MALAYSIAN MUSLIM WOMEN: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON PRINCIPAL VIRTUES OF TEMPERANCE AND NEED SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

This study was concerned with examining the framework of Al-Ghazali's philosophical virtues of temperance and Alderfer's theory of human needs as evident in the practices of Malaysian Muslim women. The study were conducted by a questionnaire with fifty employees at several job levels from a faculty. The questionnaire items were marked according to the respondent preferences. It is found that there is a significant correlation between Al-Ghazali's philosophical virtues of temperance and Alderfer's theory of need satisfaction (existence, relatedness, and growth). The result of the study post a potential contribution to women's studies. Al-Ghazali's classification of philosophical virtues in Islam and Alderfer's categorization of human needs can be established as alternative theories in understanding the priorities in women's needs.

Key words: Muslim women, virtues, theory, temperance, need satisfaction.

Introduction

Ghazali's (Fārābī, 1961) theory of philosophical virtues of temperance and Alderfer's (1969) theory of human needs has had a major influence on the thinking and research of many writers in the field of organizational behavior. Ghazali's theory deals with sets of philosophical virtues of temperance: modesty, shame, remission, patience, liberality, decent calculation, contentment, abstinence, cheerfulness, joy, tenderness of character, self-discipline, pleasant appearance, tranquility, honest dealing, righteous, indignation, and wit.

At a purely conceptual level, Ghazali's treatment of philosophic virtues reflects, to begin with, his acquaintance with philosophic ethics. Mohamed Ahmed Sherif (1975: 73) clarified explicitly that these virtues corresponded directly to the good habit which makes a man govern his natural appetite for pleasures of the senses in accordance with the norm prescribed by reason. Ghazali defines temperance as one of the principal virtues, which is based on the analysis of the faculties of the soul besides wisdom, courage, and justice. Justice brings about a harmony among the faculties of the soul, preparing the individual for immediate superior virtues. Because of this view of justice, Ghazali does not list any virtues under justice. This brief explanation is all that Ghazali has to say about justice. He devotes more explanation to other virtues, and thus he shows his disagreement with the philosophic tradition in which justice, especially in its social context, occupies a high spot (p.73). All other virtues enumerated by Ghazali are subordinated to these principal ones. They are assigned special places to play in the general hierarchy of virtues. Mohamed Ahmed Sherif (1975: 38) put forward Table 1 which describes Ghazali's divisions and subdivisions of the principal virtues. The table shows that Ghazali's version of these virtues matches to that of the philosophers in general and the Muslim philosophers in particular.

Alderfer's (1969: 145-147) theory of human needs assumes that a human being has three cores needs that he strives to meet. They include obtaining his material existence needs, maintaining his interpersonal relatedness with significant other people, and seeking opportunities for his unique personel development and growth. These needs (existence, relatedness, and growth) provide the basic elements in motivation. Often people express their wants in the form of complex goals, which may include mixtures of the fundamental needs.

At the most basic level, people have *existence* (E) needs which include all the various forms of material and physiological desires. Pay, fringe benefits, and physical working conditions are other types of existence needs. subsequently, we experience *relatedness* personel needs, where we fulfill our need for satisfying interpersonal relationships. We feel good about ourselves based on what others think about us. Relatedness needs include all the needs which involve relationships with significant other people. Family members are usually significant others, as are superiors, coworkers, subordinates, friends, and enemies. One of the basic characteristics of relatedness needs is that their satisfaction depends on a process of sharing or mutuality. As a final point, we reach the *growth* (G) needs level. At this point, we are looking for personel growth and development by doing work that is of high quality, meaningful, which involve a person making creative or productive effects on himself and the environment.

Satisfaction of growth needs comes from a person engaging problems, which call upon him to utilize his capacities entirely and may include requiring him to develop other capacities. Thus satisfaction of growth needs depends on a person unearthing the opportunities to be what he is most fully and to become what he be capable of.

Table 1: Ghazali's classification of philosophic virtues

Wisdom	Courage	Temperance	Justice
Discretion	Magnificence	Modesty	………….
Excellence of discernment	Intrepidity	Shame	………….
Penetration of thought	Greatness of soul	Remission	………….
Correctness of opinion (Awareness of subtle actions and of the hidden evils of the soul)	Endurance	Patience	………….
	Gentleness	Liberality	………….
	Fortitude	Good calculation	………….
	Suppression of anger	Contentment	………….
	Correct Evaluation of Self	Abstinence	………….
	Amiability	Cheerfulness	………….
	Nobility	Joy	………….
	Manliness	Self-discipline	………….
		Tranquility	………….
		Honest dealing	………….
		Righteous indignation	………….
		Wit	………….

Source: Mohamed A. Sherif (1975: 76)
Note: Ghazali does not list any virtues under justice.

Objectives of the Study

1.   To identify the practice on philosophic virtues of temperance as practice by Malaysian Muslim   women employees in their daily lives,

2.   To analyze the three-fold ERG conceptualization of need satisfaction: existence, relatedness, and growth   in   the field of organizational behavior that Malaysian Muslim women employees strive to meet in   society, and

3.   To test the correlation between Ghazali's philosophical virtues of temperance and need satisfaction.

Method

   Subjects

Approximately 50 (80%) Muslim women employees at several job levels from a university located in Serdang, Selangor served as samples for this study. With the exception of those people who were absent during the study, they represented all the employees in the organization below head of department.

   Procedure

The questionnaire was administered by the writer who met with groups of 5-10 employees at a time. Each questionnaire took about 30 minutes to complete. Each questionnaire took about 30 minutes to complete. The writer also used interviews in addition to the questionnaire survey method to test Ghazali's (1975) and Alderfer's (1969) respective theories. This methodological approach attempted to establish correlations between measures of temperance and need satisfaction. The 15 items for temperance virtues were selected from a given list by the respondents based on frequencies.

The present writer has used questionnaire methods to analyze the three-fold ERG conceptualization of need satisfaction: existence, relatedness, and growth. To date, the methodological approach has been measures of need satisfaction at a given point in time. This approach does utilized statistic correlations from questionnaires to test between the theories. Need satisfaction measures were based on six-point Likert-scale items as proposed by Alderfer (1969: 160-163). The need satisfaction items are shown in Table 3 in a different format.

Operational Definitions

Malaysian Muslim Women
Malaysian Muslim women employees at institutions of higher learning.

An Empirical Study
The empirical results of specific hypotheses tested in the study.

Principal Virtues of Temperance
Ghazali's philosophical virtues of temperance as evident in the practices of Malaysian Muslim women.

Need Satisfaction
Alderfer's theory of human needs (existence, relatedness, and growth) as evident in the practices of Malaysian Muslim women.

Hypotheses

1.   There is a significant correlation between Ghazali's philosophical virtues of temperance and Alderfer's   theory of existence need.

2.   There is a significant correlation between Ghazali's philosophical virtues of temperance and Alderfer's   theory of relatedness need.

3.   There is a significant correlation between Ghazali's philosophical virtues of temperance and Alderfer's   theory of growth need.

The present writer has used questionnaire methods to test ERG theory. To date, the methodological approach has been correlations between measures of need satisfaction at a given point in time. This approach does utilized static correlations from questionnaires to test between the theories. Satisfaction measures were based on six-point Likert-scale items as proposed by Alderfer (1969: 160-163). The satisfaction items are shown in Table 3 in a different format.

General Context of Women's Studies Scholarship

Islamic feminism was born in Egypt and Iran within the last two decades and subsequently developed elsewhere, for example, in Malaysia (Badran, 1999). The participation of Malaysian Muslim women have accounted for the steadily increasing proportions of the total labor force growth, with the resultant economic development leading to fewer women being employed in agriculture and more in both the service and industrial sectors (Offenhauer, 2005).

Beyond Malaysia, in New York City, Macedonian Muslim Romani women have strategized for a better future by entering professional labor markets (Silverman, 2012). In Europe, related research findings indicate that for second generation immigrants, emotional and instrumental support in the workplace have a complementary relationship (Abendroth, 2011). In Britain, Bunglawala (2008) has reported on behalf of the London Development Agency that many of the second generation British Muslim women are beginning to recognize the need for a significant cultural change to enable them to fully participate and progress within the wider labor market.

The overarching theoretical approach of the study focused on Ghazali's theory of virtue (see Mohamed Ahmed Sherif, 1975) and Alderfer's (1969) theory of human needs. Alderfer's (1969) theory, on the other hand, assumes that human beings have three cores needs that they strive to meet. These are obtaining material *existence* needs, maintaining interpersonal *relatedness* with other people, and seeking opportunities for unique personal development and *growth*. These core categories provide the basic elements in motivation (p.145).

Alderfer suggested the ERG theory based on results of empirical research to define the relationship between satisfaction of needs and human desires. His theory was further supported by empirical studies (Robbins and Judge, 2008; Schneider and Alderfer, 1973). The three needs of Alderfer, existence needs, relatedness needs, and growth needs are explained further according to his article (Alderfer, 1969:145-147).

Results

Temperance data in Table 2 are rated based on frequency. The most frequently marked virtues are "Righteous," "indignation" and "Wit," each with thirty frequencies. The second preferred virtue is "Honest dealing" with twenty six frequencies. "Tranquility" is ranked third with twenty three frequencies. At the same time, "Self-discipline" is in fourth place with a total of 21 frequencies. In fifth place are "Cheerful" and "Joy," of which each virtue display 19 frequencies. The frequencies of the other values are more or less the same. Self-discipline is highly prioritized virtue in Malay courtesy, especially in the old Malay community as was found by Dani, N.A. (2011). Unfortunately, in this study, self-discipline proved to be not dominant.

Table 2: Ghazali's principal virtues of temperance (frequencies)

No.	Virtues	Frequency
Temperance		
1	Modesty	17
2	Shame	16
3	Remission	15
4	Patience	15
5	Liberality	15
6	Good calculation	15
7	Contentment	17
8	Abstinence	18
9	Cheerful	19
10	Joy	19
11	Self –discipline	21
12	Tranquility	23
13	Honest dealing	26
14	Righteous indignation	30
15	Wit	30

Ghazali four principal virtues are based on the analysis of the faculties of the soul, namely, wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. Temperance is the mean between two vices, namely, self-indulgence (*sharah*) and insensibility (*khumud ash-shahwah*). The former is the extreme of excess and the latter is the extreme of defect. The moral value of *moderation* (hence, temperance) that mediates between self-indulgence (*sharah*) and insensibility (*khumud ash-shahwah*) forms the core of the present study on Malaysian Muslim women.

The data for existence needs in Table 3 indicate that for the group as a whole pay satisfaction is low at best. An item of interest is item 2, which states that compared to similar work in other places the pay is poor. The mean response to pay satisfaction is 6.00, or approximately strongly disagree on the attitude scale. Seventy two percent of the respondents indicated that much or more agreement with pay satisfaction.

The data on fringe benefits for item 1, 2, and 3 shows a similar response. Item 1 states that the fringe benefits do not cover many of the areas they should. Item 2 states that the fringe benefit program provide nearly all the security the person want. Item 3 states that the fringe benefit program needs improvement. Seventy percent of the respondents showed high agreement with this item.

The data for relatedness needs for item 3, which states boss discourages people from making suggestions is approximately mildly agreed on the attitude scale. Sixty two percent of the respondents indicated that much or more agreement with the item. Also from the data in Table 3 one can see that, overall, belongingness needs seem to be reasonably satisfied. Item 2, which states that the person can count on co-workers to give a hand when needed shows the highest agreement. Seventy percent of the respondents showed some agreement that they had developed close friendships at work.

Personel growth and development from the data in Table 3 seem to be reasonably well satisfied. Item 2, "I have an opportunity to use many of my skills at work" indicated that much or more agreement with the item. Fifty nine percent of the respondent showed mild agreement with this item.

Alderfer's theory goes further than simplifying the number of needs and broadening what each covers. He still maintains that there is a general order for pursuing needs, but this order is not as predetermined as it is in Maslow's hierarchy. Even though existence needs generally have a higher priority than relatedness and growth needs, priorities can change, depending on the person and the situation. ERG theory suggests that people can be motivated by needs from more than one level at the same time. There is not necessarily a strict progression from one level to the next. The importance of the needs varies for each person and as circumstances change. Some people might put a higher value on growth than relationships at certain stages of their lives. ERG has a "frustration-regression" element. This means that if needs stay unsatisfied with one of the higher levels, the person will become frustrated, and set out to pursue a lower level needs again.

Table 3: Frequency of need satisfaction items (n=50)

Existence Needs	Freq.	Mean
Pay: 1.Compared to the rates for similar work here my pay is good. 2.Compared to similar work in other places my pay is poor. 3.I do not make enough money from my job to live comfortably. 4.Compared to the rates for less demanding jobs my pay is poor. 5.My pay is adquate to provide for the basic things in life. 6.Considering the work required, the pay is what it should be.	7 12 6 7 4 0	6.00
Fringe Benefits: 1.Our fringe benefits do not cover many of the areas they should. 2.The fringe benefit program here gives nearly all the security I want. 3.The fringe benefit program here needs improvement. 4.Compared to other places, our fringe benefits are excellent.	9 9 9 8	6.00
Relatedness Needs		
Respect from Superiors: 1.My boss will play one person against another. 2.My boss takes account of my wishes and desires. 3.My boss discourages people from making suggestions. 4.It's easy to talk with my boss about my job. 5.My boss does not let me know when I could improve my performance. 6.My boss gives me credit when I do good work.	4 1 14 0 4 8	3.00
Respect from Peers: 1.My co-workers are uncooperative unless it's to their advantage. 2.I can count on my co-workers to give me a hand when I need it. 3.I cannot speak my mind to my co-workers. 4.My co-workers welcome opinions different from their own. 5.My co-workers will not stick out their necks for me.	23 35 26 19 24	2.00
Growth		
1.I seldom get the feeling of learning new things from my work. 2.I have an opportunity to use many of my skills at work. 3.In my job I have the same things to do over and over. 4.My job requires that a person use a wide range of abilities. 5.My job requires making one or more important decisions everyday. 6.I do not have the opportunity to do challenging things at work.	39 46 30 20 24 21	3.00

For all satisfaction item:

1=Strongly Agree; 2=Agree; 3=Mildly Agree; 4=Mildly Disagree; 5=Disagree; 6=Strongly Disagree.

Visual perspective on need satisfaction items selected by respondents is shown in Figure 1. It should be noted that the existence needs, especially fringe benefit is extremely crucial and should be noted by the authority and stake holders. In fact, pay satisfaction appears low as well, which implies that both needs are not adequate to provide for the basic things in life.

Figure 1: Visual perspective on need satisfaction items selected by respondents
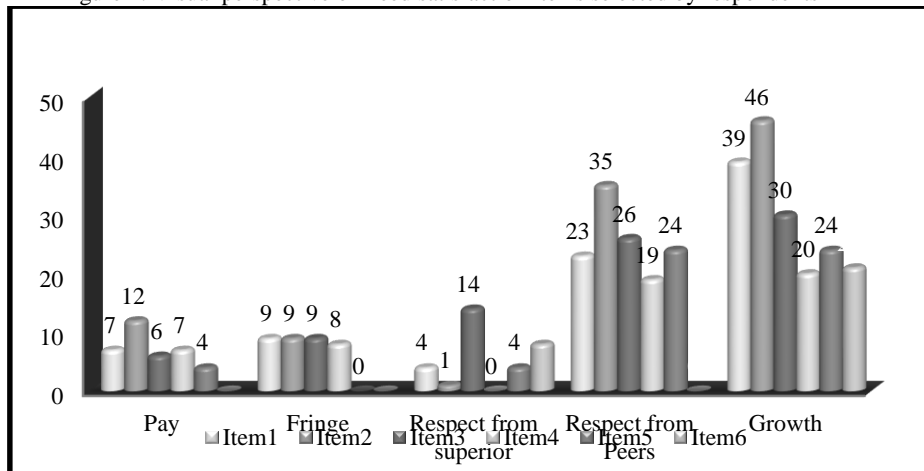
In Table 3, pay items are set as existence needs 1 while fringe benefit items are situated in existence needs 2. Respect from superior items are placed in relatedness needs 1. On the contrary, respect from peers items are incorporated in relatedness needs 2, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Need satisfaction and temperance variables
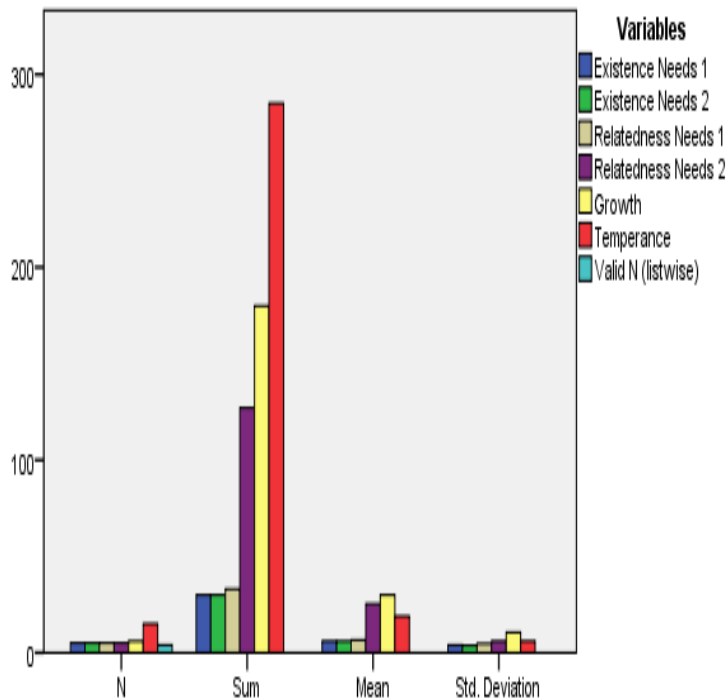
The bar for temperance in Figure 2 appeared higher than need satisfaction. This is so because temperance comprised of 15 items whereas the items in need satisfaction only six at most. Nonetheless, this does not affect the relationship between the temperance and need satisfaction. The contingency coefficient test predictions' symmetric measures indicate that need satisfaction, i.e. existence; relatedness and growth (ERG) showed strong positive relationship with temperance.

Variables	Nominal by Nominal		
	Contingency Coefficient	Value	Approx. Sig.
Existence Needs * Temperance	83.3%	.816	.125
Relatedness Needs * Temperance	100.0%	.734	.321
Growth * Temperance	100.0%	.816	.285

$_P$ < .05, 2-tail test.

There is a high degree of correlation (0.816) between Ghazali's philosophical virtues of temperance and Alderfer's existence and growth needs. However, growth needs review an additional significance compared to existence needs with the overwhelming response of 100.0% whereas in favor of existence needs is lower at 83.3%. Simultaneously, there is a moderate correlation (0.734) between Ghazali's philosophical virtues of temperance and Alderfer's relatedness needs. In summary, one difference between Ghazali's and Alderfer's theories is that ERG has one category for interpersonal needs rather than several as Ghazali's theory does. Temperance virtues depend on a different conceptualization than need satisfaction.

Conclusion

The comparative predictions about women's temperance and need satisfaction implied by the two theories from Islamic and Western notions, respectively, contribute to a new research niche at the Ministry of Women, Family and Community in Malaysia with findings that potentially inform policies related to Malaysian Muslim women employees in educational institutions.

Generally considered as the reformer (*mujaddid*) of the fifth century of the Islamic era, Al-Ghazali deeply influenced medieval thought and Islamic thought at large. His account of temperance as virtue corresponds with the concept of moderation (*wasatiyyah*) in Islam that is currently sanctioned by Malaysia. Implications from the predominant *wasatiyyah* concept reject the 'insistence' or 'fierce competition'. Behavior of 'entrapment' is replaced by negotiations and acceptance of the basic common interests. Only by such action the respect can be fostered individually or in groups. In this regard, the findings is expected to receive a favorable response from readers and researchers in Malaysia. Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory of human needs is particularly beneficial in the exploration of the conflict between the individual's existence or relatedness needs and the concept of self-actualization (growth), particularly in Muslim women's quest for more central roles in their workplace organizations.

Ghazali's classification of philosophical virtues in Islam and Alderfer's categorization of human needs can be established as alternative theories of motivation. The descriptive hypotheses produced thereof, with empirical evidence, resulting in new theory. A comparative evaluation of Ghazali's temperance virtues together with the 45 moral values recommended by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Malaysia and Alderfer's categorical elements of human needs would potentially contribute to our knowledge about the role of psychosocial needs and motivation in understanding the priorities in women's needs.

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