

A Study on the Role of Religion in Work-Life Interface

¹K. Sathish, ²Masa Divya

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Master of Business Administration, CMR Institute of Technology, Medchal, India.

² Student, Department of Master of Business Administration, CMR Institute of Technology, Medchal, India.

Corresponding author.

Correspondence: Masa Divya

E-mail: masadivya2003@gmail.com

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Abstract

Today's work scenario is characterized by a fast rate of change, intense pressure, constant decline, changing demographics, increasing use of technology have affected the lives of employees. A person working aims to find life-work balance in his personal life. Work-life balance has implications for attitudes, behavior, welfare and organizational effectiveness. Therefore, it is necessary to have an attitude of appreciation from a sense of diversity towards a religion and one's belief in the existence of God which is manifested by obeying His commands and prohibitions with all one's heart and soul which is called religiosity. Religious activities are closely related to religiosity, not only when performing rituals (worship), but also other activities including work. Thus, religiosity can predict a person's behavior at work. This article reviews the literature on the role of religiosity in the work-life balance domain for employees, which emphasizes the importance of work-life balance supported by the values of religiosity of the employees.

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's diverse and dynamic work environments, the intersection of religion and work life has become an increasingly pertinent topic of discussion. Religion, a deeply personal aspect of individuals' lives, often permeates various spheres, including the workplace. This intersection encompasses a myriad of dimensions, ranging from the expression of religious beliefs in professional settings to the influence of religious values on organizational culture and decision-making processes.

Understanding the role of religion in the workplace is essential for fostering inclusivity, accommodating diverse perspectives, and promoting harmony among employees. This introductory exploration delves into the multifaceted nature of this intersection, shedding light on its implications for individuals, organizations, and society as a whole.

It's crucial to recognize that religion holds significant importance for many individuals, shaping their identities, values, and worldviews. For millions of people worldwide, religion serves as a guiding force that informs their ethical principles, moral conduct, and interpersonal relationships. Consequently, when individuals enter the workplace, they bring with them not only their professional skills but also their religious beliefs and practices.

This intersection can manifest in various ways, such as employees seeking accommodations for religious observances, expressing their faith through attire or rituals, or grappling with ethical dilemmas informed by their religious convictions. Religion often intersects with work life through organizational dynamics and policies.

Many companies strive to cultivate inclusive environments that respect individuals' religious diversity and provide reasonable accommodations for religious practices. However, navigating this terrain can present challenges, particularly in balancing religious freedom with organizational objectives and ensuring that no individual feels marginalized or discriminated against due to their beliefs.

Religious values may influence organizational cultures, shaping norms, rituals, and decision-making processes within companies. Understanding these dynamics is essential for fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace culture where all employees feel valued and respected. The intersection of religion and work life raises important questions regarding professional ethics, diversity, and conflict resolution. Individuals may encounter ethical dilemmas in the workplace that intersect with their religious beliefs, requiring careful consideration and negotiation to reconcile competing values.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Adem Sav(2015)

Even though religion plays a significant role in the lives of many individuals, not much research has been done to determine how religion affects work-life balance, work-life conflict, or both. This study contributes to existing understanding by investigating the moderating influence of religion and its function within these notions. This is accomplished by looking into the lives of Muslim males in Australia as well as the religion of Islam, which recognizes various roles for its adherents and requires certain physical acts of worship. Data were gathered from 301 Australian Muslim men via survey questionnaires, either in-person or online, to test different hypotheses. The results support the idea that, rather than conflicting with job and other non-work tasks for time and attention, religiosity can be helpful for work-life balance.

Matthew Etherington (2019)

In this study, two people who self-identify as religious and who work in non-religious fields are interviewed about their work perspectives. This narrative research investigates the ways in which religion influences intentions, perceptions, and behavior at work by utilizing the perspectives and experiences of a Christian and a Muslim. The process of putting small-scale personalized narrative research into practice involves gathering people's life experiences and using them to analyze them. Two male participants described how their faith influences their professional lives during two interviews using a series of open-ended questions. This study identifies religion as a significant workplace issue with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The stories show how two religious individuals reconcile their personal and professional lives. The consequences of this study are significant for understanding how religion and employment can coexist peacefully, as there is an expectation that employers will recognize, respect, and possibly even benefit from their employees' religious identities and values.

Salamiah Salamiah, Abd. Madjid, Aris Fauzan(2020)

The workplace of today is defined by a rapid rate of change, extreme pressure, a steady decrease, shifting demographics, and an increase in the use of technology that has an impact on workers' life. A worker seeks to balance his personal and professional lives. The performance of an

organization and attitudes, conduct, and wellbeing are all impacted by work-life balance. As a result, to be considered religious, one must have an attitude of appreciation for diversity in religion and the existence of God, which is demonstrated by following His laws and directives with all of one's heart. Religious practices, such as working, are intimately linked to religiosity, as are ritualistic practices (worship). Religion, thus, can be used to predict an individual's conduct at work.

Omar Fayaz Khan and Mohammad Sajid Kirmani (2018)

Religion plays a significant role in providing a framework of reference that instructs people on how to handle particular circumstances. As a result, challenges and opportunities arise from concerns at work and home that manifest as demands and resources. Belief systems are shaped by religiosity, which also serves as a code of ethics and a way of living with other people. Researching how religiosity affects work-life balance (WLB) is crucial, especially in light of the increasingly diverse workforce that is entering the workforce. The purpose of the paper is to investigate the relationship between religiosity and the work-life interface. A sample of 294 female workers in the health sector made up the empirical investigation. The results imply that there is some relationship between religiosity and

Jawad Syed, Alain Klarsfeld, Faith Wambura Ngunjiri and Charmine E. J. Härtel (2017)

Not much attention has been paid to religious diversity and its role in the workplace, despite extensive scholarship, advancements in the field of management over the last century, and ample evidence of the global increase in religious diversity. Historically, religious diversity in the workplace has received little to no attention and has been viewed as a private affair. Policymakers and employers must improve their understanding and management of religious diversity in light of the resurgence of religious identities and feelings in the Middle East, Europe, North America, South Asia, and other regions of the world.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research gap:

One research gap in the topic of the role of religion in the work-life interface is the exploration of the intersectionality between religion and other aspects of diversity, such as ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. While studies have examined the impact of religious diversity on workplace dynamics, there is limited research on how multiple dimensions of diversity intersect and interact within organizational settings, potentially leading to unique challenges and opportunities for individuals and organizations.

Need of the study:

The study of the role of religion in the work-life interface is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, religion plays a significant role in shaping individuals' values, beliefs, and behaviors, which can influence their experiences in the workplace. Understanding how religion intersects with work life is essential for promoting diversity, inclusion, and respect for religious freedom in organizational settings.

Religious diversity is increasingly recognized as a key dimension of workplace diversity, alongside factors such as ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. By examining the role of religion in the work-life interface, organizations can better understand the needs and perspectives of employees from diverse religious backgrounds and create inclusive environments that accommodate their religious beliefs and practices.

Addressing issues related to religion in the workplace, such as religious accommodation,

discrimination, and harassment, is essential for promoting fairness, equity, and legal compliance. Studying the role of religion in the work-life interface can provide insights into best practices for managing religious diversity, fostering respectful interactions, and mitigating potential conflicts. The study of the role of religion in the work-life interface is important for promoting diversity, inclusion, and respect for religious freedom in the workplace, fostering equitable and respectful interactions among employees, and building inclusive organizations and societies for everyone.

Purpose of the study:

The purpose of studying the role of religion in the work-life interface is to gain a deeper understanding of how religious beliefs, practices, and identities influence individuals' experiences in the workplace. By exploring this topic, researchers seek to uncover the ways in which religion intersects with various aspects of work life, including organizational culture, leadership, diversity management, and ethical decision-making. Ultimately, the goal is to identify strategies for promoting religious diversity, inclusion, and equity in the workplace, while fostering a culture of respect, understanding, and belonging for all employees.

Problem statement:

The problem statement for the role of religion in the work-life interface revolves around the challenge of effectively accommodating religious diversity in the workplace while fostering an inclusive and respectful environment for all employees. Despite legal protections and organizational efforts to promote diversity and inclusion, issues such as religious discrimination, harassment, and conflicts may arise, impacting employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational cohesion. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of the role of religion in the workplace and proactive measures to promote religious inclusion and mitigate potential tensions.

Objective of the Study:

1. To examine the impact of religious diversity on workplace dynamics and employee experiences, including factors such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and interpersonal relationships.
2. To assess organizational policies, practices, and interventions aimed at promoting religious inclusion and managing potential conflicts related to religious beliefs and practices in the workplace.

Research Design:

The research design for studying the role of religion in the work-life interface may involve a mixed-methods approach. This could include quantitative surveys to gather data on the prevalence and impact of religious diversity in the workplace, as well as qualitative interviews or focus groups to explore individuals' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes regarding religion in the work environment.

RESEARCH TYPE: Descriptive in Nature

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:

To study how Religious aspects impact employee work life, a stratified sampling technique is effective. The population is divided into subgroups based on relevant criteria such as demographics or service industry. Random sampling ensures representation and reduces bias. Purposive sampling targets specific subsets of customers, such as those with varying emotional engagement levels.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS:

Primary Data:

Data on impact of religion on employee performance and work life is collected through surveys, interviews, and observations. Surveys gather quantitative data while interviews allow for in-depth exploration of employee performance. Observations offer real-time insights. These methods facilitate effective religious impacts performance of employees in the organizations.

Secondary Data:

The data analysis provides valuable insights into how the work-life of employees impacted by religion in company. It allows researchers to explore historical data and trends, which can inform research questions, hypothesis development, and theoretical frameworks. Overall, secondary data sources offer a rich foundation for understanding the impact created on employee work life by religious beliefs and aspects.

Population: 100

SAMPLE SIZE: 50

SAMPLE UNIT: Hyderabad

QUESTIONNAIRE:

A structured questionnaire is used for gathering the data. Multiple choice is used in the survey.

TOOLS USED: Google forms, Microsoft Excel, Charts, Bar graphs and Chi-square test.

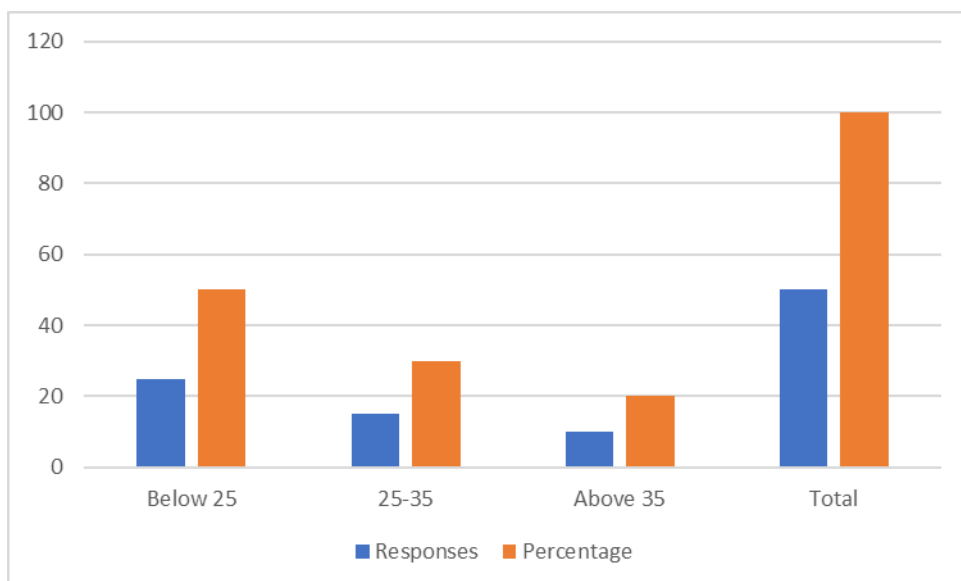
HYPOTHESIS:

H0: There is no significant difference for employees to be allowed to use religious beliefs as a factor for hiring and promotion.

H1: There is a significant difference for employees to be allowed to use religious beliefs as a factor for hiring and promotion.

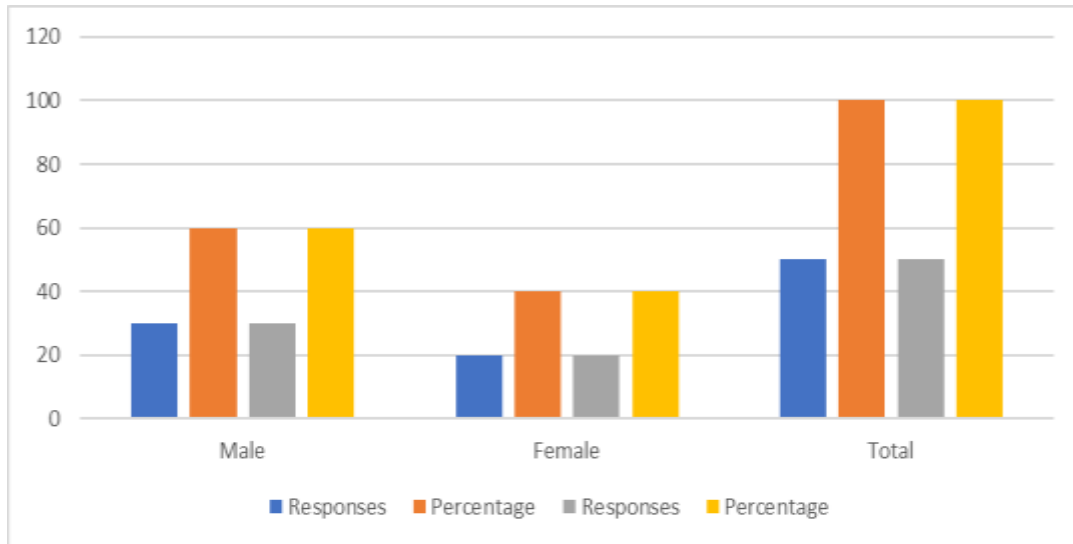
IV. DATA ANALYSIS

Age	Below 25	25-35	Above 35	Total
Responses	25	15	10	50
Percentage	50	30	20	100



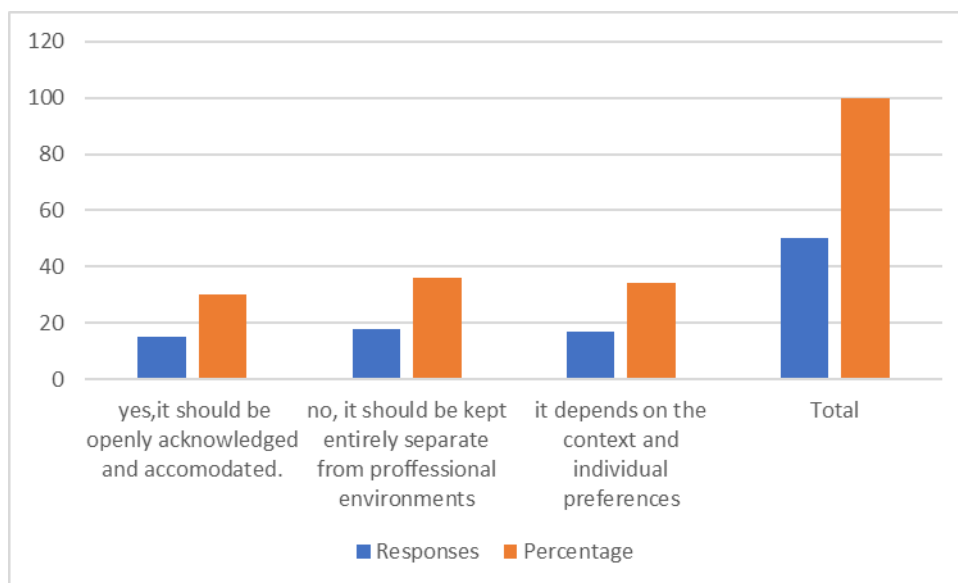
Interpretation: The total respondents are 50 out of which Below 25 with 50%, 25 to 35 with 30% and Above 35 with 20%.

Gender	Male	Female	Total
Responses	30	20	50
Percentage	60	40	100



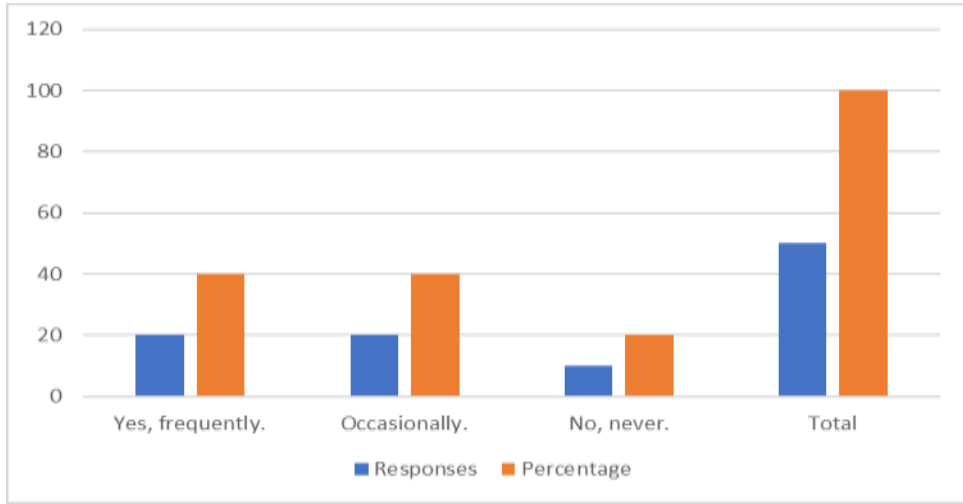
Interpretation: The total respondents are 50 out of which male are 60% and 40% are female.

Do you believe that religion should play a role in work place?	Yes, it should be openly acknowledged and accommodated.	No, it should be kept entirely separate from professional environments	It depends on the context and individual preferences	Total
Responses	15	18	17	50
Percentage	30	36	34	100



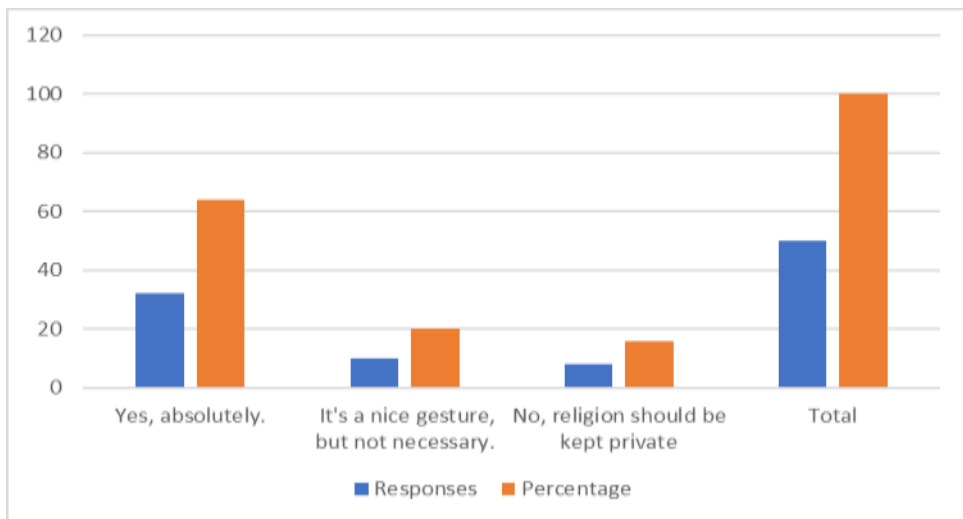
Interpretation: 36% of the people felt that religious aspects should kept totally separate from the professional environment than others.

Have you ever felt pressured to participate in religious activities or discussions at work?	Yes, frequently .	Occasionally.	No, never.	Total
Responses	20	20	10	50
Percentage	40	40	20	100



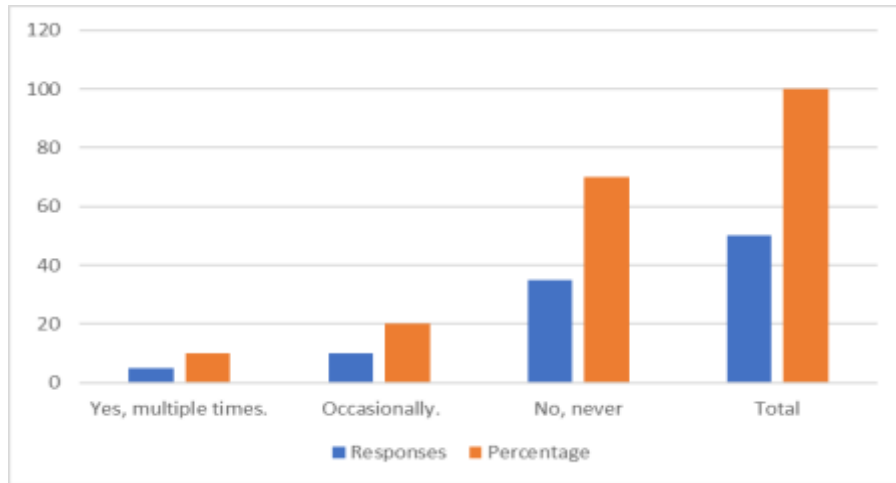
Interpretation: sometimes frequently and sometimes occasionally the people were equally felt that getting pressured in work environment by religious aspects. which is 40%.

Should employers provide religious accommodations for employees, such as prayer rooms or flexible scheduling for religious holidays?	Yes, absolutel y.	It's a nice gesture, but not necessary.	No, religion should be kept private	Total
Responses	32	10	8	50
Percentage	64	20	16	100



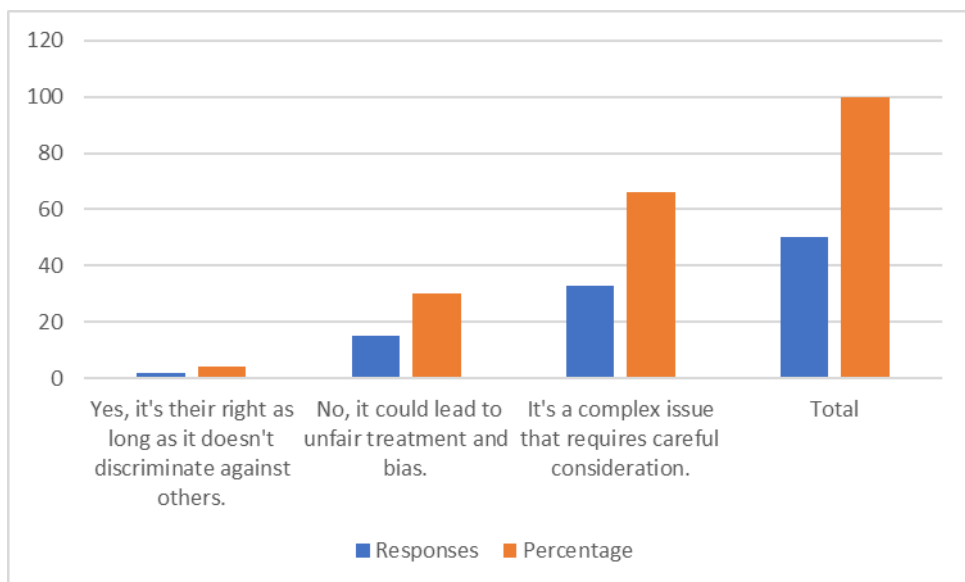
Interpretation: Most of them think that giving accommodations for religious aspects are better for improving work culture. Which is up to 64%.

Have you ever witnessed discrimination or prejudice based on religious beliefs in your workplace?	Yes, multiple times.	Occasionally.	No, never	Total
Responses	5	10	35	50
Percentage	10	20	70	100



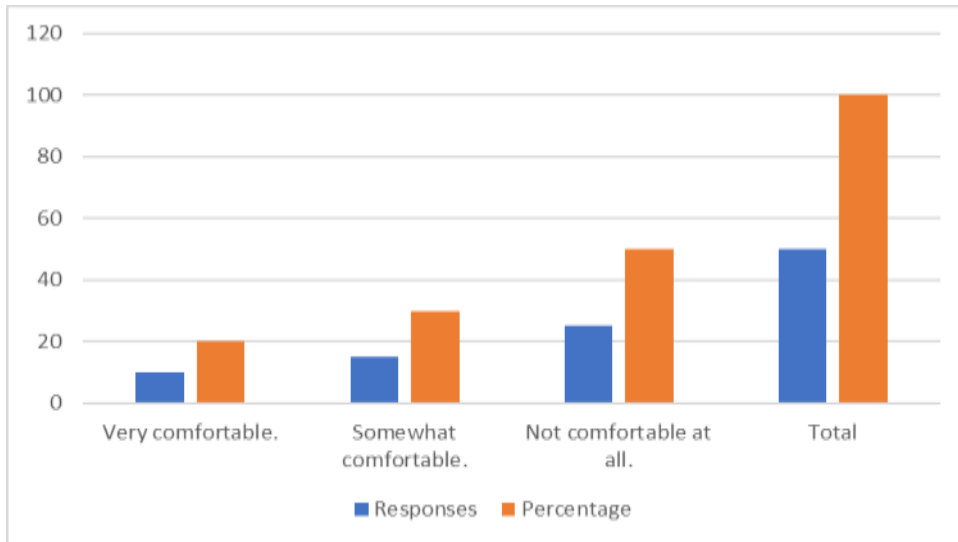
Interpretation: Most of them didn't witness the discriminations and prejudicing about religious concerns in work place in about 70%.

Should employers be allowed to use religious beliefs as a factor in hiring or promotion decisions?	Yes, it's their right as long as it doesn't discriminate against others.	No, it could lead to unfair treatment and bias.	It's a complex issue that requires careful consideration.	Total
Responses	2	15	33	50
Percentage	4	30	66	100



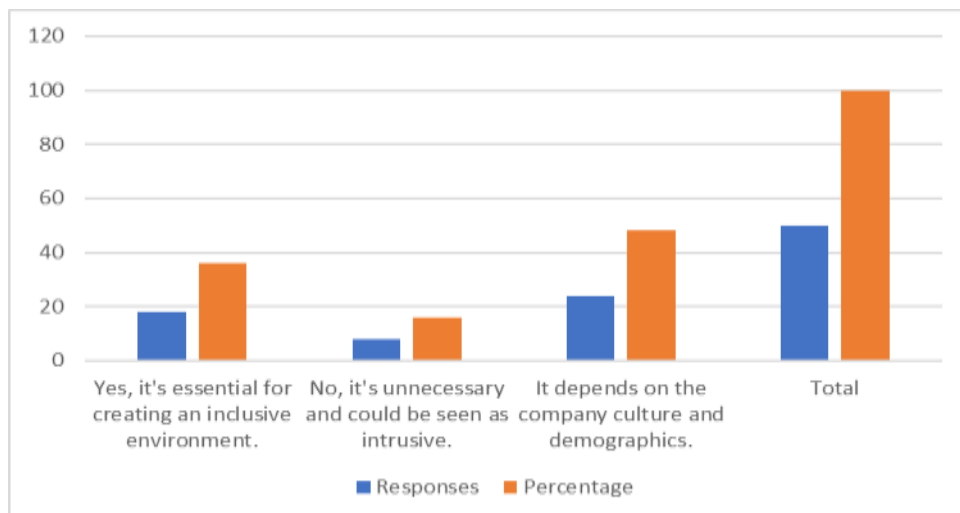
Interpretation: As it is a issue related with two many religious aspects most of them thinks that it should requires a careful consideration up to 66%.

How comfortable are you discussing your religious beliefs with coworkers?	Very comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Not comfortable at all	Total
Responses	10	15	25	50
Percentage	20	30	50	100



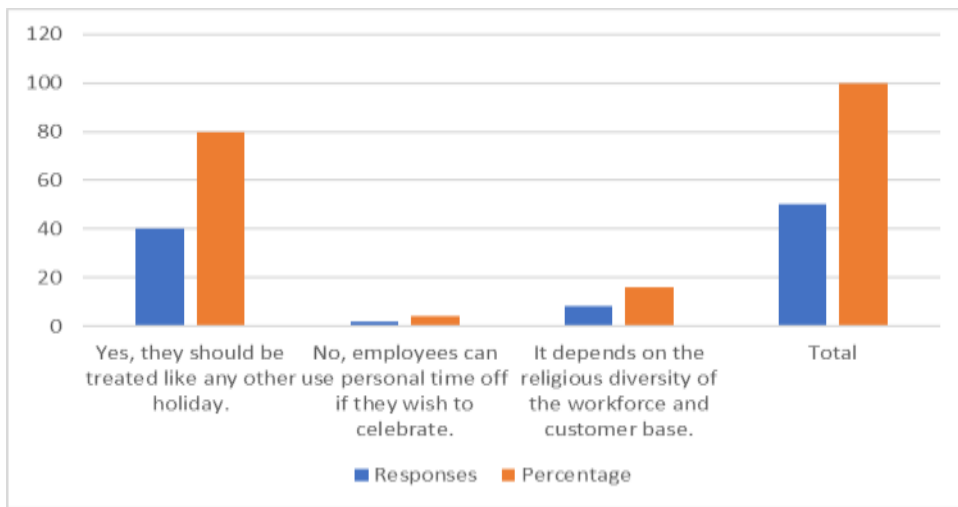
Interpretation: Discussing religious aspects in office premises is not very comfortable which was felt by most of them about 50%.

Should employers provide training on religious diversity and inclusion in the workplace?	Yes, it's essential for creating an inclusive environment.	No, it's unnecessary and could be seen as intrusive.	It depends on the company culture and demographics.	Total
Responses	18	8	24	50
Percentage	36	16	48	100



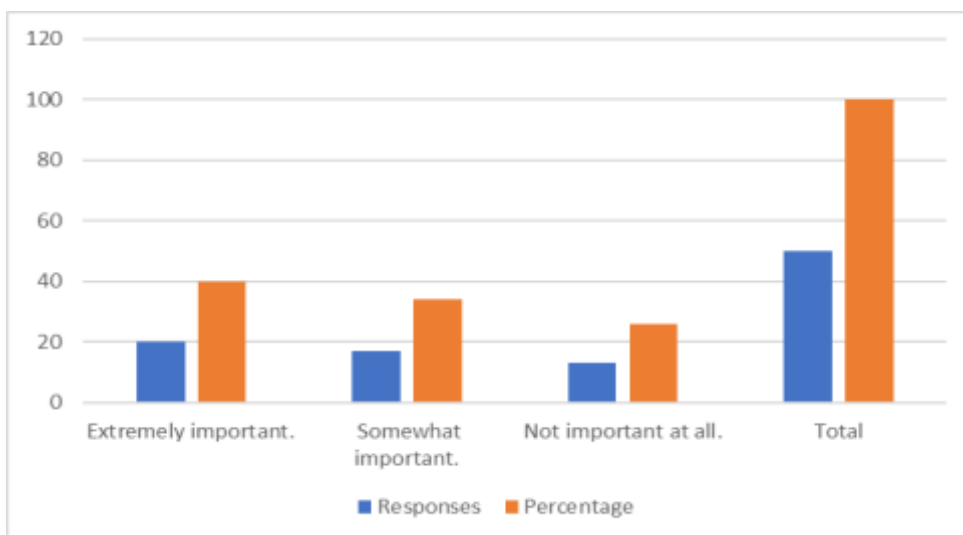
Interpretation: Many of them felt that giving training on the religious aspects will depend on the company's culture and demographics. Which is up to 48%.

Do you think religious holidays should be recognized as official company holidays?	Yes, they should be treated like any other holiday.	No, employees can use personal time off if they wish to celebrate.	It depends on the religious diversity of the workforce and customer base.	Total
Responses	40	2	8	50
Percentage	80	4	16	100



Interpretation: Religious holidays are accepted as other use of holidays by most employees the acceptance is 80%

How important is it for you to work for a company that aligns with your religious beliefs/values?	Extremely important	Somewhat important.	Not important at all.	Total
Responses	20	17	13	50
Percentage	40	34	26	100



Interpretation: finally, many of them think that aligning the company goals with religious beliefs is important which is 40%

STATISTICAL TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

H0: There is no significant difference for employees to be allowed to use religious beliefs as a factor for hiring and promotion.

H1: There is a significant difference for employees to be allowed to use religious beliefs as a factor for hiring and promotion.

The chi-square statistic, p-value and statement of significance

Results	Yes	No	Both	Row Totals
Male	1 (1.20) [0.03]	12 (9.00) [1.00]	17 (19.80) [0.40]	30
Female	1 (0.80) [0.05]	3 (6.00) [1.50]	16 (13.20) [0.59]	20
Column Totals	2	15	33	50 (Grand Total)

The chi-square statistic is 3.5732. The p-value is .167526. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.

V. FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

- The total respondents are 50 out of which Below 25 with 50%, 25 to 35 with 30% and Above 35 with 20%.
- The total respondents are 50 out of which male are 60% and 40% are female.
- The people felt that religious aspects should kept totally separate from the professional environment are up to 36%.
- Sometimes frequently and sometimes occasionally the people were equally felt that getting pressured in work environment by religious aspects. which is 40%.
- Most of them think that giving accommodations for religious aspects are better for improving work culture. Which is up to 64%.
- Most of them didn't witnessed the discriminations and prejudicing about religious concerns in work place in about 70%.
- As it is a issue related with more than two religious aspects most of them thinks that it should require a careful consideration up to 66%.
- Discussing religious aspects in office premises is not very comfortable which was felt by most of them about 50%.
- Many of them felt that giving training on the religious aspects will depend on the company's culture and demographics. Which is up to 48%.
- Religious holidays are accepted as another use of holiday by most of employees the acceptance is 80%.
- finally, many of them think that aligning the company goals with religious beliefs is important which is 40%.

CONCLUSIONS:

In conclusion, integrating religious aspects into the work-life interface is a multifaceted endeavor that requires sensitivity, inclusivity, and a commitment to fostering a culture of respect and

understanding. Religious diversity in the workplace is not only a matter of compliance with legal regulations but also a reflection of an organization's commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. Flexible scheduling policies that allow employees to observe religious holidays or practices without fear of repercussions promote a healthy work-life balance and demonstrate organizational support for employees' holistic well-being. Respecting employees' choices to wear religious attire or symbols underscores the importance of religious freedom and individual expression in the workplace. Inclusive language and practices plays a crucial role in creating a welcoming environment where employees from diverse religious backgrounds feel valued and respected. Cultural awareness celebrations and employee resource groups provide opportunities for learning, dialogue, and community building around religious diversity. Training managers and HR personnel on religious accommodation laws and best practices is essential for ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all employees. Establishing clear conflict resolution mechanisms for addressing disputes related to religious differences demonstrates an organizational commitment to resolving conflicts respectfully and constructively. Leadership commitment to religious diversity and inclusion is paramount in driving organizational change and fostering a culture of belonging and respect

In conclusion, integrating religious aspects into the work-life interface requires a comprehensive and proactive approach that encompasses policies, practices, and leadership commitment. By embracing religious diversity and fostering a culture of inclusion, organizations can create a workplace where all employees feel valued, respected, and empowered to bring their whole selves to work.

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