain activities that are incompatible with religious beliefs (Fowler-Hermes & Gierbolini, 2014). These issues can be attributed to the employers' lack of knowledge concerning Muslim employees who practice their

religion and serves as the foundation for this research study concerning Muslims' perceptions toward religious accommodation in the workplace.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to investigate Muslims' perceptions concerning religious accommodation in the workplace. Perceptions included thoughts and feelings about the issues Muslims face in the workplace. The study will add to the body of knowledge concerning the issue and provide stakeholders with a greater understanding of the phenomenon. The results of this research were intended to help generate social change by opening the dialogue between employees and employers. Ultimately, this may lead to changes in workplace policies concerning religious accommodation.

Research Question

What are the perceptions of Muslims concerning religious accommodation in the workplace?

Theoretical Framework of the Study

The political theories of pluralism and religious pluralism served as the theoretical framework for this dissertation.

Pluralism

The political theory of pluralism originated from the writers of the U.S. Constitution. Early ideas of pluralism can be found in Federalist Paper No. 10. Madison

believed one of the benefits of having a strong union was its ability to exercise governmental control over factional units that had a propensity toward violence. A pluralistic democracy is a government that possesses the ability to accommodate a variety of groups and associations and permits them to voice their particular interests in the operation of the government (Hawkins, 2015, p. 613). One of the objectives of pluralism is the distribution of power in a democracy. The Constitution accomplishes this by acknowledging groups that are diverse by race, color, and national origin (Eskridge, 2009, p. 1246). This is one of a few examples of how the Constitution laid the foundation for a pluralistic democratic government. According to Eskridge (2009), the inclusion of the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment provided the protections of individual rights.

Pluralism as a theory recognizes competing interest groups and the distribution of power among them along with their right to voice their opinions (Eskridge, 2009). Pluralism provides a balance of power within the U.S. government through a series of checks and balances of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches (Eskridge, 2009). Nongovernmental organizations, groups, and agencies to play a pivotal role in the government by ensuring the power is not just in the hands of the few, but remains in the hands of the many through the process of elections . Dahl et al. (2003) defined this as polyarchy, or having open and free competition through the process of voting for citizens, which permits the advancement of their interests when electing government officials.

Bernstein (1987) believed the central idea of pluralism is “the one and the many” (p. 520). Bernstein believed pluralism allows diverse groups with opposing interests to negotiate with each other within a democratic society.

Mougán (2015) believed pluralism is a requirement in maintaining a democratic government and its invention is critically important to the public’s ideals and respect for civil and individual rights by allowing citizens to freely voice their opinions. According to Mougán, the impetus of plurality is conflict, which takes root whenever there is disagreement among competing interest groups who want to use their power to exert influence over the government (p. 114). A positive product of pluralism is that it leads to individuality and diversity. Baggini (2015) stated there is no one size that fits all among competing groups. Every group’s choices are different and the decision that brings them to a general consensus is achieved by realizing they will incur political losses along the way in order to achieve their desired goals (Baggini, 2015). Important concepts involved with the political theory of pluralism are coexistence and consensus. Pluralism requires competing interest groups to coexist and recognize each other’s differences. Dryzek and Niemeyer (2006) called consensus the hallmark of pluralism whenever it has been reached among a diverse populace with a variety of interest groups. Adams (2006) said that pluralism is an independent concept of political theory that contains the following ingredients: freedom, common ground, understanding, and consent (p. 1). Adams (2006) and Dryzek and Niemeyer (2006) both agreed that a critical requirement of pluralism is

the coexistence of groups among themselves. Adams (2006) said “difference is not difference until it is understood by the opposing parties” (p. 5).

Religious Pluralism

According to Hutchinson (2003), the history of religion in the United States has moved through three successive stages, the first being toleration. Thomas Jefferson later decided that toleration was not enough, and originated the idea that men were endowed with certain inalienable rights (O’Malley, 2006). Jefferson believed an individual should be able to freely worship his or her creator without any encumbrance.

For a time in the Colonies, there was not any movement on this request until James Madison’s letter of memorial remonstrance. Madison said that religion was a matter of the individual’s heart and conscience and the right of every man to acknowledge his creator as he wills. The First Amendment to the Constitution requires that the government shall not prohibit the free exercise of religion nor respect any establishment thereof. The stage of toleration lasted until the late 1800s and later moved toward inclusion, which lasted until the 20th century. When a religious group welcomes diversity but underneath wants the diverse group to become more like themselves, this can be a potential problem for places where Muslims work. The U.S. Naturalization Act of 1965 allowed more non-Western immigrants into the United States, of which many were Muslims. The United States moved into the third stage of pluralism, which is participatory pluralism. Anyone should be able to bring his or her religion to work

without fear of retribution. Berger (2016) believed pluralism allows religions to coexist as partners in society.

Religious pluralism is further defined as people of diverse religions working together as equals. Religious pluralism challenges a religion's truth and sacred text by forcing followers to see that their truths are not absolute and other religions possess their own element of truth, which is a departure from what scholars call absolutism, or the finality of all truth (Karuvelil, 2012). According to Nikiforova (2008), pluralism encourages inclusivism and the belief that all religions possess "some elements of truth" (Karuvelil, 2012, p. 57). Religious pluralism is more than an ideology, or an instrument that allows different religions to actively engage each other and remove the wall of separation that was constructed because of indifference to religious differences (Karuvelil, 2012). The advantage of religious pluralism is that it removes the wall of isolation that was once so prevalent among many religions, which resulted in no communication and participation between diverse religions (Nikiforova, 2008).

In Europe, religious-based communities have established themselves in the public arena through the auspice of respect and recognition (Nikiforova, 2008). According to Eck as cited in Nikiforiva (2008), "pluralism is not an ideology, but rather the dynamic process through which we engage with one another in and through our very deepest differences" (p. 139). According to Howe (2016), U.S. contemporary religious pluralism has served to place unwarranted pressure on Muslims living in the United

States to recognize Judaism and Christianity. Woodward (2016) believed the line of religious pluralism and secularization has become blurred because many people are not differentiating themselves by religion. Instead, they are making their own decisions about religion and what religious rules they will or will not follow. A third form of pluralism called de-differentiation is a new theory that [completely rewrite this sentence to define exactly what dedifferentiation means] (Woodward, 2016).

There are two forms of pluralism: emancipatory pluralism and identity-based pluralism. Emancipatory pluralism involves the individual's right to religious freedom; this coincides with Jefferson and Madison's beliefs that all men should be able to express their religion freely. Identity-based pluralism involves religions' demands to be recognized for their religious individuality and uniqueness as a religious group (Nikiforova, 2008).

Religious pluralism served as the theoretical foundation for this research study for the following reasons. Pluralism allows nongovernmental actors to participate in a democracy and exert influence on the government. Additionally, religious pluralism requires different religions to work together in order to accomplish social objectives and maintain harmonious relationships with diversity at the center of its message. In order to validate this research, it was incumbent upon the researcher to understand the theoretical implications of pluralism and its connection to religious pluralism.

Nature of the Study

The purpose of this study was to bring attention to the lived experiences of Muslim employees within the U.S. workplace and identify and report their perceptions concerning religious accommodation in the workplace. The survey completed by Muslim employees was available online for a period of 30 days. Data were collected initially every day for the first month of the research investigation. The researcher evaluated the raw data as the responses were completed until the minimum required sample of 25 participants was reached. The first online survey was unsuccessful because there was a lack of participation of Muslims in the Washington, DC metro region. Therefore, the researcher had to expand the survey to Muslims living throughout the United States, which resulted in a total of 84 Muslim participants. This provided added credibility as the sample represented a larger demographic area. The participants' responses were posted directly into the researcher's Survey Monkey account and were downloadable. Data were recorded in an Excel spreadsheet on a separate flash drive and uploaded to NVivo for analysis. Data analysis followed the Moustakas method of phenomenological analysis, which involved the use of epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and the synthesis of meanings and essences.

Definition of Terms

Constitutional law: In 1787, the founders of the United States committed the Constitution to writing so it might be considered binding law, making possible the creation of a government under law (Huhn, 1950/2008).

De minimis: The minimum amount of religious accommodation an employer can provide without incurring undue financial hardship to the business organization (*Trans World Airlines Inc. v. Hardison*, 1977).

Faith: Belief, trust, confidence, and dependence in a superior being. Faith is also defined as “relevant to one’s intellectual commitments and/or relation to God or religious matters in general” (McCraw, 2015, p. 144).

Hijab: A veil, screen, or cover; the protective cover to make Muslim women more sacred. The word hijab literal means a barrier (Ahmed, 2011).

Intent: The mental desire and will to act in a particular way. Intent is a crucial element in determining whether certain acts were criminal (“Intent,” n.d., para. 1). Intent is defined in constitutional law as a type of interpretive argument known as the intent of the framers or original intent.

Islam: A religion meaning the way of life as prescribed by Allah. The literal meaning is submission to surrender oneself to God (Ahmed, 2011).

Legal text: The primary source of law in U.S. society. Legal text includes the Constitution of the United States and state constitutions, federal and state statutes,

municipal ordinances, administrative regulations, and any other public writings that have the force of law. The term legal text also includes privately written documents such as contracts, wills, deeds, checks, and promissory notes. Although these private documents are not law in and of themselves, they are legal texts because they create or alter legal rights (Huhn, 2008).

Muslim: One who submits him or herself to the will of Allah; a follower of Islam (Ahmed, 2011).

Precedent: Prior judicial pronouncements on the meaning of the law, which are in many cases binding upon other courts addressing the same or similar issues (Huhn, 1950/2008).

Ramadan: The fourth Islamic pillar of faith. It is a period of fasting that is observed during the ninth month of the year. The fast lasts from dawn until dusk each day. Food or drink, smoking, and sexual intercourse are not allowed. The annual fast results from the period when the Prophet Mohammed received his revelations of the *Quran* (Kaltner, 2003).

Religion: A deeply held sincere belief that is practiced by followers (Shureen, 2004).

Stare decisis: The principle which literally means “to stand by things decided” (Huhn, 2008, p. 94).

Title VII: Civil rights legislation passed in 1964 that states, “Thereby no discrimination will be done on the basis of race, sex, religion and natural origin” (Kaminer, 2009, p. 455). In 1972, it was amended to require employers to provide religious accommodation unless it would cause undue hardship (*Trans World Airlines Inc. v. Hardison*, 1977).

Workplace spirituality: Recognition that an employee has an inner life; an assumption that employees desire to find work meaningful and require a commitment by the company to serve as a context or community for spiritual growth (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007). The workplace should promote feelings of satisfaction through transcendence. The process of work should facilitate employees’ sense of being connected to a nonphysical force beyond themselves that provides feelings of completion and joy (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2007).

Assumptions

Assumptions in research are defined as what readers and peers believe is reasonably true; without them, the study fails to achieve its purpose (Simon, 2011, p. 1). Consequently, the researcher must inform the readers of the assumptions within the research (Simon, 2011, p. 2). For the purpose of this research study, the researcher made the following assumptions:

- Muslims see their practice of religion at work differently from others.
- Many employers are not knowledgeable about the Islamic faith.

- There are employers who have issues concerning the religious accommodation of Muslim employees in the workplace.
- Cases involving religious accommodation are reported to the EEOC.

Scope of the Study

Scope defines the operational boundaries used to meet the objectives of the study and what the researcher will disclose during the conduct of the research investigation (Simon & Goes, 2013). The chosen research method for this study was phenomenology based on the exploratory nature of issues confronting Muslims in the workplace.

I chose phenomenology in order to identify and report the Muslims' perceptions toward religious accommodation due to the increase in the number of lawsuits filed by Muslims concerning religious accommodation (Malos, 2009). In order to conduct the research investigation it was guided by two theories—pluralism and religious pluralism.

Delimitations

Delimitations are defined as the things that are within the control of the researcher and are used in establishing the scope and boundaries of a research project (Simon, 2011).

Limitations

Limitations are defined as the recognized weaknesses of the research study that are outside of the researcher's control but can influence the findings (Simon & Goes,

2013). My control was limited to the questions in the online survey. I limited the study to open-ended questions for those Muslims who completed the survey. As a qualitative researcher, I had no influence over the attitudes of employers or employees toward religion in the workplace. More importantly, I had no authority over any new issues that arose during the conduct of this study involving Muslims' perceptions and attitudes toward religious accommodation. Moreover, this study is limited in its reach and results. Last, when conducting a phenomenological study, the findings may turn out differently than what was expected, as the focus is on the experiences of the participants. The study was limited by my ability to objectively interpret the research data.

Significance and Summary

The purpose of this study was to bring attention to the lived experiences of Muslim employees within the U.S. workplace and identify and report their perceptions concerning religious accommodation in the workplace. Through this study, it was my hope to add to the body of knowledge concerning religion to explore the challenges Muslim employees might face in dealing with religious accommodation. More importantly, it was my desire that the social change implications of this study would inspire meaningful and purposeful dialogue between employees and their organizations throughout the United States and around the world.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review is organized as a discussion of pluralism and religious pluralism, along with a brief history and definition of religion in the United States, non-Western immigration and religion, understanding of Islam, and the Workplace Freedom Act of 1993. Following is a presentation of the literature regarding the strengths and weaknesses of Title VII and the EEOC, concluding with a discussion of Muslims and religious discrimination.

Literature Search Strategy

The following Walden University databases were used for the literature review: Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, ERIC, Political Science Complete, ProQuest Central, Google Scholar, Project Gutenberg, and Walden Dissertation & Theses. Key search terms were *religion*, *religious*, *religious accommodation*, *accommodation*, *discrimination*, and *Title VII*. In the academic research, I found several peer-reviewed scholarly articles. Using Business Source Complete, I was able to locate several articles on accommodation. Through Political Science Complete, I found peer-reviewed articles on religious accommodation. I used ProQuest Central and Google Scholar to find articles on Title VII. Through further research I was able to access electronic books from Project Gutenberg and review Walden University theses and dissertations in the area of religion written by fellow public policy students. This enabled

me to conduct thorough research on all keywords and terms used in the writing of the literature review.

Theoretical Framework

Pluralism and religious pluralism served as the theoretical frameworks for this dissertation. Pluralism as a theory recognizes competing interest groups and the distribution of power among them along with their right to voice their opinions (Eskridge, 2009). Pluralism provides a balance of power within the U.S. Government through a series of checks and balances of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches (Eskridge, 2009). Pluralism accomplishes this by allowing nongovernmental organizations, groups, and agencies to play a pivotal role in the government by ensuring power is not just in the hands of the few, but remains in the hands of the many through the process of election within the democracy (Bernstein, 1987). This is also known as a polyarchy, which provides open and free competition through the process of giving citizens giving the right to vote for elected government officials (Dahl et al., 2003, p. 32).

According to Karuvelil (2012), religious pluralism means all religions are treated equally and one is not superior over another. Religious pluralism challenges a religion's truth and sacred text by forcing followers to see that their truths are not absolute and other religions possess their own element of truth, which is a demarcation from what scholars call absolutism, or the finality of all truth (Karuvelil, 2012). Religious pluralism

enables diverse religions to work together as equals by recognizing each other's contributions to society (Karuvellil, 2012).

According to Nikiforova (2008), religious pluralism encourages inclusivism and the belief that all religions possess "some elements of truth" (Karuvellil, 2012, p. 57). Religious pluralism allows different religions to actively engage each other and remove the wall of separation that was constructed because of indifference to religious differences (Karuvellil, 2012). The advantage of religious pluralism is that it removes the wall of isolation that was once so prevalent among many religions, which resulted in no engagement of communication and participation among diverse religions (Nikiforova, 2008). The growth of religious pluralism is not just national but international. In Europe, the religious-based communities have established themselves in the public arena through the auspice of respect and recognition (Nikiforova, 2008). According to Eck (as cited in Nikiforova, 2008), "pluralism is not an ideology, but rather the dynamic process through which we engage with one another in and through our very deepest differences" (p. 139).

There are two forms of pluralism: emancipatory pluralism and identity-based pluralism. Emancipatory pluralism reflects the individual's right to religious freedom, agreeing with Thomas Jefferson and James Madison's belief that all men should be able to express their religion freely. Identity-based pluralism is produced by religions' demands to be recognized for their individuality and uniqueness as a religious group

(Nikiforova, 2008). People are able to identify with either emancipatory or identity-based pluralism. The history of religion in the United States can be shown through stages.

Hutchinson (2003) revealed the history of religion in the United States as moving through three successive stages, the first being toleration. Historically, religious toleration can be traced back to the 18th century when George Mason requested to his fellow citizens that there be religious toleration (O'Malley, 2006). Thomas Jefferson later decided that toleration was not enough, and originated the idea that men were endowed with certain inalienable rights (O'Malley, 2006). Jefferson believed an individual should be able to freely worship his or her creator without any encumbrance.

When a religious group welcomes diversity but underneath wants the diverse group to become more like themselves, this can be a potential problem within places where Muslims work. The doors of diversity opened with the U.S. Naturalization Act of 1965 that allowed more non-Western immigrants into the United States, of which many were Muslims (Morgan, 2005a). When this happened, the United States moved into the third stage of pluralism, which is participatory pluralism (Hicks, 2002).

However, if pluralism is to be achieved there must be acceptance on both sides. Hicks (2002) called this respectful pluralism. Anyone should be able to bring his or her religion to work without fear of retribution. Berger (2016) believed pluralism allows people of different religions coexist as partners in society.

Religious pluralism theoretically embodies the ideal of diverse religions working together to achieve societal goals. Nevertheless, this cannot be accomplished without a democratic government that sees its citizens as a viable part of the election process, though conflicts can arise among competing nongovernmental groups (Mougán, 2015). It was my goal to use the theories of pluralism and religious pluralism as the theoretical framework to guide this research investigation into the perceptions and issues of Muslim employees concerning religious accommodation.

Religion

Religion has been a part of life throughout the history of the United States as a nation. One of the key issues prior to the Revolutionary War was how to separate religion from the power of the state and the state from the influence and control of religion (O'Malley, 2006). During that time, 11 of the 13 colonies had state-sponsored churches, and the men and women who lived in those colonies were responsible for financially supporting their churches within their respective state governments (O'Malley, 2006). Conflict began to arise when colonists were not allowed to freely exercise their religion (O'Malley, 2006). The dominant religious groups at that time were the Quakers and Baptists. More importantly, during this time ministers of the gospel had to be licensed by the state. However, there was a sect of Free Will Baptists who believed they should be free to preach the word and exercise their religion without government approval. For their beliefs, many of them were whipped and thrown into prison (O'Malley, 2006).

This eventually led to George Mason's declaration that religion should be determined by intelligence and not by coercion or repudiation (O'Malley, 2006). Within Mason's declaration he mentioned the word toleration, which ran contrary to the belief held by Madison and Jefferson that the exercise of religion was man's inalienable right (O'Malley, 2006).

Years later, James Madison would write his famous *Memorial and Remonstrance*, articulating religious freedom through writing that "all men are entitled to the full and free exercise of religion" (O'Malley, 2006, p. 5), which was later inserted into the U.S. Constitution. Jefferson and Madison were able to successfully separate religion from the power of the state and government from the auspices of religious expression. Religion is a self-regulating institution that only comes under scrutiny when it challenges or questions the authority of the government. Essentially, religion is an entity that regulates itself, but the law still places parameters on religion.

Sullivan (2009) asked the question of whether religion is actually separate from the state. Because religion categorically falls under the rule of law and the state places limits on religion, the law is sovereign and above all with the ability to stand alone. Moreover, religion is prohibited from entering into legal decisions, and the law should not wield influence over religion. In the United States, the rule of law plays a prominent role in the regulation of religion (Sullivan, 2009).

What makes the United States different from other countries is that many countries have a national church, whereas the United States does not. If there were even a suggestion of the United States having a national church, it would be considered unconstitutional, as government and religion are possessors of their own freedom (Sullivan, 2009). This results in a government that is free from religious influence and religion that is free from governmental intervention, which formulates the present-day separation of church and state.

Sullivan (2009) argued that Americans are intimately familiar with the institution of religion, but how much is really known about religion? She argued that the founding fathers knew what religion was and intentionally decided not to define religion in the U.S. Constitution (Sullivan, 2009). Moreover, if the authors of the Constitution decided to define religion, would they have placed one religion above another? Sullivan asked the question of whether all Americans are religious because of the First Amendment, which grants all Americans the right to freely practice their religion without fear of retribution. Evidence of this can be found in a recent study done by the Pew Research Center (2015a) on the changing religious landscape in the United States that provided the following information: in 2007, 78% of Americans identified themselves as Christians, whereas today that number has decreased by an estimated 8%. Next, there are a number of young adults who no longer identify with the church, who view themselves as nonreligious and nonbelievers, which has led to a significant change in the way people view religion in the

United States with the largest incremental changes in the religious population coming from those ages 18 to 24, 25 to 33, and up to 46 years of age (Pew Research Center, 2015a).

Defining Religion

Martin (2009) attempted to define religion and Bruce (2011) stated it is difficult to define because it is an ever-evolving phenomenon of how people gravitate toward what they believe is divine and supernatural. James (2008) posed the question of whether an individual should be told what to revere and acknowledge as to his or her religion. Essentially, the attempt to define religion is a dilemma that is confronted by all who have attempted to do so.

A single definition is not sufficient for all the world's religions. Martin (2009) referred to William P. Alston's definition of religion as a belief in one or more supernatural beings; essentially, the belief in a deity or gods who possess a power above that of natural man. These beings are all-powerful and therefore are assigned the highest place in the follower's life. One can find examples of this in many religions, such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Confucianism; these are just a few examples and definitely not a complete compilation of all the religions in the world. Also important is the distinction between the sacred and the profane. This description comes from the writings of the great French philosopher and theorist, Emile Durkheim (2012), who believed there was a distinction between what was sacred and what was profane as

determined by mankind. Examples of this philosophy can be attending Mass for Catholics, attending prayer for Muslims, meditation for Buddhists, yoga for Confucianists, or sacrificing animals for Peyote Indians. The determination of the sacred and profane is done by each individual religion.

For Christians, it would be taking communion, the bread representing the body of Christ and the wine representing the blood of Christ, and the water baptism (Zondervan, 1999). Sacred objects that arouse religious feelings during rituals include temples, mosques, churches, and other religious and symbolic artifacts that represent the institutional belief system. Religion can also be defined as a group of ritual acts focused on sacred objects. For example, in the Old Testament section of the Bible, the Jews once practiced animal sacrifice and are planning to return to this ritual once their new temple has been built (Zondervan, 1999). In preparation for this ritual, during the spring of 2015, construction was completed on a new altar that was built exclusively for animal sacrifice (Balofsky, 2015). According to biblical prophecy, animal sacrifices will not occur until the new temple has been built (Hohmann, 2015).

Religion can also be defined as a moral code believed to be sanctioned by the gods. Many religions practice the art of prayer, defined as communication with a higher being that consists of prayers and other communicative forms of conduct concerning the gods. In the Muslim religion, for example, prayer is practiced five times a day facing the East. Another command is that Muslim men are not allowed to enter another man's house

when he is absent (Ahmed, 2011). For a man to enter another man's house while he was away would be a violation of respect for the man and his home, and could cause him to think that his wife has been unfaithful to him (Ahmed, 2011). Holistically, religion can be defined as a worldview that provides its followers a significant place in the universe.

Martin (2009) further argued that religion is not one-size-fits-all, making it difficult to adequately define religion because it has different meanings for different groups. However, Martin can be challenged on the point in that in other instances he believed religion could be defined. It appears Martin was somewhat unsure of his definition of religion. His thinking on religion was paradoxical. For example, in one instance he stated there is no religion, which leaves the reader with two different viewpoints.

Castelli (2010), on the other hand, noted it is not possible to define religion, as it is a term created by scholars for their use in academic study. According to Castelli, religion is infinitely timeless without age or deposition. Religion has to be defined by the state in matters concerning legal ramifications. Therefore, the state must have an understanding of what religion is and what it is not. For example, in the case of *Grainger Plc & Ors v. Nicholson* (2009), Tim Nicholson, an employee, was asked by his boss to fly from London to Ireland to bring him his Blackberry (Hunter-Henin, 2013). Nicholson refused to do so based on his belief that doing so would further pollute the environment. This individual held a strong belief about the environment, and for his failure to deliver

his employer's Blackberry he was fired from his job. Subsequently, he filed a lawsuit. The issue surrounded whether the employee's belief about the environment fit the definition of a religion (Vickers, 2010). James (2008) may have agreed with this employee in theory in that religion is what an individual holds supreme above all else. Because the environment was pre-eminent in the employee's life, why would his employer expect him to violate what he strongly believed? Nonetheless, the interpretation of the employee's actions had to be decided by the court, and Nicholson won the case (*Grainger Plc & Ors v. Nicholson*, 2009).

According to Bruce (2011), religion is not so easily definable in such matters. In contrast, James (2008) would tend to disagree. Notwithstanding, was it possible for the employee to claim religious protection under Title VII on the basis of his religious belief about the environment? Bruce (2011), in his assessment, presented a strong case that religion in such cases is difficult to define. Castelli (2010) concluded that the theory of religion continues to grow. According to Martin (2009), people of different races and nationalities can hold vastly different views on the meaning of religion. Martin believed religion poses a challenge to all who would attempt to define the construct. Martin (2009) classified religion as a system of beliefs that are important to the overall beliefs of the parent community of which an individual desires to become a part. Martin argued that religion is closely tied to the supernatural. However, those who follow other religions may not believe in the power of the supernatural or even with whether there is a

supernatural dimension to religion's relationship with the belief in the invisible, or simple faith. The question is can faith be proven and do all religions possess the characteristic of faith? Third, the more popular term religion has a relationship to facilitating the understanding of life (Martin, 2009, p. 163). This definition of religion, according to Martin, did not come into existence until the 20th century. Nonetheless, there remains a conflict between those who believe in a religion and those who do not. Religion holds no historical value to those who contend that religion does not exist (Martin, 2009).

Religion as a phenomenon can be defined as a social construct with pious objectives, though Bruce (2011) and Castelli (2010) contended that there could be no universal definition of religion. Bruce (2011) went on to say that religion was invented and there are those who differentiate between a true religion and a false religion. Such persons may believe their beliefs are superior to all others because of their belief in the supernatural (Bruce, 2011). In order for a belief to be recognized as a religion, it must meet the spiritual needs of its followers, such as serving as a foundation of hope for those who practice and follow the rituals and ordinances. The literature reveals that, ideologically, many scholars argue that religion does not exist because there are no quantifiable data to prove its existence (Martin, 2009). In contrast to this argument, there are those who believe religion does exist and its creation began with the social interactions of human beings with each other and their environment. One of the primary

theoretical issues discussed among theorists is how to properly define religion (Martin, 2009).

Holistically, there is a limitation on what an individual defines as religion and the number of words used to describe religion. According to Martin (2009), humans are delimited by the words used to define religion and are constrained by words that inadequately both define and describe religion. Still, there continues to be differing viewpoints about this subject. Those who have a positive opinion about religion view it as a comfort for the poor. Having said that, there are those who believe religion's purpose is one of evil and not of good, allowing the rich to use religion as an unholy tool over the poor because the poor are subject to their religious beliefs and the rich are not, thus allowing the rich to easily take advantage of the poor (Bruce, 2011). Others believe religion's purpose is to serve as an instrument of justice for both the upper and lower classes of society.

According to the literature, religion is defined as a sincere and deeply held belief that is practiced by its followers (Shureen, 2004). The belief becomes a part of the individual's lifestyle along with its own foundation and teachings. This historically contributed to the theistic view of a sincere belief in a divine creator (Shureen, 2004, p. 36). Later, the definition of belief was expanded to a group of beliefs, with evidence of its practices. When combined, these beliefs must occupy the central part of the follower's life (Shureen, 2004, p. 36). However, in order for a belief to be a religion, it must meet

three criteria, the first being the test of content, or whether the subject matter determines it to be a religion.

Second, is it segregated by one particular doctrine or does it embrace a broader landscape? The third criterion surrounds whether there are any signs of the religious diocese, rituals, structure, and organization (Shureen, 2004). Solidifying the place of religion and its relationship to the government are the following words of the U.S.

Constitution:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. (U.S. Const. amend. I)

Man's Ultimate Concern

According to Tillich (2011), religion is man's ultimate concern—what life is about and what is held as pre-eminent. Included in that concern is the *element of faith*, defined as the invisible belief in or expectation of a person or thing (The Random House College Dictionary, 1980). According to the Pew Research Center (2015a), an estimated 64% of Americans consider themselves religious, while another 74% identify themselves as followers of religion and spirituality. As a result, the landscape in the U.S. workplace has started to change and more workers are seeking to express their faith in their places of work. Every religion has its own set of beliefs and practices surrounding what is

esteemed as precious, or holy or not, which leads back to Emile Durkheim's theory of the sacred and profane. According to Durkheim (2012), each religious institution has a pre-determined list of what things are sacred and what things are profane.

According to Weber (1920), a strong belief in one's duty at work served to strengthen the Protestant work ethic. Second, capitalism had an influence on the Protestants, who believed their work was of *divine origin*, therefore serving as a catalyst for Protestants to excel in their performance and resulting in the expansion of capitalism in the United States (Weber, 1920). The Protestants believed it was their divine calling from God to work industriously and it was God's will for them to do so (Weber, 1920). However, at this juncture it is important to look at religious history in connection with the continued growth of non-Western immigrants into the United States.

Non-Western Immigration and Religion

Historically, in the United States, there were three main religions: Christianity, Judaism, and Protestantism (Morgan, 2005b). These religions maintained their popularity for several years until the passing of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 (Morgan, 2005a). In 1970, only 5% of the U.S. population came from outside of the country; the number of immigrants entering the United States has steadily risen through the years (Morgan, 2004, p. 12). According to Morgan (2005a), increased immigration produced an increase in religions such as Islamism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. When the United States began experiencing increased immigration, leaders in organizations and

places of business were relatively unconcerned with religion and spirituality because American workers were quiet about their religious beliefs and maintained them internally. However, this is not the lifestyle of those from non-Western countries who practice their religion as a part of their everyday life and work. Another change is that persons from these faiths have been able to convert U.S.-born Americans to their beliefs, which has served to strengthen their religious presence as a people in the United States (Morgan, 2005a).

Understanding Islam

Often, there is a misunderstanding of the Muslim religion. Therefore, a distinction has to be made between the followers of Islam, who are called Muslims, and the Islamic faith, which is the religion of the Muslims (Ahmed, 2011). According to Ahmed (2011), followers of Islam are considered to be slaves to their master. The master is Allah and his words are written in the *Quran*. The words of Allah were written by the Prophet Mohammed through his sayings and actions of the Sunnah (Ahmed, 2011). The religion of Islam, to its Muslim followers, is a way of life, just as Christianity and Judaism are a way of life for their followers. In the *Quran*, according to Ahmed, those who are believers (i.e., Christians and Jews) who worship outside of Islam are considered people of the book (Ahmed, 2011). Commensurate with that are the tenets of Islam that will provide a greater understanding of why Muslims practice certain rituals. Whether at

home or work, it is normal for Muslims to pray five times a day facing the East toward the holy city of Mecca (Ahmed, 2011).

One of the issues in the Islamic faith is the vast difference between orthodoxy and orthopraxy. *Orthodoxy* is the belief in one God; this allows an individual to become a follower of the religious group. For example, the belief that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh would fit the requirement of orthodoxy (Kaltner, 2003). *Orthopraxy* refers to the practices followed by those who believe in the one true God (i.e., Allah). Orthopraxy is concerned with religious practices along with beliefs (Kaltner, 2003). A Muslim is a follower of Islam and is required to practice the five pillars of faith.

Pillar number one is that there is no true God but Allah and his messenger is the Prophet Mohammed, though not all Muslims accept this idea (Kaltner, 2003). This is called the *profession of faith* (Kaltner, 2003). Any controversy with this tenet is considered a grievous offense that challenges one's unity as a follower of Islam. Next is the confession that there is no other God but Allah and there is only one true Prophet, Mohammed. Children are taught this at a very early age in the Muslim culture.

The second pillar of faith is prayer; all Muslims are expected to pray a minimum of five times a day (Kaltner, 2003). Those times are dawn, the noon hour, the middle of the day, when the sun goes down, and in the evening. Muslims gather together for prayer at a mosque or place of prostration. Muslims throughout the world practice prayer at different locations; however, many gather together at noon on Fridays (Kaltner, 2003).

Women who pray are required to do so in a separate location from men. Muslims must always face the city of Mecca when praying. Unity grows when Muslims gather together in one place to pray, and this can be a deeply emotional and spiritual event (Kaltner, 2003).

The third pillar of faith is almsgiving, or giving to the downtrodden and less fortunate; this requires a Muslim to give 2.5% of his or her personal wealth to the poor to be used for the spread of Islam throughout the world (Kaltner, 2003).

The fourth pillar is fasting, which is observed during the ninth month of the year called Ramadan. The fast lasts from dawn until dusk each day. Food or drink, smoking, or sexual intercourse are not allowed. Elders and those who are not well are not required to engage in the fast. The annual fast is attributed to when the Prophet Mohammed received his revelations of the *Quran*; this is known as the “night of power” (Kaltner, 2003).

The fifth pillar of faith is that all Muslim men should make a journey to Mecca at one time in their life in the 12th month of the year. Women may make the pilgrimage, but they are required to be accompanied by a man (Kaltner, 2003).

The Workplace Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993

Three cases contributed to the foundation of the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act, known as 42 U.S. Code §2000bb. The first is *Sherbet v. Verner* (1963). Ms. Sherbet, who was a Seventh-day Adventist, because of her faith refused to work on

Sundays. Later, the company she worked for in South Carolina terminated her employment. She eventually applied for other jobs in the state, but each time with the same result—they all required her to work on Saturday, which she refused to do. Eventually, she applied for unemployment benefits with her state, but the state refused to pay them. Her case was later sent to the Supreme Court, which decided that because of her individual refusal to accept work she could not force the state to pay her benefits when she could have worked for other companies that offered her employment. Unfortunately, she had fallen in line with the state law of those who refuse to accept suitable employment and are therefore disqualified for unemployment benefits. The court's ruling in this case would serve as a building block 30 years later for the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (Civic Impulse, 2015).

The next case is the *Employment Division of Oregon v. Alfred Smith* (1989). Alfred Smith and Galen Black were workers at a rehabilitation facility, and because of their religion they were expected to take a hallucinogenic drug called peyote that is expressly prohibited by Oregon law. The two defendants, Alfred Smith and Galen Black, were later terminated from their jobs for this violation. However, both contended that their use of the drug was an expected part of their religious practice. If they had refused, they would have been excommunicated from their religion. The court ruled they had violated state law even if they were freely exercising their religious rights. The decision was the two defendants were not allowed to receive unemployment benefits in light of

their religious but illegal actions in taking the hallucinogenic drug. Holistically, in this case, the religion collided with state law. Should the court rule in this matter? The Constitution does allow citizens to freely exercise their religion, even though the act may be unacceptable and controversial. The question is whether the government should have placed an undue burden on a group that is freely exercising its religion (*Employment Division of Oregon v. Alfred Smith*, 1989).

The law in general was designed to protect the citizens of the state, but the issue is where the line is to be drawn in such challenging matters. According to Wallace (2005) and Falsafi (2014), the Constitution has two conflicting statutes. On the one hand, it will not stop the free exercise of religion, but on the other hand it will not make any law with respect to the establishment of religion (Falsafi, 2014). Wallace argued that the ideals held by the writers of the U.S. Constitution were to protect the country from favoring one religion over another (Wallace, 2005, p. 597).

This leads to the case of *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972). Yoder, who was a member of the Amish group, refused to let his children attend school beyond the age of 14, though Wisconsin law required students to attend school up to the age of 16. It is the practice of the Amish not to allow their children to attend school past the age of 14 because of their religious views and belief that their children will be strongly influenced by the world. The court ruled that based on the long-standing faith of the Amish people as a group and

their beliefs and religious practices, they should not be penalized for their children not attending school up to the age of 16.

In 1993, Congress passed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to reflect the belief that undue burdens were being placed on the free exercise of religion. It appears Congress was returning to the historical ideology that the government should not encumber freedom of religion. This was the intent of the founding fathers when they wrote that each individual should be able to freely exercise his or her religion (*Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 1972). The *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972) decision was a positive outcome for its defendants; however, according to Falsafi (2014), there is a question surrounding whether the government should allow religious groups to govern themselves when it comes to the greater society. Does freedom of religion mean to exercise it freely without restriction, even when it crosses state authority? Freedom also comes with limitations; other theorists believe this idea has been lost with regard to the court's rulings prior to this act. Organizations should not discriminate against their employees once they have been hired (Brougher, 2011). Therefore, it should not be surprising to the employer when the employee requests that his or her religion be accommodated within the workplace. There is a contractual agreement between both parties when signing the employment contract. For example, if the employee practices Buddhism and requests 15 minutes a day to do so, the employer should decide whether he or she can accommodate the employee's request. The challenge for the employer is whether he or she can accommodate the employee's

request without incurring undue hardship. If the employee cannot be accommodated, it must be communicated to the employee by management (Brougher, 2011). According to Brougher (2011), the religious accommodation conflict can become a source of discomfort that interferes with the employee's religious practices and rituals.

Americans with Disabilities Act

According to Blair (2010), if the rules associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) were applied to religious accommodation, more cases would be settled. The ADA requires U.S. employers to be able to reasonably accommodate disabled employees. Blair took a position on the differences between religious accommodation and its boundary of undue hardship versus the ADA requirements for accommodation for employees with disabilities as long as they do not pose a significant or substantial expense upon the employer. If an employer cannot provide accommodation for a qualified disabled employee, then the employer is required to demonstrate the costs the company or business would incur. Under Section 701 of Title VII, the only way an employer can be absolved from providing accommodation for a disabled employee is when the restriction places a significant expense upon the business organization (Blair, 2010). The difference is that in order for any employee to receive religious accommodation, it must not produce an undue hardship for the employer (Blair, 2010).

If the ADA had been used as the standard set forth in the case of *Trans World Airlines Inc. (TWA) v. Hardison* (1977), it would have cost the airline a mere \$450 over a

3-month period until Hardison was able to change shifts. Although Blair's (2010) points are valid, the ADA's reasonable accommodation deals with physical disabilities, whereas religious accommodation deals with the religious accommodation of the individual and whether the organization can afford the accommodation without inflicting undue hardship on the employer. The difference is that one provides protection for employees with physical disabilities and the other protects employees from religious discrimination (Blair, 2010).

The ADA recognizes the following disabilities: hearing impairments, sight problems, paralysis, missing limbs, and other physical disabilities that employers must accommodate in the workplace (Blair, 2010). This is in comparison to the religious employee who must demonstrate that he or she has been discriminated against in the workplace. Consequently, the employer should provide proof that he or she cannot reasonably accommodate the employee without experiencing undue hardship on the business organization (Blair, 2010). In the case of *TWA v. Hardison* (1977), the Supreme Court ruled that allowing Hardison to change shifts would violate seniority rules and place an undue hardship on the company (Blair, 2010). Nine years later, in the case of *Ansonia Board of Education v. Philbrook* (1986), the ruling was that the school board offering the employee 3 days without pay was acceptable and should have been received by the employee.

Both cases were precedent-setting rulings by the court surrounding the de minimis cost and now make it easier for employers to claim undue hardship or only provide accommodation at the lowest cost possible when accommodating religious employees (Blair, 2010). Employees rarely win religious discrimination cases because the courts do not want to appear biased in their decisions surrounding the issue of religion in the workplace (Blair, 2010). When an employee decides to file a religious discrimination suit, he or she must first assume the responsibility of communicating to the employer that the workplace conflicts with his or her religious beliefs. The employee must bring the issue to the attention of the employer (Blair, 2010). If the employee fails to obey the organization's rules, his or her employment can be terminated (Blair, 2010)

Blair (2010) argued that although the employee may meet these requirements, the religious discrimination lawsuit might fail to pass to the next level. The employee must make a *prima facie case*, meaning the requirements he or she must meet before the actual investigation are the following: (a) that his or her faith is in conflict within the workplace, (b) the practices of his or her religion are required in order to maintain membership, (c) the employer has been made aware of the religious dilemma, and (d) the employee has become victimized because of the employer's refusal to provide accommodation (Blair, 2010, p. 539). Nonetheless, it is the employer's responsibility to demonstrate that he or she has taken the necessary steps to accommodate the employee's religious accommodation request (Blair, 2010). If this fails, it demonstrates the employer is unable

to provide religious accommodation for the employee in the workplace (Blair, 2010). According to Blair, the courts respect alternative methods such as employees changing their shifts with another employee. Courts view this kind of workplace option as an example of religious accommodation (Blair, 2010). If an employee refuses to change shifts, the religious employee risks losing the case in a court of law (Blair, 2010).

Title VII

According to Huhn (1950/2008), the intent of any law is contingent on what the framers of the law wanted to carry out, the source being the law or legal text. Arguments within the U.S. legal system are based upon the following texts: intent, precedent, and tradition and policy analysis. In this literature review, the focus is on Title VII and its intent. Title VII prohibits discrimination based on an individual's race, religion, color, national origin, or sex (Brougher, 2011). Brougher (2011) believed these are protections of civil liberties. Title VII provides employees the right to file a discrimination claim if they believe they have been discriminated against (Brougher, 2011).

By law, Title VII is an anti-discrimination statute and courts are reluctant to rule on cases involving religious discrimination as they do not want to appear to the public to be in favor of religion (Little, 2011). According to Little (2011), courts are more favorable when employers offer their workers the opportunity to change work shifts, as this is one tool at the employer's discretion that demonstrates a willingness to eliminate religious accommodation conflicts in the workplace. The disadvantage of this option can

be coworkers' unwillingness to change shifts, leaving the religious conflict unresolved (Blair, 2010). Title VII provides religious accommodation for religious employees while also providing support for the employer with the inclusion of the undue hardship provision (Blair, 2010).

According to Brougher (2011), religion does not have to be an institutionalized religion, but can involve any observance or practices a person carries out in daily life. Conflicts arise when the employer does not accommodate the individual religion or its practices. However, there are guidelines to which each employer must adhere in order to comply with the law. A business must have a minimum of 15 employees before it can be investigated by the EEOC (EEOC, 2015a). Not every case of discrimination can be filed against businesses that do not meet the minimum personnel requirements (Brougher, 2011). By law, employers must reasonably accommodate employees' religion as long as it does not place undue hardship on the organization. Employees cannot suffer discriminatory treatment because of their religion or religious affiliation (Brougher, 2011).

Section 701 of Title VII defines religion to include all aspects of religious observance and practice as well as beliefs, unless an employer demonstrates an inability to reasonably accommodate an employee's or prospective employee's religious observance or practice without placing undue hardship on the conduct of the employer's business (Brougher, 2011). Moreover, Section 701 provides recognition of all aspects of

an employee's religious rituals, beliefs, and practices as long as they are not inconvenient to the employer and do not affect the employer's business operations (Brougher, 2011).

Kaminer (2009) argued that the primary objective of Title VII is to provide protection from religious discrimination. This can be accomplished by employers taking steps toward providing religious accommodation for their workers' religious beliefs and practices (Kaminer, 2009). Title VII was amended in 1972 to say that no person should be discriminated against on the basis of his or her supremely held beliefs, observances, or religious requirements the individual must practice and display in a secular environment (Kaminer, 2009).

Religion as an Immutable or Mutable Trait

Immutable traits are defined as those characteristics of human beings that are innate and cannot be artificially changed, such as race, skin color, sex, or national origin. The opposite is a *mutable trait* such as religion. For example, as a child, John Doe was born into a Catholic family and all he knew was Catholicism. However, one day he was invited to a Pentecostal service by a coworker. John attended and decided he would no longer participate in Catholicism and thereafter embraced his new religion as a Pentecostal. John becoming a Pentecostal involved a decision of his own will or personal choice, a factor that influences the courts when deciding on cases involving religious accommodation (Kaminer, 2009). Williams (2008) argued the courts are familiar with the immutable traits of race, color, sex, and national origin. However, they interpret religion

as a mutable characteristic that is subject to change at any time by the individual. For example, if a child is born into a Baptist family this can be seen as immutable as the family is Baptists. However, when the child becomes an adult and decides to become a Muslim, the courts will likely view this as mutable conduct (Williams, 2008). Therefore, if an employee files a claim of religious discrimination based on the employer's misperception of his or her religion, the individual can file a claim and the case may be later dismissed based on the fact that Title VII does not permit discrimination based on the employer mistaking the employee's religion (Williams, 2008). Such was the case in *Ashfar v. Pinkerton Academy* (2004), in which Ashfar, who was of Iranian descent, was harassed by his coworkers for being an Arab and was therefore assumed to be a Muslim, but in reality he was of the Baha'i faith (Williams, 2008). The court dismissed his claim of misperception but allowed the claim of discrimination based on his national origin, which allowed the court to connect it to the immutable characteristic of national origin (Williams, 2008).

Williams (2008) and Kaminer (2009) would both agree that cases dependent upon the legal interpretation of religion are considered by the courts to involve a mutable trait that can be personally changed by the follower in comparison to race, sex, color, and national origin, which are immutable traits (Williams, 2008). According to Williams (2008) and Kaminer (2009), the intent of Title VII is to provide protection for the religious employee; however, according to religious accommodation doctrine it has failed

employees. Little (2011), Kaminer (2009), and Williams (2008) would agree that in the case of *Trans World Airlines Inc. v. Hardison* (1977), the cost of transferring Hardison, or paying others to work the shift, would have only been \$150 over a 90-day period (Williams, 2008). In recent years, the courts have placed emphasis on the de minimis standard, requiring employers to provide religious accommodation at the lowest possible cost to their business. In the case of *TWA v. Hardison*, the court did not ask for TWA's market cost (Kaminer, 2009).

The court's decision in *TWA v. Hardison* (1977) set a precedent in religious discrimination cases involving religious accommodation by not requiring the employer to present a burden of proof by taking the employer's word over the employee. The broader aspect of this is that the ruling served to strengthen the employer's position but weakened the purpose and intent of Title VII, which weakened the claim of the employee who filed a religious discrimination suit by overpowering the religious discrimination claim by the employee (Dhillon, 2011). What must occur is that the courts should willingly interpret Title VII as the legal standard against religious discrimination.

Dhillon (2011) argued that Section 701 provides the religious employee extra protection. However, Section 701 protects the employer by noting that religious accommodation can only occur if there is no undue hardship to the employer in accommodating the religious employee (Dhillon, 2011). Kaminer (2009) would agree with Williams (2008) and Dhillon (2011) that the courts view religion as mutable when it

is compared to the other irrefutable characteristics of race, color, sex, and national origin. According to Dhillon, religion is immutable, but the religious person's conduct is subject to change. Dhillon (2011), along with Williams (2008), criticized the language of Title VII.

According to Dhillon (2011), Title VII was created to provide a shield for religious minority employees in the workplace. When the courts begin to rule favorably toward the employer, they may be indirectly endorsing discriminatory actions toward the religious employee. For example, in a hypothetical case, Ahmed needs to pray five times a day and the supervisor cannot afford to give him time off during his shift to pray because this would reduce production. Later, Ahmed files a suit that he is being discriminated against in the workplace, but the employer informs the court that allowing the employee time off five times a day severely reduces his production output; consequently, the court ruled in the employer's favor. Such was the case in *TWA v. Hardison* (1977). Dhillon argued that this legitimizes the employer's discriminatory behavior toward religion.

According to the literature, Title VII was created to protect the religious employee; however, its application can be injurious to the religious employee when he or she finds him or herself caught between faith and employment. The purpose of Section 701 was to protect employees from having to decide whether to remain in the workplace or face possible job termination in order to practice their faith (Dhillon, 2011). These

occurrences have happened in a number of cases and have set the stage for religious discrimination in the workplace. Dhillon (2011) argued that the courts have severely hampered Title VII when rulings are favorable toward the employer. Dhillon took an adversarial stance toward employers providing religious accommodation for employees and argued that the law was created to protect religious employees in the workplace.

However, the law must be interpreted as neutral; if every employee won his or her case, the law could be viewed as prejudiced against employers. Having said that, there must be a balance when dealing with employers and employees in matters concerning religious accommodation. Both Blair (2010) and Dhillon (2011) agreed that a religious employee's demands to be treated differently than coworkers because of his or her religion. However, the employer must also take into consideration the rights and demands of the nonreligious and those who do not outwardly practice their religion in the workplace (Morgan, 2004). In Section 701, the amendment to Title VII, the word religion is inclusive of all religious beliefs and practices, whereby employers cannot discriminate against employees in the workplace. Dhillon argued that Title VII currently protects religious conduct and religious belief, which requires the employer to effectively accommodate the religious worker.

The law requires employers to treat their religious employees differently than nonreligious coworkers (Dhillon, 2011). In other words, the law is granting privilege to the religious employee because of his or her religion. This has been a repeated theme

throughout the literature. According to Macfarlane (2005), the courts are reluctant to preside over religious cases, especially those involving religious discrimination.

Macfarlane argued that the purpose of Title VII was to forbid employers from engaging in discriminatory practices against minorities based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin within their business organization. According to Macfarlane, there is a prevailing view that those who file religious discrimination suits are complainers.

However, the tide is turning as a result of the Lily Ledbetter suit for equal pay and the ruling that her case had surpassed the statute of limitations. Nevertheless, this was the first bill signed into law by President Obama from Congress (Dhillon, 2011). Macfarlane (2005) emphasized that Title VII was implemented to help those of a lower socioeconomic status file a legitimate suit in a court of law. Macfarlane argued that the court should readily acknowledge the legal requirements an employee must meet before his or her case can appear before a federal court.

First, the employee must meet the requirements that have been outlined by the EEOC when filing a case within a 90-day period from the date of the violation. Second, the EEOC must issue the individual a “right to sue letter.” Once the complainant has fulfilled the requirements without any deviations, it is allowed to proceed to the federal court system (Macfarlane, 2005). Macfarlane (2005) argued that the court is adding to the requirements by forcing plaintiffs to file identical claims to those in the initial complaint in order to be processed by the EEOC. She argued the court is adding to the work of the

complainant and thereby making the filing of a Title VII suit more cumbersome for the employee, as the filing process places a greater and more complicated burden upon the employee and lacks simplicity for the complainant (Dhillon, 2011).

Macfarlane's (2005) argument is interesting, as it is the court's job to interpret the law and make the best decision based on legal text, precedent, and the intent of the legislation. Although the filing of a religious discrimination suit under Title VII can be a laborious process for the employee and his or her counsel, it is nonetheless necessary for the court to have all documentation without any changes being made to the initial complaint so the judiciary will be able to make the best possible decision.

Macfarlane (2005) validated her argument with her survey of the Administrative Exhaustion Doctrine. This doctrine requires the plaintiff to follow all requirements by the EEOC in order to present his or her case. However, the employee is not allowed to present additional material that was not submitted in the initial complaint (Macfarlane, 2005). Macfarlane argued this requirement is counterproductive to the plaintiff's case, and because the case is going before a federal court the new material should be admitted. She further argued that Title VII is a federal statute, and because the federal courts judge it, the employee should be allowed to file additional charges (Dhillon, 2011, p. 218).

Kaminer (2009) argued that religion should not be treated as a mutable trait by the courts because most courts view religion as a lifestyle and personal preference. Religion's placement within Title VII is among the immutable traits, but is treated as

mutable when it comes to cases involving employee dress versus the company's dress code, resulting in the court viewing religion as a mutable characteristic. For example, say a person who was born into a family of Baptists later makes the decision to become a Catholic. When this takes place the court views this characteristic of religion as mutable and not immutable (Kaminer, 2009). Legal experts and judges have found that Section 701 poses an interpretative challenge when deciding on religious cases (Kaminer, 2009).

In 1980, the EEOC issued stronger guidelines concerning religious accommodation. However, this did not influence the court's decision in the case of *Ansonia Board of Education v. Philbrook* (1986). Philbrook was a high school teacher and a member of the Worldwide Church of God (Kaminer, 2009). As a member, he was required to take 6 days off per year for religious observance. The school offered him 3 paid days off and 3 days unpaid. Philbrook refused and took his case to court. The court decided he had been reasonably accommodated without conflict with his religious beliefs in that he was offered 3 days of unpaid leave.

The court's treatment of religious conduct and observance was as a mutable trait. If the employer chooses to extend some form of religious accommodation, the employee is expected to accept the offer and adjust his or her expectations (Kaminer, 2009). Realistically, the employee must take the offer provided by the employer although it may not completely resolve the religious conflict (Kaminer, 2009). According to Kaminer (2009), an individual's religious beliefs can increase over time, but that does not mean

the court will interpret them as being immutable. The court argues that religion is immutable but not the individual (Kaminer, 2009), because individuals can change but not the religion itself once it has been defined as a sincere belief system held by its followers (Shureen, 2004). Kaminer further argued that mutable and immutable traits should not be the main objective of Title VII.

When an individual changes his or her religion, this is viewed by the court as mutable conduct; hence, the court's treatment of the employee and his or her religion as mutable. The employee is mutable because human beings have the power to change their conduct, but once they embrace their religion and it becomes an integral part of their life, the religion as a belief remains unchangeable (Little, 2011). However, when the employer demonstrates a willingness to provide religious accommodation, the employee should be willing to compromise unless his or her religion does not provide options while working in a secular environment.

If the employer is willing to accommodate the employee, this can work to the employer's advantage during legal proceedings involving religious accommodation (Kaminer, 2009). Therefore, it is understandable why employees lose some religious accommodation cases when a resolution has been offered by the employer that does not incur financial hardship (Kaminer, 2009). Courts in the past have decided religion is a matter of personal choice and is thereby protected by the First Amendment (Kaminer, 2009). Therefore, if the employer attempts to reasonably accommodate the worker and

the employee refuses to accept the offer, he or she would lose the case in court. This has been the reasoning behind the decisions in cases such as *TWA v. Hardison* (1977) and *Ansonia Board of Education v. Philbrook* (1986).

According to the EEOC (2015a), reasonable accommodation should remove the religious conflict between the employer and employee. Requiring employers to resolve all religious conflicts in the workplace is an unrealistic and unattainable objective. The expectations of the employer and employee must be managed when it comes to conflict, as there is a contractual agreement between the employer and the employee when the employee agrees to work for the business organization.

Little (2011) argued that the U.S. legal system does not require evidentiary proof from employers when they are claiming undue hardship and argued that the courts should require more rigorous evidentiary support from employers. Many times the court has taken the employer's word on this issue instead of requiring them to demonstrate the costs involved when accommodating the religious employee. Scholars such as Kent Greenwalt, a well-known legal expert in his field, agree that employers need to show proof that they are unable to accommodate their religious employees (Little, 2011). When the employer is required to provide evidence it should be reliable and credible, not speculative or based on the opinion and morale of the organization (Little, 2011). For example, if an employee requests time off and is later approved by management, then fellow workers may elect to do the same (Little, 2011). Having said that, the courts need

to interpret religious accommodation along with religious protection under Section 701 of Title VII. Little supported his argument with the case of *Burns v. Southern Pacific Transportation Company* (1970), in which a religious employee refused to pay union dues and asked if he could give the money to the charity of his choice (Little, 2011). Consequently, the employer refused to grant this accommodation to the employee (Little, 2011).

Weaknesses of the EEOC and Title VII

The EEOC was created in 1966 after the landmark civil rights legislation of 1964 (Macfarlane, 2005), including Title VII. The purpose of Title VII was to forbid all employment discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, and national origin (Kaminer, 2009). Theorists such as Kaminer (2009), Williams (2008), Blair (2010), and Macfarlane (2005) believe that race, color, and religion are immutable traits, for a human being cannot change the color of his or her skin pigmentation naturally or his or her race, ethnicity, or national origin.

The EEOC's primary purpose is to enforce Title VII. More importantly, the EEOC cannot legally penalize any company, restore an employee's job, or pay compensatory damages; these are the congressional limitations placed on the EEOC. However, the EEOC serves as an administrative agency to ensure all claims of religious discrimination suits are received, filed, and investigated before they are passed on to federal jurisdiction (Macfarlane, 2005). Along with that, the EEOC has set certain

guidelines and procedures for plaintiffs to follow in order to process their claims of religious discrimination. Unfortunately, the EEOC has been mistakenly viewed as a ruling agency, but it can only make decisions within the scope of its authority (Macfarlane, 2005).

The EEOC can check out the violations against an organization but it cannot bring judgment. Although having the EEOC investigate the matter does bring a certain amount of weight to the employee's allegation of religious discrimination, essentially the EEOC is the "watchdog" over Title VII. Both the EEOC and Title VII are intrinsically and legally tied to each other. Title VII as a law has the EEOC to stand beside it. However, some critics see the EEOC as a weak agency with limited power to enforce the directives of Title VII (Pedriana & Stryker, 2004). Employees who file these claims are required by agencies such as the EEOC and National Labor Review Board to present their complaint before the presiding agency. All claims must be processed and follow all procedures required by the EEOC before the case reaches the federal level (Macfarlane, 2005). Macfarlane's (2005) argument leans toward bypassing the EEOC when a complaint is filed.

If a complainant is given the choice to bypass the EEOC, then cases would go straight to federal court. However, with the EEOC in place, this streamlines the cases that go to court and does not waste valuable judicial time. The EEOC is necessary even though it is not without its faults, such as not having enough personnel to handle the

overload of cases (Macfarlane, 2005). The EEOC is a government agency mandated by law to investigate all claims and violations of Title VII. Macfarlane (2005) highlighted the failings of the EEOC, but the agency must be given the opportunity to investigate these complaints to ensure they are valid and credible before reaching federal court.

The literature revealed the EEOC has had many problems since 2001. According to Macfarlane (2005), the EEOC has many failings to overcome in order to become what was envisioned by Congress an agency of substance and worth to all groups and minorities in the United States. First, it has been understaffed as a result of a quarter of its workers leaving. Next, many of its investigators are handling an insurmountable number of cases. This results in a number of cases being lost or extensions needed in order to complete the investigations. For example, in 2008 it reduced the number of cases to be completed from 72% to 48% (Macfarlane, 2005).

Kaminer (2009), Blair (2010), and Williams (2008) referenced the difficulties posed by the language in Title VII for those who are responsible for interpreting the law. Title VII places religion in line with five other immutable characteristics that employers must recognize when managing employees (Kaminer, 2009, p. 455). Race, color, sex, and national origin are immutable characteristics of human beings. However, religion is not immutable, as it is decided by individual choice. Herein lies the possible internal weakness of Title VII because religion is subjective to the person and not the law. On the other hand, should religion be placed by itself when it comes to the other immutable

characteristics? A further analysis of this law demonstrates its weaknesses may lie in the way the law has been structured. It was inserted to prohibit religious discrimination from taking place within the workplace (Blair, 2010). Employees who file religious discrimination suits must prove they were discriminated against by their employers (Macfarlane, 2005). In order for this to be done, the employee must first demonstrate that the employer's policy conflicts with his or her religion (Macfarlane, 2005). For example, if the workplace policy calls for all employees to work from Monday through Saturday, all employees must follow this mandate. This would be a problem for those employees who are Sabbatarians, whose day of worship is on Saturday. This results in a conflict for an employee who invariably would have to choose between work and his or her day of worship, which is an integral part of the employee's religion and practice (Kaminer, 2009).

One example is the case of *Dewey v. Reynolds Metal Company* (1971) in which Dewey was required to work on Sundays but refused to do so because of his membership in the World Wide Church of God (Macfarlane, 2005). Although Dewey was successful in getting his coworkers to work in his place, there was one Sunday in August when he refused to find a replacement (Macfarlane, 2005). This resulted in his termination, which later led to his filing a religious discrimination suit (Macfarlane, 2005). Cases that employees have lost in the court of law, such as *Dewey v. Reynolds Metal Company* (1971), *Ansonia Board of Education v. Philbrook* (1986), and *TWA v. Hardison* (1977),

involve employees having to make difficult choices between their religion and place of work (Macfarlane, 2005). Nonetheless, Title VII is left to interpretation by the judges who must make decisions involving religious discrimination. It is important that both employers and employees remember that judges are human beings who strive to be objective, but are subject to human failings, prejudices, and beliefs that are invisible to the naked eye but play a pivotal role in the lives of those who have to make decisions involving religious discrimination lawsuits.

This was evident in the case of *Ashfar v. Pinkerton Academy* (2004). Ashfar, who was an Iranian, was mistakenly believed to be a Muslim by his employer when in reality he was a member of the Baha'i faith. Here, Title VII failed to protect the employee from a mistake made by his employer concerning his religion when it was misperceived that he was a Muslim. Courts in the past have refused to hold employers responsible for these kinds of errors (Williams, 2008, p. 363). This demonstrates that Title VII is impotent when it comes to the protection of religious employees and other types of workers who are seldom mentioned but who still play a vital social role, such as interns and welfare workers.

Each year in the United States, many business organizations take on interns to teach them how their business operates in the global economy. Unfortunately, many of these workers do not know they are legally unprotected in the business environment (Fredericksen, 2013). The literature shows these kinds of workers are susceptible to

deliberate discrimination with no legal recourse to protect them because the law defines employees as those who are paid a wage for their labor (Fredericksen, 2013). This is counterintuitive to the language of Title VII that no person should be discriminated against based on race, color, sex, religion, or national origin (Williams, 2008). Legally speaking, the statute provides protection for those who are legally employed and not for those who are voluntarily employed, which leaves little recourse for an intern or volunteers to file a discrimination suit involving any of the four immutable characteristics of race, color, sex, and national origin required by Title VII (Fredericksen, 2013).

Kean (2004) and Fredericksen (2013) both argued that a number of cases of discrimination involving unpaid workers go unreported in the United States. One example is the case of Bridget O'Connor, who was pursuing an undergraduate degree in sociology and later applied for an internship at a medical center (Fredericksen, 2013). Unexpectedly, Ms. O'Connor's supervisor began to berate her with his use of derogatory language and unwanted sexual advances (Fredericksen, 2013). O'Connor reported the harassment to her superiors and was informed that there was nothing they could do because she was only an intern. This went on for several weeks until she could endure no more and quit her internship (Fredericksen, 2013). Later, she sought legal counsel and was advised that there was no legal recourse because she did not meet the legal definition of an employee because she was not being paid for her work (Fredericksen, 2013). However, through her own persistence she was able to find a lawyer who was willing to

argue before a court of law that her job possessed monetary value based on the nature of her assigned job duties.

Kean (2004) argued that interns are not the only workers who are unprotected by Title VII. A number of states require welfare recipients to work to receive benefits, and many have experienced discrimination in the workplace (Kean, 2004). Moreover, many of these workers are reluctant to report these incidents to the authorities (Kean, 2004). It is evident that Title VII lacks the fortitude as a legal statute to protect all employees in the workplace, whether they are financial recipients or those who lack the ability to receive monetary benefits (Kean, 2004). In the O'Connor case it was decided by the court that her job did possess a monetary value that was beneficial to the business organization. The court concluded she should be compensated for her claim of sexual harassment by her employer (Fredericksen, 2013). Fredericksen (2013) and Kean (2004) both agreed that Title VII should be further amended to include all types of employees within the U.S. workplace. Interestingly enough, if this statute were inclusive of all workers, it could also serve as a protector for both interns and welfare recipients who are required to work for their benefits.

The literature reveals critics of Title VII believe the statute has become weak and has lost its original purpose because of its inability to provide protection for religious employees who voice their complaints by filing religious discrimination lawsuits against their employers (Macfarlane, 2005). Williams (2008) would agree with Macfarlane

(2005) that Title VII fails to protect the employee, especially when the employer has mistakenly placed the employee in a race or ethnicity of which he or she is not a member and a religion that he or she does not practice. This was evident in the case of *Ashfar v. Pinkerton Academy* (2004), in which an Iranian employee was mistakenly believed to be a Muslim by his employer. Another weakness of Title VII is its lack of choice for the employee filing a religious discrimination suit. For example, cases such as *Dewey v. Reynolds Metal Company* (1971), *Ansonia Board of Education v. Philbrook* (1986), and *TWA v. Hardison* (1977) demonstrate whether an employee who files a Title VII religious discrimination claim has any options.

According to Prekert and Magid (2006), the freedom to make a decision in reality is not really freedom at all, especially when there is only one choice, as in the story of Mr. Hobson who would tell his customers they could select any horse they wanted in the stable. However, once they agreed to use his horses, they quickly found out there was only one horse available, resulting in what is known today as Hobson's choice (Prekert & Magid, 2006). Such is the case when employees file religious accommodation cases against their employers. Once the employer offers a reasonable accommodation to the employee, he or she has met the responsibility to provide religious accommodation according to Title VII. The law is not specific on what the accommodation must be, just as long as the business unit has willingly offered the worker a choice. Prekert and Magid agreed that it is not really a choice at all because Title VII

leaves the employee who has a religious conflict at the disposal of the employer, who can choose what kind of accommodation he or she will provide and such accommodation may not resolve the employee's religious conflict in the workplace (Prekert & Magid, 2006). It is believed that Hobson's choice is extremely influential in many court decisions involving religious accommodation. This is because of the words "undue hardship," which tends to favor the employer in religious discrimination cases (Prekert & Magid, 2006).

Employees who file religious discrimination cases are at the mercy of the employer as long as the employer is in compliance with Title VII when providing a reasonable accommodation. In the case of *Ansonia Board of Education v. Philbrook* (1986), the court decided that because the employer had provided Mr. Philbrook with 3 days of paid leave and 3 days of unpaid leave to practice his religion, he was accommodated and should have willingly taken the offer (Kaminer, 2009). This resulted in his having only one choice—accept the school board's offer or leave the school system. Roshelli (2008) would agree that there must be equality of choice on both sides of the spectrum of religious accommodation and religious discrimination.

For example, there was a gay couple that wanted to conceive a child through in vitro fertilization. The doctor refused to treat the couple because of his religious convictions and the LGBT couple later filed a suit against this doctor (Roshelli, 2008). The doctor claimed it went against his religious conscience to perform this operation for a

gay couple. Roshelli (2008) argued that several states have implemented conscience clauses for their health workers. According to the literature, they are discriminating against LGBT couples that want to receive the same fertility treatments as their heterosexual counterparts (Roshelli, 2008). Roshelli argued that health care workers have at their disposal the protection of the First Amendment where an individual can legally exercise his or her religious faith (Roshelli, 2008). Roshelli enumerated that state constitutions also protect health care workers with their religious conscience clauses.

Roshelli (2008) left out the right of the gay couple to receive fair treatment as the U.S. Constitution protects the rights of the couple as U.S. citizens. It is clear that there must be a balance between the rights of health care workers and U.S. citizens when the dictates of conscience are confronted with the exercise of an individual's legal right (Roshelli, 2008). In this case, Title VII should protect the gay couple from being discriminated against by the health worker because of religious conscience.

Vickers (2010) argued that religious conscience is not protected in the UK as it is in the United States. When a civil registrar named Ladele refused to marry LGBT couples in her district in the United Kingdom, she was first reprimanded and later terminated (Vickers, 2010) and was not given the right of choice under Europe's religious discrimination law. Perhaps employers in the UK and the United States can learn from each other's experiences when this type of Title VII issue arises.

Lam (2013) would find the discussion of choice between Vickers (2010) and Roshelli (2008) ironic because he was interested in the case of Nancy Wetherill, who as a dual-status federal employee worked both for the civil service and as a technician in the U.S. military. She was promoted and had a successful career but ran into difficulty upon requesting a waiver to retire in order to meet her retirement requirements (Lam, 2013).

Wetherill's request was granted by one general but rescinded by a new general. Because her career was spent serving the military, under the Feres Doctrine she was prohibited from filing a discrimination suit against the military. The Eighth Circuit Court disapproved her discrimination claim, but the Supreme Court ruled that as a federal civilian employee she could not be denied the right to file a claim under Title VII (Lam, 2013). In this case, Wetherill was able to reclaim her right as a dual service technician to file a discrimination suit under Title VII. This was one of the few times that Title VII has worked in favor of the employee.

Although Lam's (2013) argument did not involve religious discrimination, it did involve choice and highlights that the Feres Doctrine applied only to military personnel, not dual-status civil service employees. Moreover, Title VII's role as the statute of choice served to help this employee and provided her with the option to pursue litigation in support of her claim of sexual discrimination as a soldier in the U.S. military. It is clear that those who file claims under Title VII must be prepared for the consequences,

whether they are favorable or unfavorable. The purpose of Title VII was for minorities and lower classes to be able to pursue justice within the U.S. legal system.

The literature revealed that in the O'Connor case the employee was fortunate to find a court system that was sympathetic to the case; unfortunately, this is not the case for many who file discrimination suits under Title VII. Those who file religious discrimination suits have a limited number of choices; that is, to endure religious discrimination in the workplace or to quit their job and look for a new one. According to Malos (2009), this was not the case with a former Apple employee, Nancy Zayed, who worked as an on-call engineer. For the first few years of the job, things went very well for Zayed, as she received satisfactory performance reviews. After 9/11, the workplace became a hostile environment for Zayed. Her supervisors began to treat her with disrespect, and Zayed's coworkers began to make jokes about the Quran during working hours (Malos, 2009). Subsequently, Zayed began to receive substandard performance evaluations and was later offered a lower paying position; if Zayed refused, they assumed that Zayed would resign (Malos, 2009). In response to working in a hostile environment, Zayed went on sick leave and was later terminated by Apple (Malos, 2009). Interestingly enough, Zayed filed a case of religious discrimination, which included harassment and retaliation that was later lost (Malos, 2009).

Malos (2009) argued that discrimination cases are difficult for the employer; Kean (2004) and Fredericksen (2013) would both disagree with Malos, focusing instead

on the unfair treatment Zayed had to endure as a Muslim employee in the workplace. Fortunately, Zayed did have Title VII as protection against such unfair treatment because of dress and religious affiliation in the workplace. Malos argued that employers have more to deal with when there are multiple claims filed by the employee. However, he failed to take into account the distress and hardship for the employee who has to work in a hostile environment. Both O'Connor and Zayed as employees did not accept the wrongful treatment they received while carrying out their duties as an intern and employee within their respective organizations (Malos, 2009).

Strengths of Title VII and the EEOC

Congress enacted Title VII along with the civil rights legislation. In order to support and strengthen Title VII, legislators came up with a strategic plan that gave birth to the EEOC that began on July 5, 1965 (Pedriana & Stryker, 2004). Despite severe obstacles during its beginning, the EEOC has grown into a powerful agency.

Pedriana and Stryker (2004) argued that the EEOC became stronger because of the social activism during the late 1960s and 1970s. The writers attributed the EEOC's growth to the United States having a strong economy with an ever-increasing workforce of minorities and women (Pedriana & Stryker, 2004). Along with increased political pressure and social activism, the EEOC grew from a weak government agency to a strong one that is still in operation 50 years later (Pedriana & Stryker, 2004). Pedriana and Stryker argued that despite the tremendous problems the EEOC experienced during its

infancy as a government agency, it was not expected to survive or maintain its primary objective of enforcing Title VII's statutory authority within the public and private sectors of the United States.

Maatman and Strumwasser (2013) argued the need for a change to the 300-day limitation rule on filing claims involving Title VII. According to Maatman and Strumwasser, courts use broad interpretations when following Sections 706 and 707. Section 706 requires the filing of the complaint to be no more than 300 days old, and the courts have been holding the EEOC to this statute. However, the EEOC, when filing cases past the 300-day mark, refers to Section 707 when filing charges against employers who they believe have violated Title VII and have demonstrated behaviors of discrimination toward a group of employees.

Holistically, this demonstrates a strength of Title VII as an outdated complaint can be filed on the behalf of a group of employees by the EEOC. In 1972, the EEOC was given the authority by Congress to investigate complaints against employers on behalf of employees. This continues to show not the weakness of Title VII but its strength as employees can expect its protection along with the support of the EEOC. This maintains the purpose of the enforcement power of the EEOC to ensure companies are not engaging in discriminatory employment practices. Though Williams (2008) and Macfarlane (2005) saw both the EEOC and Title VII as weak and as failing to protect employees, Madman and Strumwasser (2013) viewed the EEOC as a strong agency that knows how to

strategically and legally use its authority on the behalf of employees who file complaints under Title VII.

Dunn (2013) argued that Title VII allows the EEOC to investigate claims within its congressional parameters. Under the deferential review, the EEOC possesses the authority to investigate a claim and later decide whether the employer was liable for discrimination and make a conciliatory offer to the company. Once the company receives the offer, its leaders can choose to accept or reject the offer. Dunn argued that the EEOC, under deferential review, can operate as an agency without any limits. Therefore, left up to its own vices, it poses a greater threat to private companies with employees who file discrimination charges under Title VII (Dunn, 2013). Dunn's argument refuted that of Williams (2008) on the strength of Title VII and the weakness of the EEOC. Dunn further dismissed Williams's (2008) argument with the EEOC because of the authority of the deferential review that obligates the EEOC to operate by statutory review and without this legal requirement the EEOC would be a threat to companies in the private arena (Dunn, 2013). She further argued that under statutory authority, the EEOC maintains balance and is kept under control as a result of the law's requiring better treatment of employees (Dunn, 2013). This is accomplished by the following:

- First, they must inform the employer of the reason for the alleged Title VII violation.

- Second, the employer must be given the opportunity to correct the alleged Title VII infractions (Dunn, 2013, p. 470).
- Third, the EEOC should demonstrate a willingness to work and not appear to take on an adversarial role. Dunn (2013) arguably believed the strength of Title VII and the EEOC is to operate with a level of fairness by allowing the company to respond in a positive manner to the filing of complaints by employees. Dunn's argument illuminates the strengths of Title VII and the EEOC.

Greene (2013) argued that the strength of Title VII is that it protects the employee before and after the contract. The protections cover five immutable traits according to Kaminer (2009): race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. The purpose of Title VII is also its strength, as the main objective was to prohibit the five kinds of employment discrimination. Title VII provides the means for those of lower socioeconomic status and minority races to file a complaint of employment discrimination. In 1972, the EEOC was given the authority to prosecute violations of Title VII. In the years prior to this, as Pedriana and Stryker (2004) argued, the EEOC was a weak agency; however, in the next 7 years it became a stronger agency that was backed by Congress to investigate both individual and group claims of employment discrimination.

Pedriana and Stryker (2004) would agree with Greene (2013) that the EEOC being given more authority in 1972 created a stronger agency by enforcing and protecting

the rights of employees but also as a vanguard over private industries and companies and their employees. One of the strengths of Title VII is that an employee has 180 days to file a complaint within the EEOC guidelines. Once the complaint has been received, the EEOC will determine whether it is a legitimate claim under Title VII and then assign the case to an investigator (Greene, 2013). Another strength of Title VII is that it gives employees options when filing a claim under the five irrefutable characteristics of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. Scholars such as Williams (2008) and Macfarlane (2005) argued that Title VII's biggest failure is not protecting employees from discriminatory behavior in the workplace. This was referenced earlier in the literature review using the case of *Ashfar v. Pinkerton Academy* (2004), in which an employee was believed to be a Muslim but in actuality was of the Baha'i faith. In this case, Title VII did not protect the employee from the misperception of his faith.

However, in the case of Mohammed Rafiq, there was a different outcome when his employer and coworkers began to become hostile after 9/11. Rafiq was born in India and was the recipient of unwanted misperception and discrimination in the workplace. After 9/11 he endured harassment, ridicule, and interrogation by his supervisor and coworkers (Greene, 2013). Consequently, after the terrorist attacks he revealed the way he was treated was because his coworkers thought he had played a role in the attacks on the United States. This did not stop there, as he later endured being called "Taliban" (Greene, 2013, p. 157). Consequently, this culminated at a company United Way event

where all were required to be present with no exceptions. Rafiq attended but recalled being told by his supervisor that he was living in the United States, not in an Islamic country. Later, he received a written reprimand from his superior and 2 days later his employment was terminated (Greene, 2013). Under Title VII, Mohammed Rafiq was able to file a claim of national origin discrimination based on misperception (Greene, 2013) because he was not an Arab but of Indian descent. Rafiq was only able to file his complaint because of the authority of Title VII along with the enforcement authority of the EEOC. This case demonstrates the authority of Title VII and the EEOC working together on behalf of an employee's right to not be discriminated against in the workplace.

Gutman and Dunleavy (2013) agreed with Greene (2013) that Title VII is a law that provides a shield for employees who file employment discrimination complaints against their employers. Since the implementation of Title VII 50 years ago, the law has matured and is responsible for changing employment practices in the United States (Gutman & Dunleavy, 2013). According to the literature, Title VII was created to ensure African Americans and women and minorities would not be discriminated against by businesses in the United States. Gutman and Dunleavy argued that the strength of Title VII is its power to protect employees of all races from overt and intentional employment discrimination. When it comes to the matter of retaliation, a strength of Title VII is that it provides protection for the employee during and after the employment discrimination

complaint has been filed. The preceding arguments have demonstrated there are differing opinions when it comes to Title VII and the EEOC. Some scholars, such as Williams (2008) and others, believe Title VII and the EEOC are weak instruments in preventing employment discrimination. However, this idea was not supported by Greene (2013), Gutman and Dunleavy (2013), or Pedriana and Stryker (2004), who sincerely believed Title VII protects the employee from employment discrimination and the EEOC during the last 50 years has gotten stronger as an agency that at times by the court must be reprimanded in order for it to stay within its boundaries and maintain its purpose, which is the enforcement of Title VII.

Muslims and Religious Discrimination

September 11, 2001, was a tragic day for many Americans and their families. Consequently, from this date began the denigration of Muslims as a religious group in their neighborhoods and places of work. Research has shown that since 2001 there has been a significant increase in the number of religious discrimination suits filed by Muslims in the workplace. Researchers such as Zaheer (2007), Malos (2009), Mutjaba and Cavico (2012), and Ruan (2008) confirmed the increase in the number of religious discrimination suits filed by those of the Islamic faith in the United States.

The remainder of this literature review is designed to address the issues many Muslims and those of non-Western religions confront while working in the United States. According to Zaheer (2007), 9/11 was responsible for the increase in religious

discrimination suits. This event supports one of the reasons for the dramatic increase in the number of religious discrimination suits filed since 9/11 (Zaheer, 2007). Zaheer's argument was that the Muslim faith, known as Islam, would soon become the largest non-Western religion in the United States (Zaheer, 2007). The religion will soon replace Judaism as the number one minority religion (Malos, 2009). Shureen (2004) argued that U.S. employers are facing new challenges related to how to provide religious accommodation for these workers (Zaheer, 2007). Zaheer argued that the U.S. legal system needs to re-evaluate the wording of Section 701 of Title VII, which says accommodation must be given to all religious orders and rituals (Brougher, 2011). This statute was amended in 1972 by Senator Jennings Randolph to include that no person could be discriminated against based on religious beliefs and practices (Kaminer, 2009). Zaheer (2007) and Malos (2009) agreed that 9/11 has served to influence employers and nonreligious employees' negative attitudes toward followers of the Islamic faith. Zaheer's position requires the court to reinterpret the application of Section 701 when confronted with cases involving religious discrimination toward Muslim employees.

Zaheer (2007) should remember that the statute was made for all citizens, not just Muslim employees, even though as a group they are responsible for the majority of religious discrimination suits. More importantly, the purpose of the law is to protect all citizens, and the courts should apply this law when it involves any individual or group that files a religious discrimination lawsuit against an employer. The statute is complex as

it relates to discrimination within the workplace. When the law became a part of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, it did not directly focus on any minority group in the United States except African Americans, but it was instituted to ensure all minorities would be treated fairly by all companies and business organizations (Kaminer, 2009). I find Zaheer's argument to reinterpret the law on the behalf of any non-Western religious group to be unacceptable because if the courts decided to follow his suggestions, this would leave out other minority religions such as the Sikhs, the Buddhists, and those of the Baha'i faith.

Malos (2009) and Zaheer (2007) both agreed that a number of situations have influenced the filing of religious discrimination suits by Muslim employees. In 2007, the number of Title VII claims went from 8,600 a year to 11,600; contained in these numbers were 3,000 religious discrimination suits (Malos, 2007). For example, a man of the Sikh faith applied to become a retail store cashier but was refused the job because he wore a turban and the company feared his appearance might be disturbing to its customers (Malos, 2009). Another example is the case of an American-born Arabian who was called a raghead, a terrorist, and many other derogatory names by his coworkers in the workplace. Or the cases of Muslim workers who request to pray while at work and ask if they can use the company's conference room for their prayers (Malos, 2009). If the company refuses, it could face a religious discrimination suit.

Another example would be a temporary worker who is wearing a headscarf while working at the front desk. The company requests the temp agency to replace her because

they believe her presence misrepresents the organization (Malos, 2009). Complaints of this nature have contributed to the number of employee discrimination cases that are presently filed inside the workplace (Malos, 2009). Malos (2009) argued that these types of cases are easily defeated by employers in court because of the prevailing unsavory attitudes toward Muslims in the United States. Zaheer (2007), Malos (2009), and Mutjaba and Cavico (2012) all agreed that Muslims are still experiencing the residual effects of 9/11. Malos (2009) and Mutjaba and Cavico (2012) argued that 9/11 was responsible for Muslim employees working in a hostile environment more than any other group of people in the United States. The issue that confronts Muslim employees is the freedom to practice their religion in the workplace (Mutjaba & Cavico, 2012). The observance and practice of their religion in the work environment do not come without challenges, such as getting employers to agree to religious accommodation (Mutjaba & Cavico, 2012). Mutjaba and Cavico (2012) argued that there are workplace dress policies that do not allow for hijabs, headscarves, beards, or certain articles of religious clothing.

Employees who file religious discrimination suits must prove to a certain degree that they face aspects of discrimination such as disparate treatment and disparate impact. *Disparate treatment* is defined as an employer knowingly treating some employees differently than others (Mutjaba & Cavico, 2012, p. 99). An example of this would be employees who are given time off for holidays compared to other employees who are not allowed to have holy days off from work (Mutjaba & Cavico, 2012). This is one example

of disparate treatment; although an employee may experience this, it must be proven when filing a discrimination complaint against an employer (Mutjaba & Cavico, 2012). More importantly, an employee must demonstrate that the employer has willfully engaged in discriminatory actions toward the employee (Mutjaba & Cavico, 2012). One example is the case of *El-Hakem v. Buy, Inc.* (2005), in which an employee endured being called a nickname by his employer. The employer called him Manny, a name of Western origin. The employee repeatedly asked the employer to stop calling him Manny as that was not his name (Mutjaba & Cavico, 2012). The employer should have made the effort to get to know the employee and respect his request to be called by his family name. Unfortunately, this went on for 12 months and the employee was forced to file a discrimination suit based on his national origin (Mutjaba & Cavico, 2012).

Ruan (2008) argued that the legal system in the future will be more favorable toward religious discrimination cases. If she is correct, then she and Zaheer (2007) would agree that Title VII cases involving Muslims should result in more favorable decisions. Ruan based her argument on the fact that the Supreme Court has begun to look more favorably at religious protection suits involving religious issues. I question how Ruan knows this, although she referenced the landmark cases of *TWA v. Hardison* (1977) and *Ansonia Board of Education v. Philbrook* (1986). Ruan's argument is optimistic, but fails to support the plight of Muslims in the United States when it comes to religious accommodation in the workplace.

Summary and Conclusions

Von Bergen (2013) stated the newest and most prevalent type of diversity in the United States involves religion and spirituality, known today as “God at Work” (Von Bergen, 2013, p. 112). Traditionally, in the United States it was unfathomable to mention or bring God into the place of work (Von Bergen, 2013). Nonetheless, these borders are disappearing and the lines have begun to intersect and in the future they may totally disappear when it comes to places of employment (Von Bergen, 2013). The literature revealed that whenever a company prepares to accommodate an individual’s religion, it must also consider the right of nonreligious employees to not have religion imposed upon them in support of religious employees (Ruan, 2008). The Muslim employee does not see the difference in his or her workplace and religious life because they are intrinsically tied together. The literature reveals employers need to take into consideration the rights of nonreligious employees who may object to religious employees receiving favorable treatment because of their religion. Ruan (2008) and Zaheer (2007) need to remember that the workplace was once defined as a place of work; it was not a place for prayer or different types of dress and other religious practices. Zaheer (2007), Malos (2009), and Ruan (2008) would agree that employers currently face new challenges concerning religious accommodation in the workplace because of the increased number of Muslim employees in the workplace.

Zaheer (2007), Malos (2009), Ruan (2008), and Mutjaba and Cavico (2012) agreed that employers must begin to take preventive measures toward limiting the number of religious discrimination suits in the workplace. The literature revealed this can only be done by better educating those who work in management in terms of knowing the cultures and religions of their employees. According to Mutjaba and Cavico, companies need to provide training for managers so they can resolve religious conflicts in the workplace. This will become imperative with the continued growth of the Muslim population in the United States. Education has to become one of the primary instruments of businesses and organizations when it comes to accommodating Muslim employees in the workplace. The literature also revealed employers will have to embrace a greater awareness of their employees' backgrounds, national origins, and religious affiliations; by doing so they will reduce the number of discrimination cases in the workplace and reduce the load of cases the EEOC has to investigate on a daily basis (Malos, 2009). Ruan (2008) argued that as the U.S. workforce becomes more diverse, more employees will exercise their right to freely express their religion in the workplace.

Malos (2009) supported the premise that employers must become better educated when dealing with Muslim-American employees. The literature revealed that in order for companies to be successful in religious discrimination suits, they must change their policies to accommodate employees, such as by implementing policies that prohibit the employer and supervisor from taking retaliatory actions against the employee. According

to Malos, they must work closely with Human Resources offices to create policies where employees can freely see their representative and file an EEOC complaint without fear of retribution or reprisal. The literature also revealed that companies must start providing leadership training that calls for sensitivity when it comes to an individual's race, religion, and national origin (Malos, 2009). Companies that have these policies in place are helping to reduce the number of religious discrimination claims filed by employees (Malos, 2009). The gap in the existing literature relates to a lack of information that can be used to provide assistance to employers when their organizations begin taking measures toward providing religious accommodation for employees within the workplace. Some of the existing literature contained details of the adversarial relationship that can exist between an organization and its workers. Therefore, the current study was driven by the need to explore Muslims' perceptions of the issues they face concerning religious accommodation in the workplace. More importantly, the study conducted by Schlanger (2014) is related to this study on the perceptions and issues of Muslims in the workplace. Mutjaba and Cavico's (2012) study on Muslim discrimination provided me with another format for the type of study I wanted to conduct through their use of legal databases and EEOC information. I selected phenomenology as the research approach to this study. The literature also revealed Muslims as a religious group have filed the majority of religious discrimination suits (EEOC, 2015a). The literature revealed employers are now being challenged on how to approach issues of religious

accommodation. Scholars such as Zaheer (2007), Malos (2009), Ruan (2008), Mutjaba and Cavico (2012), and Schlanger (2014) believe management must become better educated when dealing with those of the Islamic faith. Therefore, this study was driven by the need to explore Muslims' perceptions of the issues they face concerning religious accommodation in the workplace.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to identify and report on Muslims' perceptions about religious accommodation in the workplace. The results of the research were intended to help generate social change by opening or increasing the dialogue between employees and employers. Ultimately, this may lead to changes in workplace policy related to religious accommodation. This chapter documents the research methodology used to conduct this study. Specifically, this chapter presents the justification of the research method and design chosen for this study. In addition, subsections are devoted to the population and sampling procedure, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis. The chapter concludes with the implementation of ethical procedures and a chapter summary.

Research Design and Rationale

This study was guided by the following research question: What are the perceptions of Muslim employees concerning religious accommodation in the workplace? One of the primary objectives of qualitative research is the study of human beings and the researchers' own interpretation of the phenomenon being studied (Stake, 2010). According to Stake (2010), all researchers are different and each takes a different path toward the phenomenon they are seeking to understand. The most important aspect of qualitative research is human life (Stake, 2010). The difference between the qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry is that quantitative research looks at the larger picture

and qualitative research examines smaller things. By understanding this difference, the researcher can seek answers and gather information that is important to the investigation (Stake, 2010). It was my goal as a researcher to understand and interpret objectively the issues concerning religious accommodation for Muslims in the workplace.

Qualitative research is subjective and interpretive of the researcher's experience (Stake, 2010). Qualitative researchers have to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of conducting this type of research (Stake, 2010). The element of subjectivity in qualitative research is viewed by other disciplines as weak and subject to human failure (Stake, 2010). The strength of qualitative research is in its specialization and attention to detail. Because of its progressive nature, qualitative research is emergent and adaptable to changes when problems develop during the research investigation (Creswell, 2014).

Various qualitative research designs were considered but many approaches were more normative in design and inadequately addressed the intended focus of the study. Based on the data and the purpose of the study, a number of qualitative research designs were explored to determine whether they were appropriate for conducting the data analysis. These included grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology, case study, and narrative study.

In order to understand what Muslims in the United States are experiencing related to religious accommodation in the workplace, phenomenology was the best approach to the research study. The rationale behind the use of phenomenology is that it enables

researchers to look at a particular occurrence or event that has taken place in order to investigate individuals' responses. A researcher in a phenomenological study is concerned with how the phenomenon was created, what contributed to its manifestation in the world, and how to interpret and account for resulting actions (Vagle, 2016).

This research study used a qualitative phenomenological design because this is the most appropriate approach for an exploratory study of individuals' lived experiences. Groenewald (2004) defined phenomenology as the concern with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of the people involved. Groenewald stated phenomenological research is concerned with generating descriptions; phenomenology helps in understanding a phenomenon through description. To gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, people who have direct experiences of the phenomenon are investigated. The perspectives of the participants of this study were significant because they had firsthand experiences of the topic being investigated. Open-ended survey questions were used to collect the data.

I modeled the survey based on a review of existing studies (see Appendix A). As this was a phenomenological study, the online survey provided the option for me to focus on the participants' responses to capture the essence of their experiences and produce a rich interpretation in line with the qualitative tradition of focusing on the small things within the study. This led to identifying the research question and the data sources used throughout this phenomenological study. I aligned each source of data to the research

question. This was accomplished by analyzing responses from the online survey completed by Muslim men and women who worked in diverse geographical locations throughout the United States. During the data analysis, I was looking for the perceptions of Muslims toward religious accommodation in the workplace.

Role of the Researcher

The most important aspect of qualitative research is the study of human life and the human experience. Stake (2010) defined this goal “as understanding one thing well” (p. 27); more simply, the subject or topic the researcher plans to study. Qualitative research is subjective and interpretive of the researcher’s experience (Stake, 2010). As a qualitative researcher, I needed to remain aware of my own strengths and weaknesses when conducting the research. The element of subjectivity is viewed within other disciplines as weak and subject to human failure (Stake, 2010).

It was my goal as a qualitative researcher to understand and interpret objectively participants’ perspectives concerning religious accommodation for Muslims in the workplace. As a researcher, I was mindful not to interpret any data in light of my own biases or personal and professional experiences and remained cognizant of my own individual life experiences that served to influence me as a person and researcher. I managed this by focusing on the research question and the survey as the chosen instrument for this study.

I served as the central research instrument for data gathering and analysis by acting as the data collector and analyst of the study. Any researcher may introduce personal bias into the data collected and the results of the analysis. To avoid any potential bias as the data collector, I remained guided by the survey questions (see Appendix A).

According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative researcher must be aware of who he or she is as a human being and not ignore their personal beliefs or experiences. I accounted for my biases by keeping a reflective journal to document observations and reviewed the journal periodically to ensure I remained objective during the course of the research investigation. I was intimately aware of my biases that had grown out of my experiences of living in North and West African countries. I remained cognizant of my own individual life experiences as an ordained minister along with my Christian beliefs in God and teachings from my youth including the golden rule. I believed my religious beliefs served to influence me positively as a researcher while conducting this phenomenological research study.

Last, I adhered to the *Belmont Report* protocol to set an ethical standard for my study. The *Belmont Report* protocol includes respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Respect for persons involves recognition of the personal dignity and the autonomy of individuals, with special protection for potential participants with diminished autonomy. Respect for persons includes focusing on the respondent's time to complete the survey questions. In particular, respondent anonymity was a focus of the

research. Participants were offered the opportunity to withdraw from the study before completion, and to have their responses discarded.

Beneficence entails an obligation to protect participants from harm by maximizing the anticipated benefits and minimizing the possible risks of harm. As noted above, the responses were anonymous, thus minimizing harm. Maximization of gain was offered through providing respondents with access to research results they could use for personal development or reflective learning.

Justice requires the fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of research. The issue of justice was not a significant concern, as responses were not collected from those who are disadvantaged and the research was intended to serve the population from which the responses were drawn. Regardless, the issue of justice was addressed by allowing the respondents access to the results of the survey.

Methodology

In conducting this study, I followed the van Kaam modified phenomenological model as outlined by Moustakas (1994). The model calls for the following protocols: categories and clustering of groups of responses, an examination of the invariant constituents whereby the researcher analyzes captivating moments of the participants' experiences, and determining unusual occurrences in these lived experiences. This phenomenological study concluded with a summary of the findings from the research investigation. Once that was done, I returned to my literature review to identify the

differences between my study and previous research. Last, I developed recommendations for future research in this area of study (Moustakas, 1994).

In 1913, Husserl, the early founder of phenomenology, believed in a pure transcendental phenomenology conducted by logical investigations (Cerbone, 2006). He believed in the consciousness of the experience; for example, a person cannot experience touching a rock unless he or she knows there is a rock and proceeds to touch the rock. Once the individual has touched the rock, he or she can understand the experience of touching the rock (Cerbone, 2006). Moustakas (1994) defined phenomena as what can be visualized in the conscious mind. According to Moustakas, the thing must first make its appearance and then the individual has to experience the thing that has appeared.

For example, when a mother is giving birth to a child, during the time of the delivery the mother remembers those who were present, the date, the time of birth, and the number of hours she was in labor until the delivery of the child. The mother's experience of this phenomenon will always be connected to the birth of her child. The child is the object of the mother's experience of the birth phenomena (Cerbone, 2006). The phenomenologist's objective is to encapsulate the essence of the experience that was experienced by the participants (Cerbone, 2006). Phenomenology as a discipline provides a strength of assurance that other sciences do not because of its focus on the object of the experience (Cerbone, 2006).

Theoretical Alignment

The central research question for this study was: What are the perceptions of Muslims concerning religious accommodation in the workplace?

The research question fit into the theoretical framework of the study in two distinct ways. Pluralism allows for the recognition of diverse groups with individual rights and liberties to voice their opinions within a democratic government and to be recognized as a group. Pluralism calls for diverse groups, in this case Muslims, to coexist with other groups, in this case non-Muslims, in a pluralist democratic society. The purpose of the research question was to identify and report on Muslims' perceptions of the issue of religious accommodation. Using pluralism as part of the theoretical framework set the stage for this investigation of Muslims' thoughts on how they are perceived in the U.S. workplace and how they perceive themselves to be treated as a religious group in the United States, along with their employers' responses to their religious expression during working hours.

The second component of the theoretical framework was religious pluralism, which is a byproduct of pluralism. Religious pluralism demands that diverse religions work together for the greater good of society. This is accomplished by recognition of each other's religion. The reality is conflict exists and it is important for competing religious groups to overcome their differences and work together for the benefit of society. This occurs within greater society and places of work where non-Muslims may

have little understanding of Islam as a religion. Holistically, non-Muslims must embrace the challenge of those whose religions are different from their own religion or non-religion. According to Nikiforova (2008), pluralism encourages the belief that all religions contain “some elements of truth” (Karuvelil, 2012, p. 57). Religious pluralism is what enables people of different religions to engage with each other and take down the wall that keeps them from coming together (Karuvelil, 2012). Therefore, using the framework of pluralism and religious pluralism supported the research investigation.

Instrumentation

I conducted an anonymous online survey of 82 Muslims who lived throughout the United States, 28 of the participants served as the primary source of data in the research investigation, two respondents did not answer all of the survey questions. The survey was modeled on peer-reviewed existing studies conducted by Cunningham et al. (2011) and Mutjaba and Cavico (2012). The open-ended survey questions were designed to gather rich, in-depth information from Muslims concerning religious accommodation in the workplace. Open-ended questions were chosen to give study participants the freedom to convey their thoughts and perspectives regarding the topic being investigated. Open-ended questions are questions that allow respondents to give a detailed response through explanations and elaborations. The following open-ended questions were used in the online survey:

1. In what ways does your company provide religious accommodation to their employees?
2. How does your company communicate its religious accommodation policy to employees?
3. What actions have your company taken that promotes religious accommodation?
4. In what ways do you think that Muslims should express their religion while at work?

The survey as an instrument was appropriate for this study because it allowed the participants to freely answer the questions without any face-to-face contact with the researcher. This kept me focused on the participants' answers to gain the essence of their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). I used NVivo to facilitate the coding process. NVivo is data management software that facilitates coding. I coded the survey responses and placed them into categories after receiving the data from the online survey. The survey instrument was conducted electronically online. Online surveys provide a cost-effective, convenient, and flexible method to reach a diverse population compared to other data collection methods (Ali, Islam, & Lim, 2013). The survey was conducted using Survey Monkey's online survey tool. Survey Monkey served as the platform that initiated the distribution of the survey to the participants and collected the raw data from the

completed surveys. I then coded the raw data by each question in order to generate themes.

Content Validity

Content validity is related to credibility. In the qualitative tradition, content validity is a term that has progressed over a period of time (Maxwell, 2013). However, the qualitative researcher possesses a different view on content validity because content validity is the test of the research questions against the real world. Validity is examined through the objectives and issues that engage the research. For example, did the researcher find out what he or she was expecting or were there alternate findings that challenged the research? (Maxwell, 2013).

Content validity came through the accuracy of the data obtained from the survey instrument. The online survey was the instrument that provided the responses used to draw conclusions related to the research question in order to identify and report on Muslims' perceptions toward religion accommodation in the workplace. Once the research investigation was completed, I was able to determine the content validity and its findings through the evidence produced (Maxwell, 2013).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

After receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (number: 06-30-17-0023800), I used Survey Monkey to recruit participants who met the specific requirement of being Muslims who worked in a U.S.-based company. Participants' identities remained

confidential. They could only contact me through Survey Monkey and my Walden e-mail address. Initially, I reached out to those who lived in the Washington, DC, and metro region. Unfortunately, I was unable to acquire the number of participants for the study. This led me to reach out to a broader audience of Muslims who were from diverse geographical regions throughout the United States. The participants were 84 Muslim men and women who were over the age of 18 years. 28 of those participants were the primary source of data for the research because phenomenological studies do not require a large amount of data only from 10-30 participants (Gentles et al, 2015). As earlier stated, the data collection was accomplished online through Survey Monkey, a web-based survey company that specializes in providing a platform for surveys. The link to the survey instrument was sent to the participants through e-mail with an invitation to participate in the study. The instrument was posted on the Survey Monkey website, along with an introductory page that explained the purpose of the study, instructions for how to answer the questions used in the survey instrument, and an informed consent form (see Appendix B) that included the promise of anonymity and confidentiality. The contact information for the researcher was posted in case the respondents had any questions regarding the study.

A Minimum of 25 participants were recruited. However due to the interests of the online participants the survey closed with a total of 80 who responded and four that did not completely answer the survey. Participants were notified that: (a) their participation

could be terminated at any time without consequence, (b) no compensation from the researcher would be provided, and (c) no deception was used in the research study. The survey took approximately 30 minutes to complete, but there was no time limit given in the questionnaire.

Prior to accessing the survey, participants provided their consent to participating in the study. Each of the respondents agreed to and signed the informed consent form to prove they had given their consent to participate in the study. The respondents were not allowed to access the survey if they did not provide their informed consent. The informed consent form appeared on the Survey Monkey website after the introductory paragraphs and required an affirmative response before advancing to the actual survey questions. This process ensured each participant's informed consent was obtained. The informed consent process was used to inform the participants that any information collected from them would remain confidential, and no personal or identifying information would be collected or used. The participants were instructed to click the "agree, I am willing to participate" button to the informed consent form in the online link. Clicking the negative response button, "I am not willing to participate," concluded the survey, and respondents were not allowed to answer the survey, as they did not provide electronic consent for participation. Once permission from the participants was obtained, data collection commenced and the participants were allowed to access the survey. The respondents were redirected to the next page, which contained the survey questionnaire. Once the

participant completed the survey, he or she clicked the “submit” button located on the online page and automatically exited the survey.

The survey was available online for 30 consecutive days. I evaluated the raw data as the responses were completed until the minimum required sample set at 25 participants was reached based on the recommendation of Polkinghorne (2005). At least 25 complete responses needed to be collected, but more samples needed to be obtained in order to reach data saturation; for this online survey, data collection stopped after 84 completed surveys. The participants’ responses were posted directly into my Survey Monkey account. I placed the downloaded data from Survey Monkey into an NVivo file and saved them on a flash drive. I stored the data in NVivo and will keep the files in a research database established for the purpose of this study. I am keeping a research spreadsheet to record the dates of data collection. Survey Monkey was used to date the raw data during the data collection. The 32G flash drives housing all data are being kept in a secure place in my home safe that only I can access.

As a result of a change in the original procedures, I requested IRB approval to include demographic data in the survey as an amendment to my original. A total of 80 respondents answered a total of four questions on the survey and four questions regarding their demographic information. The participants answered the following demographic questions as shown in Appendix C:

1. What is your age?

2. What is your gender?
3. How much total money did your household earn last year?
4. Where in the U.S. region do you live?

As a means of organization, I entered the data in chronological order by date received into MS Word and MS Excel files. Any confidential data were removed. Instead of the actual names of the respondents, codes were used to distinguish the respondents. The information is marked public, so the university would be able to replicate my data retrieval and collection procedures to validate my research findings. No one had access to the data except me to ensure the data were not compromised. I will continue to maintain and keep all data in my home safe for 5 years, at which time I will legally destroy the information. I have stored hard copies of the files in a locked cabinet at my home office. I have also stored soft copies of files in a password-protected computer in my home office.

Data Analysis Plan

I used the Moustakas (1994) method of phenomenological analysis to analyze the survey responses. The responses of the respondents constituted the data for the study. The four-step process of the Moustakas method of phenomenological analysis involves epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and the synthesis of meanings and essences.

Epoché is the process of setting aside one's bias and prejudgments in order to capture the intended meanings within the participants' responses (Moustakas, 1994). This

stage is important because the interpretation of data needs to be objective. The assumptions and beliefs of the researcher need to be set aside when interpreting the data. I did this by first reviewing my personal journal that listed my biases and prejudices. I then proceeded to objectively interpret the data according to the answers provided by the respondents and did not include my subjective view regarding the topic of the study in the analysis. I enumerated only the responses obtained from the surveys.

The second step involves reduction (Moustakas, 1994). Reduction is the process of situating the responses of the participants within an existing knowledge framework, which is the literature. Through reduction, I gave every unique idea in the survey a name or code that was in line with the two theories used as the theoretical framework for this study, which were the political theory of pluralism and religious pluralism.

The third step is the use of imaginative variation. In this stage, the researcher creates themes based on ideas that are thematically similar. Imaginative variation is a procedure used to reveal possible meanings through using imagination, varying the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, positions, roles, or functions. The aim is to discover the underlying and precipitating factors accounting the experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Imaginative variation complements eidetic reduction. The former eliminates the irrelevant, whereas the latter expands the scope of inspection to discover the veiled and the hidden.

I arranged the codes that emerged from each participant into themes. I used the qualitative software NVivo to assist with generating categories, emergent codes, and the recording of responses; however, I conducted the coding of the data. After the completion of the survey, I conducted an analysis of each participant's responses to the survey questions. Once that was accomplished, I screened each relevant statement by removing all statements deemed irrelevant to the research. I coded relevant statements directly in NVivo and placed them into categories (Moustakas, 1994). I used NVivo to group the data by identifying recurring words or phrases. I used an emergent coding system to analyze the survey responses to create themes and eliminate bias from the responses (Saldana, 2014).

Preliminary Codes and Themes

Table 1 provides an emergent list of codes determined by what was revealed during the course of the research investigation (Saldana, 2014). The table contains a list of preliminary codes, themes, and survey questions for the online survey used to gather the perceptions of Muslims concerning religious accommodation.

Table 1

List of Preliminary Codes and Themes

| Code | Theme | Interview Question |
|------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Culture | Religion | In what ways does your company provide religious accommodation to employees? |
| Conflict Adjustment | Workplace Accommodation | How does your company communicate its religious accommodation policy to employees? |

| | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| | | In what ways do you feel it is appropriate for Muslim to express their religion while at work? |
| Thoughts | Perceptions | What suggestions do you have for your company to enhance their practice of religious accommodation? How does your company communicate its religious accommodation policy to employees? |
| Differences Area | Discrimination Environment | In what ways do you feel it is appropriate for Muslims to express their religion while at work? |
| Holy Day | Religions Observance | How does your company communicate its religious accommodation policy to employees? |
| Prayer Past | Religious Manifestation History | In what ways do you feel it is appropriate for Muslim to express their religion while at work? |

The last step is the synthesis of meanings and essences (Moustakas, 1994). In this stage of the analysis, the themes are used to create a narrative that represents the experience of the entire sample as a whole. The essence of the experience is reported in the integrative summation. This step is achieved by looking for emergent themes and interprets findings to lead to a rich and thick description by encapsulating the essence of the participants' experiences. If discrepant cases are found, they are documented and mentioned in the final investigation.

Issues of Trustworthiness

My respect for the principles and policies of the university ensured my personal integrity and trustworthiness to conduct this research investigation in a forthright manner that will bring honor and credit to Walden University as an educational institution. I used the participants' responses to the survey questions to address the research question related

to religious accommodation. I sought out studies conducted by credible researchers into the topic of religious accommodation to develop the survey questionnaire.

To enhance the dependability of the results, I properly documented every step and procedure. To address the dependability issue more directly, I reported on the processes used within the study in detail to enable any future researcher to repeat the work. After collecting all the survey responses, I coded the responses to create themes within the qualitative data. To increase the transferability of the results, I provided an accurate description and discussion of the context of the research (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). Finally, I enhanced the confirmability of the results by identifying any personal biases so readers and other researchers can evaluate the objectivity of the analysis (Creswell, 2014). The concept of conformability is the qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity. I took proper steps to ensure the findings were the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants and data, rather than my own characteristics and preferences. I used emergent coding to analyze the survey data to promote the conformability in this study to reduce the effect of investigator bias. Sufficiency of data was established through data saturation.

As stated, data saturation in data collection is referred to as the point at which no new information can be extracted from the data, even if the sample size is increased (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Data collection can be terminated when new cases no longer disclose new features (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A total of 84 participants were recruited to collect a minimum of 25 participants and 80 who completely answered the survey. If data saturation i.e. new information was not realized until later in the research findings which will be discussed more in chapter five. If the responses and comments to questions were not achieved after 25 respondents, then more samples would be recruited and asked to answer the survey questions. A loose but useful rule is that one should not collect too much data at a time. It is better to analyze a small data batch carefully and then determine what additional data will be needed. Dividing the analyses into smaller parts also helps the researcher develop manageable results for a publishable report.

Ethical Procedures

I followed the Walden University guidelines because this study contained data involving human participants. Having received university approval of my research proposal, I proceeded to contact Survey Monkey to finalize our agreement as to when to release the survey. All data retrieved from the online survey were kept on a separate 32 GB flash drive. I conducted the collection of data using the utmost integrity in the data control and record keeping procedures to keep my research free from compromise and

prevent any potential ethical violations of any institution's legal or civil rights. Other ethical issues that were addressed in the study were as follows:

- I had no knowledge of the participants, just that they were Muslims and were employed.
- The volunteer participants were from the following regions of the United States: New England, West North Central, East South Central, Mountain, West South Central, East North Atlantic, South Atlantic, Pacific, and Mid-Atlantic.
- Data were collected online and away from my place of work.
- There was no involvement of my local office as a logistics officer for the U.S. Government.
- The participants' identities were anonymous and I kept a record of responses.
- Participants could exit the online survey at any time.
- A 32G flash drive housing all data will be kept in a secure place in my home for a period of 5 years that I alone will be able to access.

Summary

The objective of this research study was to embrace the essence of the participants' experiences in order to produce a rich understanding of the issues and perceptions of Muslims concerning religious accommodation in the United States. A phenomenological design was used for this qualitative study to gain a fuller

understanding of the issues faced by Muslims in the workplace. This chapter included a presentation of the data collection process wherein open-ended survey questions were used to study the collected data from Muslim men and women age 18 and above working in the United States. The survey was conducted online using Survey Monkey. In order to keep the research unbiased and objective, I coded the themes and patterns after gathering all the responses from the participants. This provided me with a fresh view on the phenomenon through the eyes of the participants. The data analysis involved coding the survey responses to develop categories and themes.

Chapter 4: Findings

This study was guided by the following research question: What are the perceptions of Muslims concerning religious accommodation in the workplace? The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to identify and report on Muslims' perceptions of religious accommodation in the workplace. U.S. companies and businesses can face challenges when employees are not allowed to practice their faith during working hours.

Ignoring Muslims' religious practices can lead to conflicts within the workplace because it is difficult to separate an individual from his or her religious beliefs (Cunningham et al., 2011). A number of academic scholars are reluctant to conduct research about religion and employment because they refuse to be associated with controversial activists inside the political and religious arenas of the United States (Cunningham et al., 2011, p. 5). This chapter contains details of the setting and demographics of the study, the data collection process, and data analysis procedures. Evidence of trustworthiness is presented, concluding with a summary of the study's findings.

Setting

I had no control over where and when the survey was taken, which may have affected the participants' answers. Because the survey was hosted online and responses were anonymous, I did not have the ability to determine whether any of the participants

were experiencing any personal or organizational conditions that may have influenced their responses. Moreover, responses that were originally sought from Muslims in the Washington, DC, area were insufficient because of a lack of participation. Therefore, I reached beyond the DC area to find 84 suitable male and female participants who would participate anonymously in the research study.

Demographics

I submitted a request for change in procedures for the inclusion of demographic information on March 16, 2018. Ten days later, on March 26, 2018, the request was approved by the IRB (# 06-30-17-0023800). I received a total of 84 responses to the survey. Though not every participant offered information for each of the demographic categories, the majority of the respondents completed all the demographic information. Figure 1 presents the participants' ages. The plurality of the participants ($n = 32$) were 60 or older, 25 participants were between the ages of 45 and 59, 17 were between the ages of 30 and 44, and 10 participants were between the ages of 18 and 29.

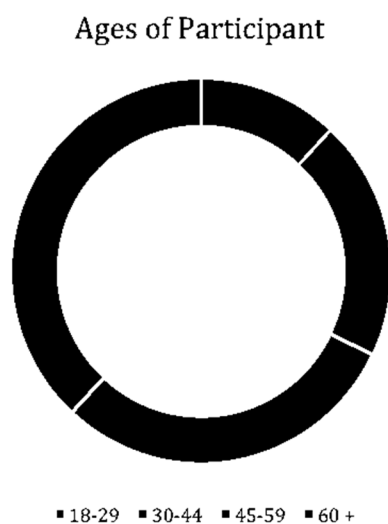


Figure 1. Ages of the participants who responded.

Gender categories were included in the data collection. There were 51 male participants and 33 female participants. Figure 2 shows the categorization of participants by gender.

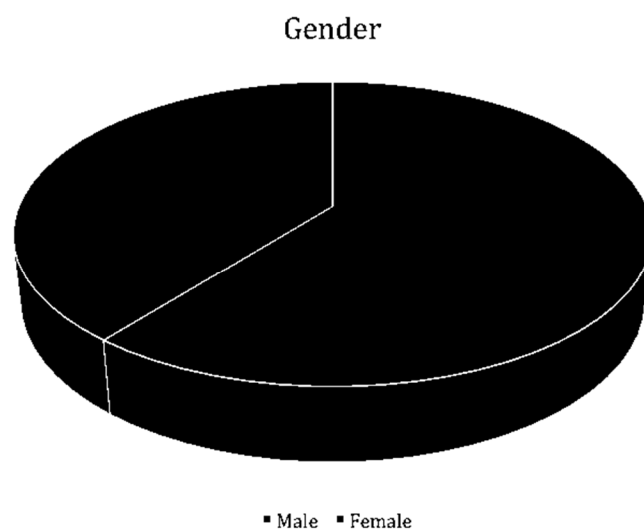


Figure 2. Gender of respondents.

Geographic location was considered in this study. Figure 3 documents the geographic locations of the survey participants. Though the participants were spread throughout the United States, the largest group ($n = 15$) came from the Mid-Atlantic region, which includes New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Washington, DC, Virginia, and West Virginia.

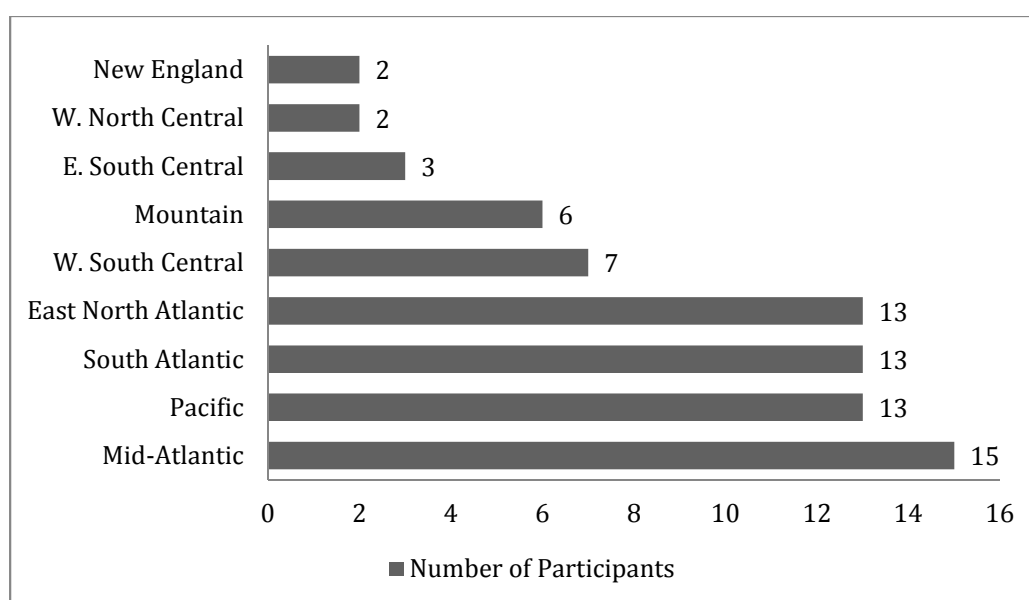


Figure 3. Geographic locale of respondents.

Finally, Table 2 presents the annual household incomes of the participants. Ten participants skipped this demographic question. Therefore, this table documents the distribution of incomes of the 74 participants who answered.

Table 2

Household Annual Income (n = 74)

| Annual Income | <i>N</i> | % |
|------------------------|----------|--------|
| \$0 to \$9,999 | 11 | 13.10% |
| \$10,000 to \$24,999 | 14 | 16.67% |
| \$25,000 to \$49,999 | 13 | 15.48% |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999 | 9 | 10.71% |
| \$75,000 to \$99,999 | 6 | 7.14% |
| \$100,000 to \$124,999 | 4 | 4.76% |
| \$125,000 to \$149,999 | 2 | 2.38% |
| \$150,000 to \$174,999 | 2 | 2.38% |
| \$175,000 to \$199,999 | 0 | 0.00% |
| \$200,000 and up | 7 | 8.33% |
| Prefer not to answer | 16 | 19.05% |

Sampling

Sampling is defined as the process to select a specific representation of the population in order to collect data that will be used to meet the goals of the research (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, and McKibbin (2015)). For this research study, the researcher conducted purposeful sampling in order to purposely recruit participants in order to answer the research question: What are the perceptions of Muslims concerning religious accommodation in the workplace? Purposeful sampling was accomplished by selecting Muslims employees who met the research study requirements (Gentles et al.). This was accomplished in order to successfully collect a sample of participants who were both male and female followers of the Islamic faith. Online participants were required to be

between the ages of 18 and older. Lastly, they had to be employed in the United States for the purpose of answering the research question. Purposeful sampling is primarily dependent upon the researcher's judgment in the selection and criteria of the participants. For the purpose of this research investigation, the participants did not know each other, which ensured the legitimacy of the data collection. Elements of convenience sampling were also used due to the criteria of the research question, which required that the participants practice the Islamic religion.

One of the challenges of convenience sampling is that it can lead to researcher bias during the conduct of the research investigation (2014). Because this is the easiest type of sampling to accomplish and can be the most dangerous because of its simplicity and proclivity to researcher bias. Nonetheless, there is a distinct difference between convenience sampling and purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is more specific and the convenience sampling can be biased and prejudicial. For example, during the conduct of the research study, if the researcher selects his best friends or a group of colleagues who work in the same office, or a group of football players on the same team (Brewis, J., 2014). However in the qualitative tradition purposeful sampling meets the need of phenomenological research because of its direction toward a particular group of the population that will serve as the sampling unit and source of data collection on the lived experiences of human beings Gentles et al. (2015)

Data Collection

There was a total of 82 participants in this study who were working Muslim men and women who worked in different regions throughout the United States, of which 28 of the participants served as the primary source of data. Data collection occurred through an anonymous online survey. The survey was online for 30 consecutive days. The participants' responses were posted directly into the researcher's SurveyMonkey account and downloaded into an NVivo file and saved on a flash drive.

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Data Analysis

I used the Moustakas method of phenomenological analysis to analyze the survey responses. The responses of the participants provided the data for the study. The four-step process of the Moustakas method of phenomenological analysis involves epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and the synthesis of meanings and essences. The first step, epoché, involves setting aside prejudgments and constructing the survey questions with an unbiased, receptive presence. During the phenomenological reduction phase, I used both individual textural descriptions, which descriptively integrated the textural constituents and themes of each research participant, and composite textural descriptions, which integrated all of the individual textural descriptions into a group. I arranged the codes that emerged from each participant into themes. Each question in the open-ended survey was coded one at a time. Then I would

go to the next question until I was able to see what would emerge from the participant's responses during this process.

I used the qualitative software NVivo to assist in generating categories, emergent codes, and the recording of responses. Preliminary codes were established based on the survey questions. These included religion, communication, modifications, and religious manifestations. Emerging codes were integrated during the imaginative variation stage, which involved considering varied perspectives of the phenomenon from different vantage points. These codes were "personal freedom of expression" and "no expression of religion." These two codes emerged from the responses of participants that were written aspects of the questionnaire. Finally, I integrated the data into final major themes, which involved the last phase, the synthesis of meanings and essences.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I used a number of strategies to establish credibility for this research. For example, I sought out studies conducted by credible researchers into the topic of religious accommodation to develop the survey.

To enhance the dependability of the results, I documented every step and procedure in the methodology chapter. In order to address the dependability issue more directly, I reported the processes within the study in detail to enable a future researcher to repeat the work. After collecting all the survey responses, I coded the responses to create

themes. To increase the transferability of the results, I provided an accurate description and discussion of the context of the research (Houghton et al., 2013).

Finally, I enhanced the confirmability of the results by identifying any personal biases so readers and other researchers can evaluate the objectivity of the analysis. The concept of conformability is the qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity. Proper steps are taken to ensure the findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants and data, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. I used emergent coding to analyze the survey data to promote the conformability in this study and reduce the effect of investigator bias. The emergent codes all came from the respondents' answers to the questions on the survey and reflected their perceptions of religious accommodation in the workplace: (a) culture, (b) communication, (c) policy, (d) expression. These codes were integrated with the preliminary codes of religion, adjustment, thoughts, and manifestation. Sufficiency of data was established through data saturation. As stated, data saturation in data collection is referred to as the point at which no new information can be extracted from the data, even if the sample size is increased (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012).

Research Question

The primary research question addressed by this study was: What are the perceptions of Muslims concerning religious accommodation in the workplace? In order to address this question, the participants answered four survey questions:

1. In what ways does your company provide religious accommodation to their employees?
2. How does your company communicate its religious accommodation policy to employees?
3. What actions have your company taken that promotes religious accommodation?
4. In what ways do you think that Muslims should express their religion while at work?

Results

Four main themes emerged from the survey of Muslims as to religious accommodation in the workplace: religion, communication, modifications, and religious manifestations. These themes emerged from the participants' responses to the above-mentioned survey questions. Note that because of the nature of the online survey, very few respondents gave their opinions or comments on the questions asked. However, those who did are mentioned within each theme. My focus was to ensure the respondents answered the questions in the survey. The subsequent sections of this chapter are used to explore the themes, and the corresponding subthemes, that emerged from the data. Table 3 presents an aggregate table of the themes, subthemes, frequency of responses, and how the subthemes emerged.

Table 3

Aggregate Results

| Theme | Subtheme | Number of Responses | Derived from Open Survey Questions |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Religion | Not at all | 28 | Y |
| | By company policy | 22 | Y |
| | Diversity | 14 | Y |
| | Other | 5 | Y |
| | Media | 5 | Y |
| | Bulletins | 3 | Y |
| Communication | Management | 42 | Y |
| | Pamphlet | 16 | Y |
| | Bulletin board | 13 | Y |
| | Media | 10 | Y |
| Modifications | None | 41 | Y |
| | Emphasis on diversity | 27 | Y |

(table continues)

| Theme | Subtheme | Number of Responses | Derived from Open Survey Questions |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Religious Manifestations | Change in company policy | 7 | Y |
| | Other | 5 | Y |
| | New management | 4 | Y |
| | Prayer | 35 | Y |
| | Dress | 18 | Y |
| | No appropriate expression of religion | 10 | Y |
| | Any manifestation/Personal freedom | 10 | N |
| Communication with other Muslims | 9 | Y | |

Question 1

Major Theme 1

Within this theme, participants discussed the ways in which their employers provided religious accommodation. There were six subthemes within the theme of religion: by company policy, diversity, bulletins, media, other, and not at all. The distribution of responses can be seen in Figure 4.

Q1 In what ways does your company provide religious accommodations to their employees?

Answered: 63 Skipped: 1

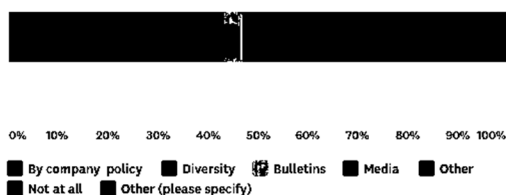


Figure 4. Religious accommodation provided by employers.

A total of 28 participants chose the most frequent response of not at all. One participant stated the company “did not provide any type of religious accommodation for Muslim employees.” Another respondent did not see religious accommodation as a problem and answered with the following comment: “My employer is an Islamic non-profit organization so everything is provided.” However, this was not the case for the majority of the respondents who said their companies had no religious accommodation. Another respondent commented that his “employer believed in diversity and it was part of the company’s policy.” Another participant said it was a “joke” because no one in management ever mentioned religion. However, it is interesting to note that no participants under the age of 30 responded; instead, eight respondents between the ages of 30 and 44 and 45 and 59, respectively, as well as six participants over 60, stated there was not any kind of religious accommodation at their places of employment. Most respondents were in the lower income bracket when it came to annual household income: 26% of the respondents for this subtheme made less than \$10,000 annually; 21% made between \$10,000 and \$24,999; and 15.7% made between \$25,000 and \$49,000. Finally,

67.8% of those who were a part of this subtheme of no religious accommodation were male. The responses of the participants revealed some U.S. companies are not providing Muslim employees with religious accommodation.

The second most popular subtheme was company policy. A total of 26%, or 22 participants, said their company's policy provided religious accommodation for employees. Moreover, of those who answered that their company had a religious accommodation policy, 64% were between the ages of 45 and over 60 and 50% were male. One respondent said he felt "that company policy singled them out as Muslims and kept them from being a part of the team." Though the earned income of participants was slightly higher than those who said their employers offered no accommodation, the majority of the respondents who said their company policy offered religious accommodation were not high-earning income participants, with 22% making between \$10 and \$24,999 and 18% making between \$50,000 and \$74,999 annually.

The third subtheme was diversity, which was cited by 14 participants (16.8%). Of these respondents, the largest number ($n = 4$) made between \$25,000 and \$49,000 and were age 60 and above. There was, however, an almost even split between men and women who responded positively to diversity as a matter of importance in reference to religious accommodation. Another responded "diversity was important so that their fellow workers could better understand them."

The fourth subtheme was other; with five participants (6%) noting their companies had different methods of providing religious accommodation without specifically describing those other accommodation. It was evident from the results that these respondents were women between the ages of 45 and 59. Moreover, the annual income for respondents in this subtheme was from \$10,000 to \$24,999. One respondent said she “disagreed with her company’s policy on religious accommodation.”

The fifth subtheme was media, with five respondents (6%). Two were between the ages of 18 and 29, two were between the ages of 45 and 59, and one was between the ages of 30 and 44. These respondents were overwhelmingly male (4 out of 5) and fell into two main age brackets: 45 to 59 and 18 to 29. However, there were no similarities between these groups when it came to household income.

Finally, three participants (3.6%) reported their companies used bulletins when communicating the company’s religious accommodation policy. One participant stated they “get a bulletin reference once a quarter on diversity and religion.” Two of the three respondents were over the age of 60 and one was between the ages of 30 and 44, all were female, and all reported their annual income in the upper echelons, with one each in the following three brackets: \$75,000 to \$99,000; \$125,000 to \$149,000; and \$200,000 and above.

Question 2

Major Theme 2: Communication

The second theme that emerged from the results was communication, which related to how companies communicated their religious accommodation policy to their employees. This theme came from the second survey question, which was: How does your company communicate its religious accommodation policy to employees?

Table 4 demonstrates the distribution of responses for this question.

Table 4

Communication of Religious Accommodation Policies

| Answer Choice | <i>N</i> | % |
|------------------------|----------|--------|
| By Pamphlet | 16 | 19.75% |
| Media | 10 | 12.35% |
| Bulletin Boards | 13 | 16.05% |
| Management | 42 | 51.85% |
| Other (please specify) | 0 | 0.00% |
| Total | 81 | |

The majority of the respondents ($n = 42$; 51.8%) noted management communicated the religious accommodation policy in the company. The respondents were evenly split between gender (55% male and 47% female); 19 of the 42 (45%) made under \$50,000 annually; and 17 of the 42 (40.4%) were age 60 or older. One respondent stated there was “a sheet placed on the bulletin board once a quarter on diversity and religion.” The next most popular subtheme within communication was a pamphlet, with 16 (19.75%) respondents citing this mode of communication. Like the previous category, the majority of these respondents had an income of under \$50,000 (10 out of 16). One participant said “we get these little monthly pamphlets on religion but I never read them.” However, the majority of the respondents for this subtheme were female (10 out of 16) and between the ages of 30 and 59 (11 out of 16). The third subtheme was bulletin board,

with 13 respondents (16%) noting it as their company's preferred method of communication regarding religious accommodation. Participants were evenly split among the age ranges and annual household incomes within this subtheme, although they were primarily male (10 versus 3). The final subcategory within this theme was media; with 10 participants (12.3%) noting their companies used media to communicate their religious accommodation policy to employees. Unlike the other subcategories, participants were divided evenly among all three demographic areas when it came to age, annual household income, and gender. One participant stated he felt the media did not show Muslims expressing their faith. Another respondent said, "The media was not effective; after all, I'm well educated, do they think we are stupid!" Overall, the majority of the respondents answered this question. Interestingly enough, only a few respondents did not answer the question or make any comments as demonstrated by leaving their responses blank. One participant said he "did not agree with any kind of religious policy are we not free to worship Allah!" This can be also interpreted as the companies at which they were employed lacking policies concerning religious accommodation or their disapproval of the current religious accommodation policy in the workplace.

Question 3

Major Theme 3: Modifications

The third major theme that emerged from the data was modifications, which referenced the specific actions the participants' companies had taken to promote religious

accommodation in the workplace. This came from the third survey question: What actions have your company taken that promotes religious accommodation? Figure 5 presents the results of this theme as to how companies promoted religious accommodation.

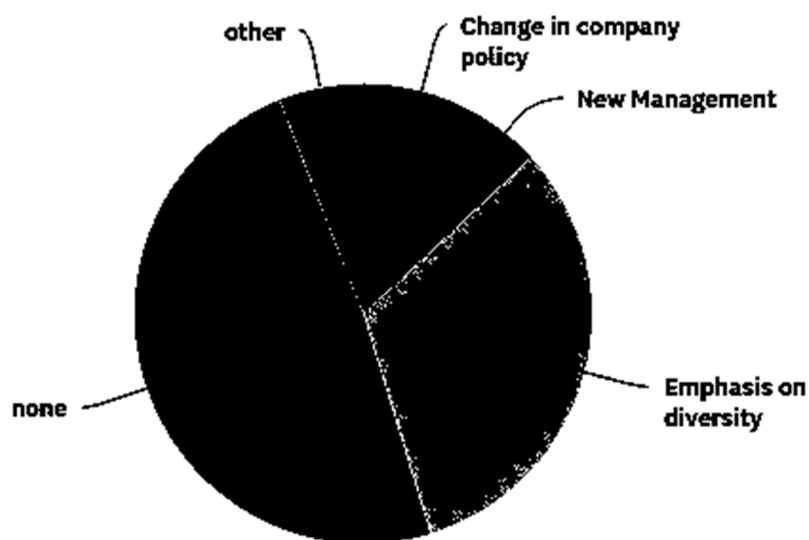


Figure 5. Accommodation of employers.

The findings indicated the largest proportion of participants believed their employers took little or no action toward promoting religious accommodation. An alarming 41 participants (48.8%) cited this subtheme and there were not any additional comments made by any of the 84 respondents who answered this question. Moreover, this can be interpreted that the question was clearly understood by the respondents. The data revealed all 84 participants had completely answered this question. One respondent commented that his company “did nothing and we are not respected.”

However, the remainder of the participants did describe some actions their companies took. Twenty-seven participants (31.1%) said their companies emphasized diversity in an effort to promote religious accommodation. Those within this subcategory were dispersed over four primary annual income brackets: five made \$50,000 to \$74,999; five others made \$25,000 to \$49,000; four reported an income of \$200,000 or more; and three said their family earned under \$10,000 (there was at least one participant in every other income bracket). Additionally, the majority of the respondents were 60 or older (51.8%) with the next highest group in the 45 to 59 age group (25.9%). Those in the youngest age bracket, from 18 to 29, were the least likely to report that their companies emphasized diversity as a way to promote religious accommodation (7%). There was a reasonable distribution between male and female participants within this subtheme as well. One participant said her company “recognized everyone’s religion.” Another stated diversity to her was equality and in her company Muslims were treated with respect”.

Change in company policy was the next subtheme, and was described by seven participants (8.3%). Five men and two women reported this subtheme; the same number within the 45 to 59 and 30 to 44 age ranges similarly described a change in company policy. A participant stated now his company allowed them to pray during their break.

The spectrum of annual household incomes was varied: five participants were in the \$10,000 to \$24,999 range; and there was one each in the \$25,000 to \$49,999; \$50,000 to \$74,999; and \$150,000 to \$174,999 ranges.

The next subtheme was other; with five participants (5.95%) noting their companies had other ways of promoting religious accommodation. Though these respondents did not specify what those actions were, they were primarily within the annual income bracket of \$25,000 to \$49,000; between the ages of 45 and 59 (3 out of 5); and were split between men ($n = 3$) and women ($n = 2$).

The final subtheme was new management. Four respondents (4.76%) described their companies as acquiring new management as a way to promote religious accommodation. One participant stated she “had received a new manager and within 2 weeks he went over the company’s religious accommodation policy with all workers in her section.” Three of the four respondents were male and between the ages of 18 and 29. Within the brackets of annual income, two were below \$25,000; one was in the mid-range (\$50,000 to \$74,999); and one was in the higher end (\$200,000 and above).

Question 4

Major Theme 4: Religious Manifestations

The final theme that emerged from the data was religious manifestations; this provided a description of the ways in which the participants felt it was appropriate or inappropriate for Muslims to express their religion while at work. Figure 6 presents the distribution of the responses.

Appropriate Expression of Religion at Work

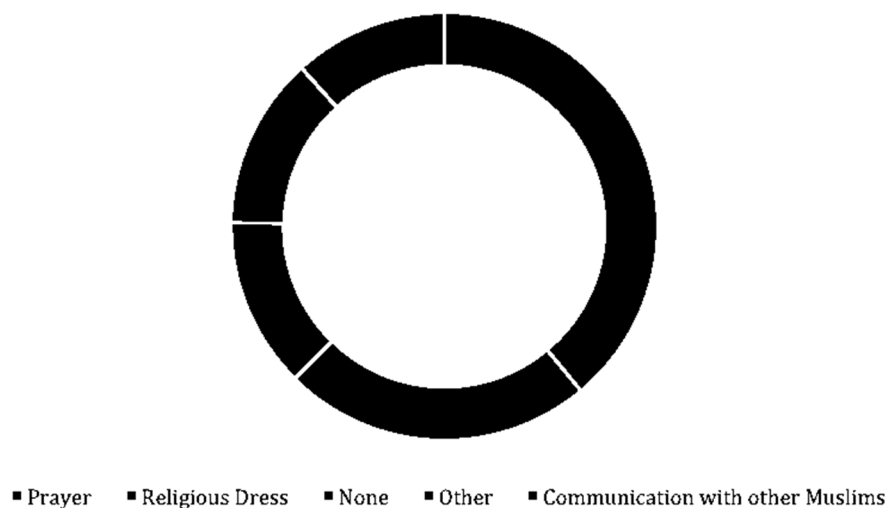


Figure 6. Appropriate expression of religion at work.

Within this theme there were five subthemes, the first of which was prayer. Thirty participants (35%) answered that prayer was an appropriate expression of their religion at work. Of these respondents, the majority were men (70%). In addition, 33.3% were between the ages of 45 and 59, 30% were 60 or older, and 16.6% were between the ages of 18 and 29 and 30 and 44. Within the demographic of annual income, 40% made under \$25,000 and 33.3% earned between \$25,000 and \$99,999.

The second subtheme was religious dress, which garnered 18 participants (21.4%). This subtheme was equally divided between men and women, but was dominated by those participants over the age of 60 (55.5%), with the remainder of the respondents falling evenly among the age brackets. Moreover, 27% of the participants in

this category earned between \$25,000 and \$49,999 annually, with about 15% of the participants below that income bracket.

10 participants (11.9%) responded that there was no expression of religion for Muslims that was appropriate in the workplace. Most of these participants were between the ages of 30 and 44 (40%) and 45 and 59 (40%), as well as making under \$25,000 (50%). However, the respondents were evenly divided by gender, with men and women equally believing there was no form of appropriate expression of religion at work.

The same number of participants (i.e., $n = 10$; 11.9%) chose other options for appropriate forms of religious expression at work. The majority answered that the appropriate form should be demonstrated as a personal freedom of expression. As one participant stated, "People should express their religion at work . . . in any way that is necessary to fulfill their beliefs." One participant stated, "They are free to express their religion in all ways." Another respondent agreed, saying it was appropriate to express religion "any way they wish or no way at all," leaving the decision up to the individual. Another respondent took an all-of-the-above approach, saying it was appropriate to express one's religion in "all ways possible, which includes prayer times and places, attire, month of fasts and religious holidays, as well as communication with other Muslims." Yet another participant offered a definition of appropriate religious workplace expression, saying it can be communicated, "In their mannerism, dress, in peace, kindness, and respect for all religions and people." Finally, one other respondent

disagreed with the label “appropriate” *prima facie*, saying, “I don’t think it is right to define/label someone’s religious preferences/practices as ‘it is appropriate or inappropriate,’” adding that whatever form of expression one chooses to take, “as long as it doesn’t disturb/disrespect another’s right to practice his/her religion,” is the correct framework. These participants were evenly split in every demographic category, spanning all age ranges, genders, and annual household incomes.

The final subtheme was communication with other Muslims, which nine participants (10.7%) described as an appropriate expression of religion in the workplace. Similar to the previous subtheme, the participants were divided, particularly with regard to gender (five women and four men) and age (with a slightly higher number of those aged 60 and above citing communication). However, the majority of the participants (55.5%) had a household annual income of below \$50,000.

Summary

Four main themes emerged from the survey of Muslims regarding workplace religious accommodation: religion, communication, modifications, and religious manifestations. Within the first theme of religion, participants discussed the ways in which their employers provided religious accommodation. The most frequent response, which was cited by 28 people, was that their companies had no religious accommodation policy. The second most popular subtheme was company policy, with 22 respondents (26%). The third subtheme was diversity, which was cited by 14 participants (16.8%),

and the fourth subtheme was other, with five participants (6%) noting their companies had different means of providing religious accommodation without specifically describing those other accommodation. The fifth subtheme was media, with five respondents (6%), and finally, the sixth subtheme was bulletins, with only three participants (3.6%).

The second major theme that emerged from the results was communication, which related to how companies communicated their religious accommodation policy to employees. The majority of the respondents ($n = 42$; 51.8%) noted management communicated religious accommodation in their companies. The second most popular subtheme within communication was pamphlet, with only 16 (19.75%) respondents citing this mode of communication, and the third subtheme was bulletin board, with 13 respondents (16%). The final subcategory within this theme was media, with 10 participants (12.3%).

The third major theme that emerged from the data was modifications, which explored the specific actions the participants' companies had taken to promote religious accommodation. The largest proportion of participants was in the first subtheme, which was none; 48 participants believed their employers took no actions toward promoting religious accommodation in the workplace. Yet, 27 participants (31.1%) cited the second subtheme, wherein they described how their companies emphasized diversity in an effort to promote religious accommodation. The third subtheme was change in company policy,

which was described by seven participants (8.3%), and the fourth subtheme was other, with five participants (5.95%) responding that their companies had other ways of promoting religious accommodation without specifying how they did so. The final subtheme was new management. Four respondents (4.76%) described their companies as acquiring new management as a way to promote religious accommodation.

The final theme that emerged from the data was religious manifestations, which reflected the ways participants felt were appropriate for Muslims to express their religion while at work. Thirty people (35%) said prayer, the first subtheme, was an appropriate expression of religion at work. The second subtheme was religious dress, which garnered 18 participants (21.4%). Ten participants (11.9%) cited that there was no expression of religion for Muslims that was appropriate in the workplace, which was the third subtheme. Another 10 participants (11.9%) chose other options for appropriate forms of religious expression at work. The majority of those who offered specifics of that appropriate form described a personal freedom of expression. The final subtheme was communication with other Muslims, which nine participants (10.7%) described as an appropriate expression of religion in the workplace; this is discussed further in the next chapter. Through the online survey and NVivo coding, I identified and reported Muslims' perceptions concerning religious accommodation in the workplace.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

U.S. law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or natural origin. Despite this legislation, the number of religious-based cases has increased in the past 10 years (EEOC, 2015b). The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions of Muslims regarding religious accommodation in the workplace. Results include the participants' feelings and thoughts about the issues Muslims face in relation to religious accommodation in the workplace. The political theories of pluralism and religious pluralism were employed as the theoretical framework for the study.

Results of the literature review and survey revealed four major themes: religion, communication, modifications, and religious manifestations. The first major theme, religion, reflected participants' perceptions of the ways their employers provided religious accommodation to employees. The second major theme, communication, means how employers communicated their religious accommodation policies to employees. The third major theme, modifications, means the specific actions companies take to promote religious accommodation in the workplace. This included changes in company policy, new management, and emphasis on diversity. The fourth major theme, religious manifestations, means the ways in which the participants felt it was appropriate to express their religion in the workplace.

Results of this study contribute to the literature on the lived experiences of Muslims in the workplace. When Muslims experience religious discrimination and file

complaints in court, their plights are often ignored by their employers and those in the legal system (Kaltner, 2003). There is a gap in the literature related to the social realities of Muslims and their experiences of religious accommodation in the workplace. The lack of empirical evidence indicates the experiences of religious groups such as Muslims have not been extensively researched, and there are not enough policies and programs available to sufficiently address their religious needs in order for them to embrace a quality work life experience. By exploring the perceptions of Muslims, this study provided an avenue to open up a dialogue between employers and employees. In addition, the results support that certain changes in policy and company laws must be undertaken to ensure Muslims' religious beliefs are accommodated and their complaints concerning religious discrimination are heard in their places of employment. In the next section, I cover the results of this research with support from the existing literature concerning religious accommodation in the workplace.

Interpretation of the Findings

It is important to understand the findings in the context of the literature and the theoretical framework. The first three major themes, religion, communication, and modifications all described how Muslim employees perceived the actions their companies had taken to ensure religious accommodation. The last major theme, religious manifestations, pertained to the perceptions of Muslims in terms of their religious expression in the workplace. In this section, each theme is discussed within the broader

literature, after which the results are interpreted within the limitations of the current study. Recommendations for future studies are also discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary of the results of the study and their theoretical and practical implications for social and policy changes with regard to religious accommodation.

Perception on Religious Accommodation in the Workplace

There were six ways through which companies demonstrated their religious accommodation policy: company policy, diversity, bulletins, or media. Out of the six subthemes, many of the participants expressed that there was little or no effort by their employers to provide religious accommodation. Muslims still face the challenge of expressing their religious freedom in the workplace (Mutjaba & Cavico, 2012).

All of the participants who answered none were 30 years and above and came from the lower income bracket. This shows that perceptions of religion vary among social classes because the status of one's social class and religion can serve to influence their perceptions on religious accommodation. However, there is a lack of literature on the different perspectives of religious accommodation based on Muslims' social experience in the workplace, and their need for more studies on the perspectives of religious accommodation.

Although many participants reported there were no religious accommodation policies in their workplaces, several perceived their companies were open to the idea. These data lend support to the belief that there are still companies that place emphasis on

protecting the civil liberties of their religious employees (Brougher, 2011), despite the prevalence of discrimination against Muslims in the workplace. There must be a realization that conflicts will arise when the employer does not accommodate employees' religions. The EEOC has put out religious accommodation guidelines that employers can implement to ensure they are following the law (Brougher, 2011). Which emphasizes the importance and institutionalization of religious accommodation in the workplace by integrating and implementing religious accommodation policies.

The expectations of employers and employees must be managed when it comes to conflict, as there is a contractual agreement when the employee agrees to work for the business organization (Little, 2011). It is important for both parties to be able to communicate clearly with each other so a mutual understanding can be reached, especially when it comes to a topic as volatile as religion.

Religious diversity is the newest and most prevalent type of phenomenon in the United States (Von Bergen, 2013). Allowing diversity in the workplace also entails accomplishing social objectives and maintaining harmonious relationships (Nikiforova, 2008). If pluralism is to be achieved, there must be a stance of acceptance on both sides.

It is important for company leaders to communicate how they are going to promote religious accommodation in the workplace. Results revealed pamphlets, media, bulletin boards, management, and other forms of communication were used to communicate religious accommodation policies to employees. Out of these findings

several participants reported management was responsible for communicating religious accommodation to employees. This reflects that organizations are ordered by law not to discriminate against their religious employees once they have been hired (Brougher, 2011). Employers and their management teams are tasked with initiating and implementing preventative measures toward limiting the number of religious discrimination suits in the workplace (Mutjaba & Cavico, 2012; Ruan, 2008; Zaheer, 2007). Though pamphlets, bulletin boards, and the media may promote religious accommodation, it is still management's responsibility to become better educated when it comes to the religion of Muslims and other religious employees.

The literature review and research support the idea that a democratic environment sees its constituents as critical in ensuring diversity (Morgan, 2015a), especially in the workplace. It was quite interesting to see management as a subtheme in relation to company policy, as management are the key people who are able to directly influence the workplace environment. If an employee's religious needs cannot be accommodated, it must be communicated to management (Brougher, 2011). Despite this, employees continue to face challenges that are rooted in the legislation related to employment. For example, though employers are required to address religious accommodation, the employee must still prove that such accommodation do not bring an undue hardship on the financial portfolio of the business organization (Blair, 2010). Not every case of religious discrimination can be filed against businesses that do not meet the minimum

personnel requirements (Brougher, 2011). This can be abused by employers, and perhaps the prevalence of the perception that employers are not taking specific actions related to religious accommodation may be hinged on the notion that the law takes into account the financial impact of a company when it comes to providing religious accommodation for an employee, such as the case of *TWA v. Hardison* who wanted to change his shift in order to honor his religious holy day. To summarize, the participants had varying perceptions of religious accommodation in the workplace. However, despite the provisions set by law, many still reported they were not aware of how their employers promoted religious accommodation in the workplace. The next subsection includes a discussion of the specific actions undertaken by employers for their employees to be able to freely express their religious beliefs in the workplace.

Perceptions of Employers' Actions on Religious Accommodation

The third major theme, modifications, reflected the actions undertaken by employers to ensure employees were able to freely express their religious practices and beliefs in the workplace without the fear of discrimination and stereotypes. Most of the participants reported their employers had not made any effort to provide religious accommodation in the workplace. This may be related to the first major theme, in which several participants reported they did not see any evidence of their employers demonstrating support for religious accommodation. Unfortunately, this is the case in many other companies. It is still believed that Title VII and the EEOC are not enough to

address the lack of religious accommodation in the workplace (Dhillon, 2011; Gutman & Dunleavy, 2013). Thus, stronger guidelines are required concerning religious accommodation (Kaminer, 2009).

Despite this, participants still expressed that diversity is an instrument that demonstrates a company agrees to religious accommodation. This shows how the central idea of pluralism is something that must be emphasized, through which opposing interests are negotiated with one another within a democratic society (Bernstein, 1987). In addition, diversity in the workplace shows how pluralism is intimately associated with freedom, common ground, understanding, and consent (Adams, 2006). Anyone should be able to bring his or her religion to work without fear of retribution. Religious pluralism is more than an ideology or an instrument that allows different religions to actively engage each other and remove the wall of separation that was constructed because of indifference to religious differences (Karuvilil, 2012).

Results showed another way to promote religious accommodation is through changes in company policies. This implies that companies must accommodate employees by implementing policies that can freely provide avenues to express and practice religion. Companies that have these policies in place are helping to reduce the number of religious discrimination claims filed by employees (Malos, 2009). Changes in workplace policies related to religious accommodation are vital in reducing discrimination against Muslims (Malos, 2009). This relates to the next subtheme, new management, which showed

acquiring and integrating policies to promote religious accommodation must also involve a change in management.

Religious Manifestations in the Workplace

The final major theme, religious manifestations, reflected the beliefs of the Muslim employees related to appropriate religious expression during working hours. This demonstrates how employees perceive their workplace environment with regard to how they should be able to freely express and practice their religious beliefs. Such practices included prayer, religious dress, and communication with other Muslims, others, and none. These practices are deemed appropriate in the workplace, which also questions and problematizes religious practices as dependent on the context and setting.

I found among the subthemes, that prayer was deemed the most appropriate form of religious expression in the workplace. The practice of prayer is commensurate with religious practices and protected by Title VII of the Civil Rights legislation of 1964, as are church attendance, the wearing of religious symbols and clothing, the display of sacred objects, a special diet, or refusal to engage in certain activities that are incompatible with one's religious beliefs (Fowler-Hermes & Gierbolini, 2014). This acceptance of prayer can be rooted in the idea that many religions define prayer as a moral code used as a means of communication with a higher being, and acceptance is related to the fact that many religions use the art of prayer to communicate with their respective gods (Ahmed, 2011).

The literature review and results of this research both revealed religious dress is also seen as an appropriate expression of belief despite there having been several cases of discrimination filed in this area (Pew Research Center, 2015b). Attitudes toward Muslims are affected by the way they dress; for example, the wearing of the headscarf by Muslim women while at work (Ghumman et al., 2013, p. 445) has been an issue for many. There are workplace dress policies that do not allow their employees to wear hijabs, headscarves, beards, or certain articles of religious clothing (Mutjaba & Cavico, 2012).

Interestingly enough, some participants believed in other forms of religious expression, described, as “any means to that is necessary to fulfill their beliefs.” Religions have strict codes, with guidelines pertaining to how their followers should express their beliefs. However, this subtheme entailed that expressing religious beliefs also involves a subjective position within the wider discourse. This shows employees have the right to fulfill their religious beliefs by practicing what they believe is necessary to express their religious beliefs while in the workplace.

Though limited, the literature and research showed there are several ways through which Muslims are able to express their religious practices in the workplace. However, the use of the word “appropriate” is quite interesting, as it denotes that other religious practices of Muslims may not be appropriate in the workplace after all. It is critical to understand how these practices are seen as appropriate, whereas others may be inappropriate. This reflects that religion is also seen as a lifestyle and personal preference

(Kamenev, 2009) that is subject to society's standards of what is correct and what is not depending on the context.

Holistically, religious manifestations in the workplace reflect how employees should express their religious practices. The participants in this study believed prayer, religious dress, and communication with other Muslims, and personal preferences were appropriate religious manifestations at work. However one participant stated, "Religious expression is inappropriate for the work environment." Which demonstrates that there is a disagreement among Muslims concerning religious expression as to what is appropriate in the workplace. It is apparent that the work setting infringes upon Muslims' freedom of religious expression, and, as such, there are practices and expressions that are acceptable in the workplace.

Limitations

The results must be interpreted in light of the study's limitations. Despite the richness of the findings, the study lacked nuance in terms of the underlying meanings of themes and subthemes. This can be traced back to the survey as the research instrument. Though the questions were open-ended, the use of a survey did not take into account how the participants created these meanings. Thus, it was difficult to contextualize the major themes within the lived experiences of the participants.

Another major limitation was the research design, which was interpretive phenomenological analysis. The conceptual fit of the survey method and phenomenology

was challenged because phenomenology, in its essence, is the study of the nature of the phenomenon. This also includes vision, emotions, and moods concerning the lived experiences (Brooke, 2015). Though the survey method is appropriate, especially for gathering a huge amount of data, a phenomenological analysis deals with quality and depth of descriptions (Brooke, 2015). In essence, understanding the explicit connections among themes is not strength of phenomenological analysis. Further studies are suggested to look into the salient relationships of these themes and categories. Thus, using a survey for this qualitative phenomenological study limited the complexity of subjective meaning of the participants' perspectives involved in the study.

Another issue is the generalizability of the topic. Phenomenological analysis often involves looking for and understanding the unique patterns and themes that are specific to the demographics being studied. On this premise, the results of this study may not be suitable for other contexts. Results are, however, very useful in identifying and reporting the experiences of Muslims in the workplace. Understanding these social realities involves looking into the core themes and categories of these experiences, thus removing its viability to be applied in different contexts. To address this limitation, another research design may be employed to further the understanding of the experiences in this context.

For instance, future researchers can employ discourse psychology or another qualitative design to further explore the underlying meanings and power relations within

this context. Religion is political (Cunningham et al., 2011). Pluralism allows nongovernmental actors to participate in a democracy and exert influence on the government. It is a common notion that every group's choices are different and the decision that brings them to a general consensus is achieved by realizing that their organization will incur political losses along the way in order to achieve their desired goal (Baggini, 2015). Thus, nuancing how capitalistic power plays into this context is critical in understanding the underlying issues of religious accommodation in the workplace.

Another issue related to the research design is the lack of salient relationships within the major themes and subthemes. Though this phenomenological analysis was able to reveal patterns and categories, it is still important to understand how these variables are related. To address this, future researchers can employ quantitative research designs. For example, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) may help reveal how different religious groups experience religious accommodation in the workplace. Similarities and disparities may be revealed using quantitative analysis.

Recommendations

Based on the results and limitations of the study, it is recommended that future studies focus on developing the research design when exploring the lived experiences of Muslims in the workplace. This can be done by future researchers conducting interviews, as well as using focus groups and telephone surveys. Religion continues to keep its

foothold in the United States and remains just as strong as spirituality (Pew Research Center, 2015b). Thus, it is critical to understand how religious groups perceive their surroundings versus their personal and religious beliefs. Doing so can open up communication between Muslims and their employers and could prove beneficial to the work environment. Using another qualitative design, such as discursive analysis, will contribute to a deeper and more insightful understanding of how Muslims create meanings within the broader contexts of religion and politics.

Moreover, it is important to understand how different variables influence the perceptions and experiences of Muslims. Thus, it is recommended that researchers further explore the different variables and factors that influence the beliefs of Muslims in the workplace. Results have already shown that management, policies, and fellow Muslims are critical in their meaning-making processes with regard to religious accommodation. Quantitative designs such as ANOVA would be appropriate for this type of study. Understanding how these themes are related to one another will contribute to a more nuanced context of the lived experiences of Muslims in the workplace.

In relation to policies, changes to existing legislation are warranted. Based on the results, it was revealed that company management and policies are vital in how Muslims are able to freely express their religious beliefs at work. The literature also showed there are still many cases of discrimination based on the person's religion and religious practices. It is tantamount, then, for policymakers in the government and in the company

to promote religious accommodation by making changes in policies and laws that protect the civil rights of workers. The law requires employers to treat their religious employees differently than nonreligious coworkers (Dhillon, 2011). In other words, the law is granting privilege to religious employees because of their religion. This has been a repeated theme throughout the literature. When a religious group welcomes diversity but underneath wants the diverse group to become more like themselves (Hutchinson, 2003), this can be a potential problem within places where Muslims work. To address this, it is vital for future researchers to look for avenues through which Muslims, as well as other minority groups, can freely express themselves without the danger of discrimination. Case studies focusing on policies may be the best choice for this type of study.

Recommendations for future studies also include focusing on developing a more appropriate method, such as an interview, for this kind of study. It is further recommended that there be more studies using the theory of spiritual intelligence.

Spiritual intelligence is defined as an individual's beliefs, knowledge, "skills and abilities and behaviors we need to balance the experience of expansive love with discipline and responsibility" (Miller, 2008, p. 139). Vaughn (2002) viewed spiritual intelligence as the way in which an individual relates to his or her inner self and the outer world. Spiritual intelligence provides the individual with different ways of understanding life issues, because not all issues involving human beings can be explained the same way (Vaughn,

2002). Spiritual intelligence assists people when they have to decide on what course of action to take within their daily life (Vaughn, 2002).

Spiritual intelligence is not automatic but grows and matures as the person experiences life's challenges and changes, which are the catalysts required for the spiritual growth that leads to an increased awareness of the transpersonal self that allows the person to reach outside of his or her inner world to those in the external world (Vaughn, 2002). It relates to a spiritual connection with a higher being or beings and fellow human beings with whom the person externally engages (i.e., outside of his or her inner-person; Vaughn, 2002). Using the theory of spiritual intelligence could enhance the literature on Muslims and their ideals and perspectives in their lived experiences as religious employees in the workplace.

Moreover, future scholars should look into the different factors that influence religious expression in the workplace and identify the moderating and predictive variables that affect the religious accommodation experienced by Muslims at work. In particular, it would be interesting to explore the coping mechanisms of Muslims when faced with discriminatory remarks or gestures. It is beneficial to understand how Muslims reconcile their experiences among the large-scale discrimination against them. Doing so will help practitioners, researchers, and social workers further contextualize the lived experiences and Emotional Intelligence of Muslims in the workplace.

Emotional intelligence (EI) began to emerge as a theory more than forty years ago (Brackett, Rivers & Salovey, 2011). Theorists such as Bower, Shalke, Clark, and Zajonc inspired the academic world to investigate this new phenomenon (1980). However its popularity did not arrive until the writings of Goleman in 1995 in a book titled *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Goleman's view was that the individual must possess the personal skills of personal confidence; political acumen; mobility; and be intimately conscientiousness of themselves and those around them (Brackett, Rivers and Salovey, 2011).

What is emotional intelligence?

Emotional intelligence is simply defined as the management of one's emotions. It helps individuals' to develop a keen awareness of their own emotions such as anger, hatred, fear, disappointment, and love. Moreover it makes an individual intimately aware of who they are and the causes that trigger these types of emotions (Brackett, Rivers, and Salovey, 2011). Once an individual has successfully accomplished the management of their own emotions, with further development they can develop the skill that gives them the ability to recognize the emotions of others and how to react to them in an appropriate manner thereby meeting the emotional needs of those around them. EI can be further defined as altruistic behavior; that is not influenced by monetary gain. Only by the emotionally intelligent person's desire to voluntarily improve the welfare of those outside of them (Huang, Shi, & Liu, 2018).

According to Wong and Law Emotional intelligence is comprised of a set of skills, that when combined together they can accurately detect the emotions of those external to themselves along with the ability to see another's viewpoint. This is important for them to maintain control of their individual emotions and perceive the emotions of those who they wish to help (Wong & Law, 2002). According to Brackett, Rivers & Salovey, 2011 when management fails to implement Emotional intelligence in the workplace both parties are losing the mutual benefits of a productive workplace. Because the workplace environment is the place where, employees are able to exchange their job duties for individual rewards that serve to enhance both the employer and employee in meeting the organizational objectives (2002). For example, if a company such as General Mills recognizes their Muslim employees' religious practice of Ramadan and later find out that that their labor production has increased, which can turn out to be a win-win situation for both the employer and employee (Wong & Law, 2002). Nevertheless, it is important that organizations recognize the aspects of jobs that require the usage of their employee's emotions i.e. the amount of emotional labor that is needed for the proper execution of the employee's assigned job duties (2002). Which is defined as the employees' regulation of their emotional needs in order to meet the organization's objectives (Wong & Law, 2002).

Therefore it is important for companies to develop EI training programs for their personnel. Because Emotional intelligence plays a pivotal role in promoting the

employees' health, and well-being during the execution of their individual and collective job assignments (Lopez, Extremera, and Ray, 2017). Once emotional intelligence has been implemented into the organization, it can serve as a deterrent, to the increasing amount of workplace violence in America (Meires, 2018). Additionally, I would like to recommend that more research be conducted concerning the Emotional intelligence of Muslim employees in the United States.

New Information

The findings revealed that among the 84 participants none of them commented or mentioned that they had filed a religious accommodation complaint against their employers'. Which can be interpreted in the following ways: they are fearful of losing their jobs or they are not aware of their legal rights as employees. Since they appear to be willing to suffer in silence until there has been a change in the company's policy toward their religious practices in the workplace environment. This is in stark contrast to the literature review where a number of employees have filed religious discrimination suits even when facing potential job loss and termination since many of the religious discrimination lawsuits have been filed by Muslims (Ghumman, Ryan, Barclay, & Markel, 2013).

On the question of religious expression, many felt that having the opportunity to pray was more important than the wearing of religious clothing. One respondent said, "religious expression was inappropriate for the workplace environment." This finding

reveals that some are developing a different attitude and way of thinking toward religion and their place of work. Perhaps living in the West could be due to Muslims influencing this. Another finding was that those companies who fail to facilitate a positive workplace environment that meets the religious needs of their employees are missing the benefits of positively motivated employees who are happy to work and develop new ideas and processes that can be mutually benefitting to both the employer and employee (Wong & Law, 2002). Finally there were a number of Muslims who were really interested in diversity and stated “when a company has diversity as a part of its management policies the workplace environment was better for all employees within their company.”

Implications

The results of this research provide information that can serve to positively affect social change within society by employers and employees engaging in open yet meaningful dialogue. The present study contributes to the literature on the lived experiences of Muslims in the workplace. Particularly, the results revealed how Muslims understand their experiences at work. The uniqueness of this reality poses a challenge to policymakers and legislators. The findings provided empirical data to help improve the quality of life of Muslims. This aspect has not been sufficiently studied, as most studies focused on the discrimination faced by Muslims, and not so much on how to protect Muslims from such situations.

The current study involved exploring the experiences and perspectives of Muslim workers. The findings help provide a foundation for positive social change by improving and finding ways to meet the needs of minority groups in the workplace. For example, human resources personnel may be able to use this information in developing and strengthening company programs and policies to support religious minorities. Organizationally, this will improve the experiences of Muslims in the workplace, and may also result in optimal organizational outcomes.

The social change implications for scholars, practitioners, and leaders are that the findings offered insight on the importance of good management and communication within an organization to ensure religious accommodation. The results may contribute to the promotion and development of plans to educate personnel on religious accommodation, as well as to improve company policies with regard to the rights of individuals to express their beliefs without the danger of persecution. These implications may also help leaders in strategic planning to create and maintain an environment that is free of discrimination based on religion. Although there are still many aspects to explore, this study provided a more concrete understanding of which areas must be addressed to achieve optimal outcomes. Finally, the results of this study can promote positive social change by encouraging employers to improve upon their company policies and open up a dialogue with employees concerning religious accommodation that ends with positive

results by leaders and policymakers who can make the needed changes that will help protect Muslims and other minority religious groups in American society.

Conclusions

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to investigate Muslims' perceptions of religious accommodation in the workplace. Conclusions of this study were the following. Employees perceived there was a severe lack of promotion of religious accommodation by companies; 52% communicated that management communicated the policies and 48% voiced that their companies failed to take any action toward providing any type of religious accommodation. When it came to religious expression, the findings showed that prayer too many Muslims was the most important form of religious expression in the workplace. Pluralism emerged in this research investigation through participants' responses to the following questions: In what ways does your company provide religious accommodation to their employees? How does your company communicate its religious accommodation policy to employees? What actions have your company taken that promotes religious accommodation? In what ways do you think that Muslims should express their religion while at work?

Although pluralism and religious pluralism served as the theoretical framework for this study, pluralism stands out more in the data and the results for the following reasons. Muslims perceived their companies were not conducting themselves favorably toward their religion. In each case, one needs to look at Muslims as nongovernmental

actors, which supports the theory of pluralism as the primary component of the framework for this research investigation. In other findings, management did communicate their religious accommodation policies to employees, which supports religious pluralism among those of different religions. The literature revealed companies are not religious entities but can be proponents of religion for their employees while at work through internal policies that promote religious accommodation. In some instances, some companies did not recognize the Islamic religion, but on the other hand some employees perceived that their companies had recognized the religion of Islam through diversity, communication, management, and bulletins who were willing to work with their Muslim employees.

More importantly, this study allowed the 84 Muslims who took the survey to freely express their perceptions on the treatment they were receiving as Muslim employees in the workplace. According to the results, several respondents to the online survey perceived that their companies were severely lacking in the promotion and provision of religious accommodation for employees. This supports the problem that although as a religious group many Muslims do not voice their rights in the workplace, their thoughts and perceptions are strongly influenced by their employers' treatment of them as employees. For example, one participant who worked for a Muslim nonprofit stated religious accommodation was a "non-issue but as I before stated that this is not the experience for those who work in non-Muslim organizations." The literature revealed

Muslims are a nongovernment actor to be reckoned with because they will soon be the largest minority religion in the United States that has grown at an astonishing rate (Pew, 2015).

A strong indicator of pluralism is when a company recognizes Muslim employees as nongovernment actors whose religion should be respected within the management of their organization. Another 20% responded that their companies communicated to them through written pamphlets. Essentially, two groups were communicating with each other, which is an important demonstration of pluralism at work within an organization.

Another indicator of pluralism was that 31% of the participants reported their companies promoted diversity in the workplace. Another 4.7% reported their companies were promoting religious accommodation through new management. All of the above findings validate the emergence of pluralism in the findings of the research investigation.

Pluralism also calls for the respect of Muslims as nongovernment actors. This can be further interpreted that companies may believe they are proponents of both pluralism and religious pluralism because they have Muslim employees. However, they must accomplish more than the hiring of Muslims as employees, they also must ensure these employees are treated equally according to the dictates of Title VII, which supports their right to religious accommodation in the workplace. In order for pluralism and religious pluralism to be implemented, there must be successful communication between parties; in this case, Muslim employees and their non-Muslim employers. The Muslim participants'

perceptions provide a greater understanding of their attitudes toward religious accommodation. The current study was driven by the need to address the gap in the literature related to Muslim issues and perceptions concerning religious accommodation.

Four themes emerged in this study: religion, communication, modifications, and religious manifestations. The first three major themes described how the efforts and actions of company leaders were perceived within the context of religious accommodation. Diversity, management, and company policies are critical in how Muslims perceive religious accommodation in the workplace. The final major theme, religious manifestations, constituted the beliefs of the participants regarding the appropriate expression of religious beliefs in a work setting. Despite efforts to increase religious accommodation, there are still outside forces that impinge upon Muslims' ability to freely express their beliefs. Thus, it is vital for policymakers and legislators to address this by institutionalizing religious accommodation in the workplace. It is also recommended that further studies focus on understanding the relationships of the major themes with regard to the perceptions of Muslims concerning religious accommodation in the workplace.

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Appendix A: Survey

1. In what ways does your company provide religious accommodation to employees?
2. How does your company communicate its religious accommodation policy to employees?
3. What actions have your company taken that promotes religious accommodation?
4. In what ways do you feel it is appropriate for Muslim to express their religion while at work?

Appendix B: Demographics

- * What is your age?
- * What is your gender?
- * How much total combined money did all members of your household earn last year?
- * U.S. Region?

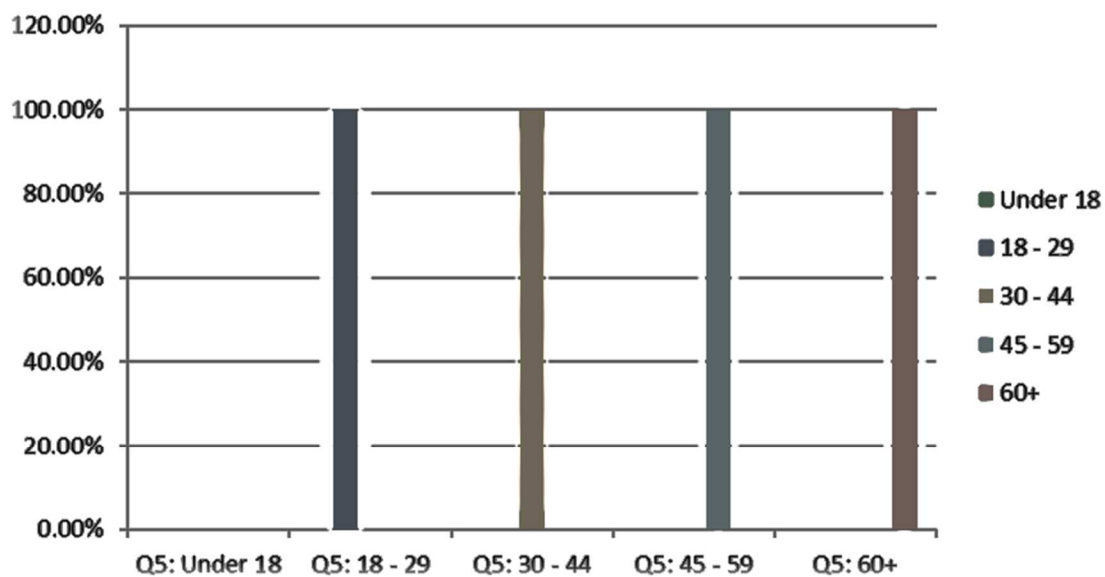
What is your age?

| | 18 - 29 | | 30 - 44 | | 45 - 59 | | 60+ | |
|--------------|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|
| Q5: Under 18 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 |
| Q5: 18 – 29 | 100.00% | 10 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 |
| Q5: 30 – 44 | 0.00% | 0 | 100.00% | 17 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 |
| Q5: 45 – 59 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 100.00% | 25 | 0.00% | 0 |
| Q5: 60+ | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 100.00% | 32 |
| Total | 11.90% | 10 | 20.24% | 17 | 29.76% | 25 | 38.10% | 32 |

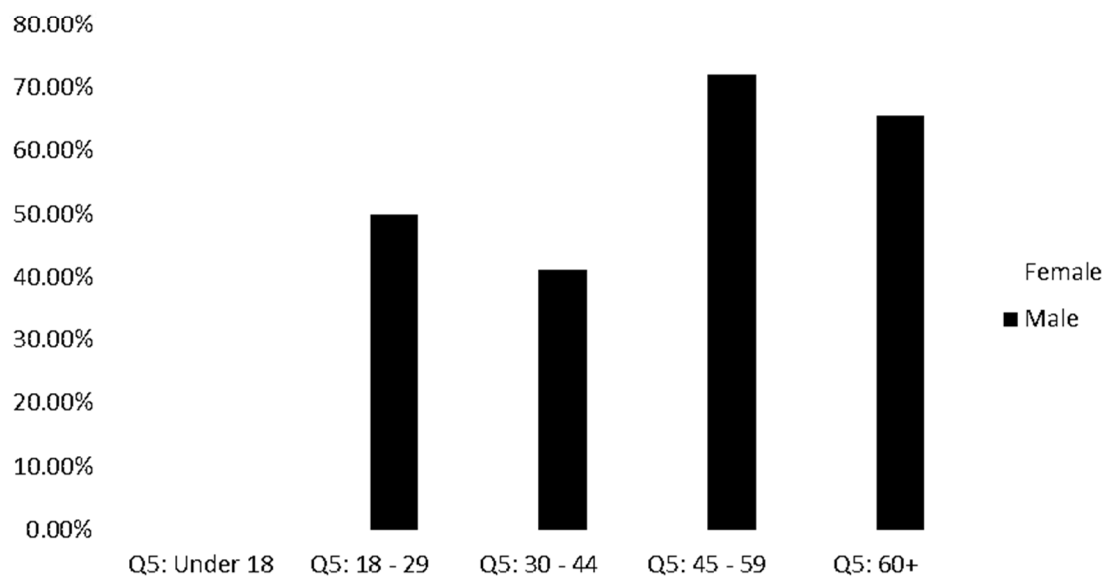
Answered 84

Skipped 0

What is your age?

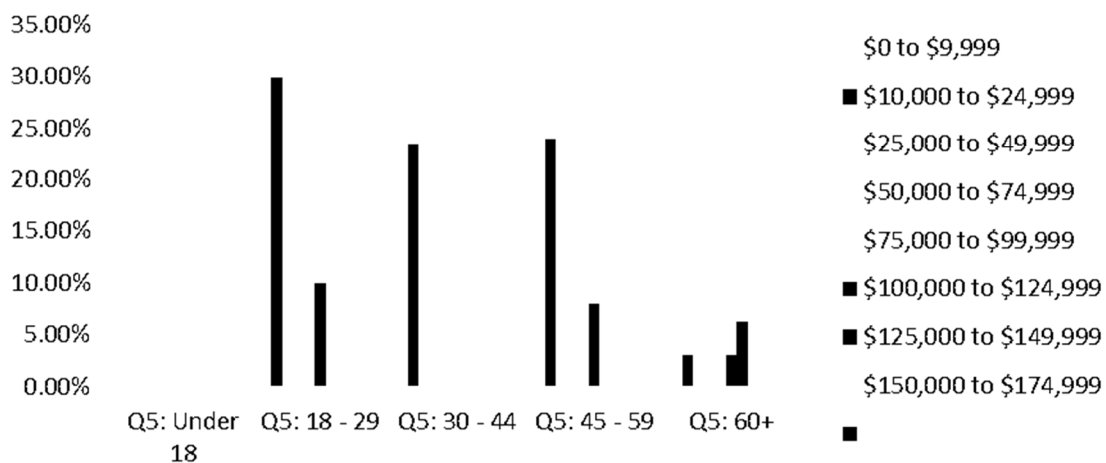


What is your gender?



| \$175,000 to \$199,999 | | \$200,000 and up | | Prefer not to answer | | Total | | |
|------------------------|---|------------------|---|----------------------|----|---------|-----------------|-----------|
| 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | |
| 0.00% | 0 | 10.00% | 1 | 0.00% | 0 | 11.90% | 10 | |
| 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 29.41% | 5 | 20.24% | 17 | |
| 0.00% | 0 | 4.00% | 1 | 20.00% | 5 | 29.76% | 25 | |
| 0.00% | 0 | 15.63% | 5 | 18.75% | 6 | 38.10% | 32 | |
| 0.00% | 0 | 8.33% | 7 | 19.05% | 16 | 100.00% | 84 | |
| | | | | | | | Answered | 84 |
| | | | | | | | Skipped | 0 |

How much total combined money did all members of your HOUSEHOLD earn last year?



US Region

| | New England | | Middle Atlantic | | East North Central | |
|--------------|-------------|---|-----------------|----|--------------------|----|
| Q5: Under 18 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 |
| Q5: 18 - 29 | 12.50% | 1 | 25.00% | 2 | 0.00% | 0 |
| Q5: 30 - 44 | 0.00% | 0 | 28.57% | 4 | 35.71% | 5 |
| Q5: 45 - 59 | 4.55% | 1 | 22.73% | 5 | 22.73% | 5 |
| Q5: 60+ | 0.00% | 0 | 13.33% | 4 | 10.00% | 3 |
| Total | 2.70% | 2 | 20.27% | 15 | 17.57% | 13 |

| West North Central | | South Atlantic | | East South Central | | West South Central | |
|--------------------|---|----------------|----|--------------------|---|--------------------|---|
| 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 |
| 0.00% | 0 | 12.50% | 1 | 0.00% | 0 | 12.50% | 1 |
| 0.00% | 0 | 7.14% | 1 | 7.14% | 1 | 14.29% | 2 |
| 0.00% | 0 | 4.55% | 1 | 9.09% | 2 | 4.55% | 1 |
| 6.67% | 2 | 33.33% | 10 | 0.00% | 0 | 10.00% | 3 |
| 2.70% | 2 | 17.57% | 13 | 4.05% | 3 | 9.46% | 7 |

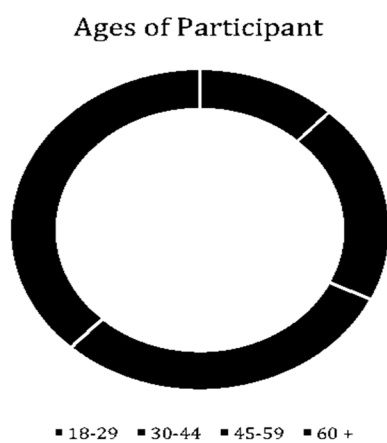


Figure 1. Ages of the participants who responded.

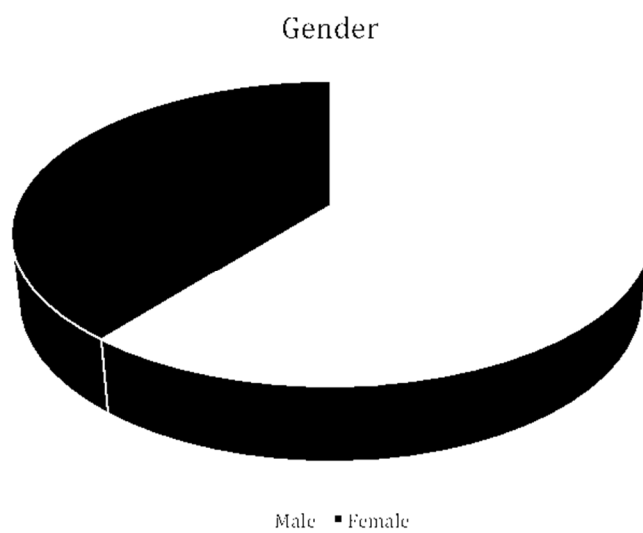


Figure 2. Gender of respondents.

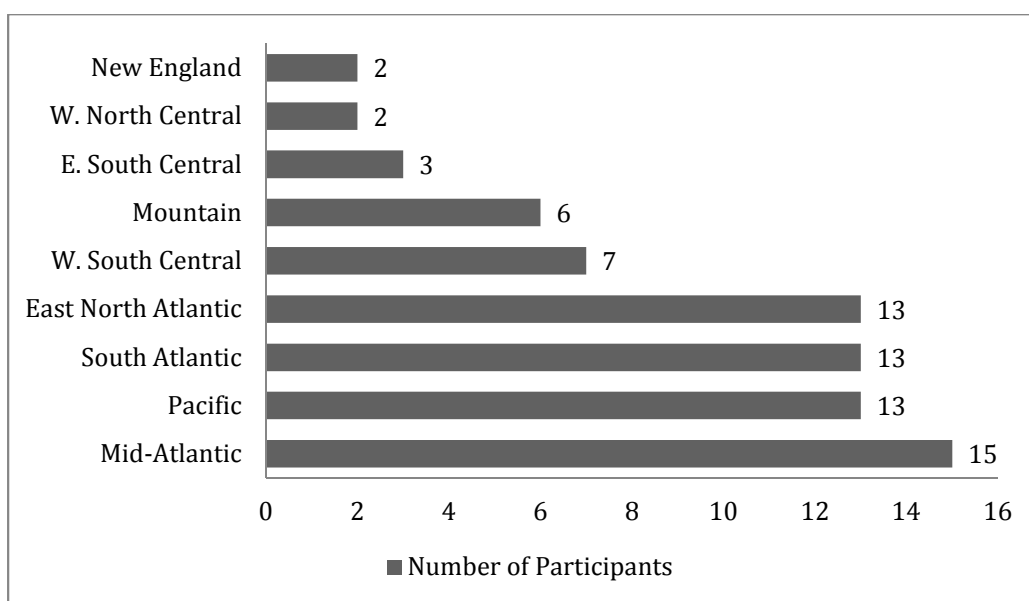


Figure 3. Geographic locale of respondents.

Q1 In what ways does your company provide religious accommodations to their employees?

Answered: 63 Skipped: 1

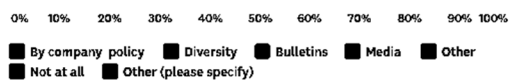


Figure 4. Religious accommodation provided by employers.

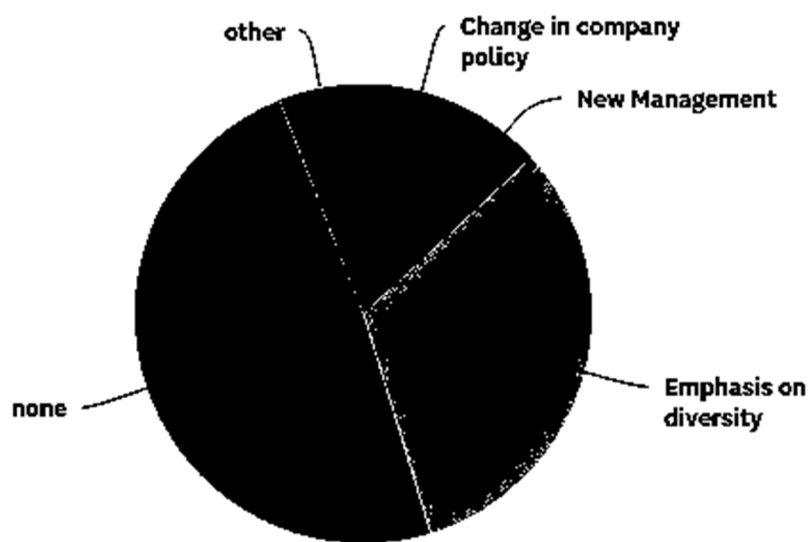
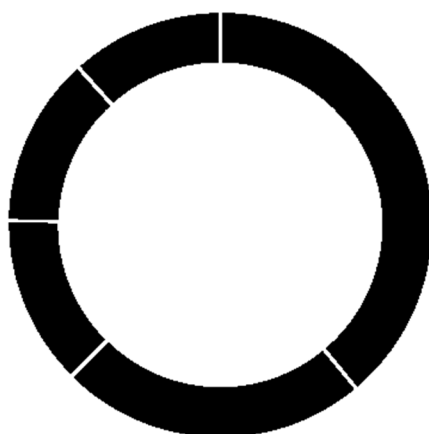


Figure 5. Accommodation of employers.

Appropriate Expression of Religion at Work



■ Prayer ■ Religious Dress ■ None ■ Other ■ Communication with other Muslims

Figure 6. Appropriate expression of religion at work.