Understanding the impact of confessional diversity in the Lebanese public sector. Case study: The Lebanese Ministry of Finance

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Abstract

The large size and function of the Lebanese civil service emphasize the significant value of civil service performance and equal employment opportunities. Generally, it is hard to attest to discrimination in recruitment because it is hidden in informal practices. Also, the selection process and the probable discrimination incident usually differ from one job seeker to another. This study investigates and analyzes the impact of confessional diversity on recruitment and selection, affective commitment, and career satisfaction in the Lebanese Ministry of Finance, where 195 questionnaires were distributed to different department employees. The proposed model is analyzed with partial least squares (PLS) path modeling in Smart PLS 3.0 software.

Keywords Confessional diversity · Recruitment and selection · Affective commitment · Career satisfaction · Lebanese public sector

Introduction

The workplace is generally formed by a complex web of interactions among employees from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Workgroup diversity, with its disadvantages, can be an issue for an organization. However, it could also be suitable for businesses (Thomas & Ely, 1996; Ilgen et al., 2005). Esty et al. (1995) defined diversity as identifying, comprehending, accepting, and appreciating people's differences concerning age, education, gender, race, ethnicity, disabilities, sexual orientation, and spiritual practice.

Diversity exists within various religious, ideological, and philosophical schools of thought or varying social classes, among other discriminatory characteristics. The meaning of diversity varies across societies (Hofstede, 2007). The United States is concerned with the racial combination (Griffin et al., 2016). In Britain, the ethno cultural system of a minority is essentially coterminous with the study of immigrants and their descendants (Li & Heath, 2016). The discourse of diversity employed among German and French people is related to cultural discrepancies and international diversity rather than gender and ethnicity (Koopmans &

Schaeffer, 2016). As for the Lebanese society, diversity is commonly defined based on religion to one of the eighteen officially recognized sectarian groups (Badaan et al., 2020).

Religious diversity is the expression of belonging to a specific religious group or sect (Morgan, 2004), which could cause in-group favoritism or inequality between people (Cantone & Wiener, 2017). Religious diversity can be identified by traditional dress, appearance, working hours and prayer breaks per day, celebrating religious holidays, or planning activities (Hamblen, 2015). People of diverse religious might be prone to get into conflict (Nai et al., 2018). Religious diversity in Lebanon is usually indicated by the term “confessional diversity” or “confessionalism.” This diversity distributes and secures equitable sharing of institutional, political, economic, and social power among various religious communities. Until this day, confessional diversity, as power-sharing between different religious groups (majorities and minorities) that constitute a separate and cohesive entity within the region in which the groups live, poses an insecure balance (Hanf, 2015).

Religious discrimination is expanding faster than other types of discrimination as to gender or race (Beyer & Beaman, 2019). A limited number of publications are aware of confessional diversity and/or religious discrimination within organizations. Some previous studies have shown that organizations that engage people in their workforce from different cultural backgrounds and openly encourage them to express

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their religious beliefs at the office are likely to become more successful. This might improve their productivity, increase their integrity, motivation, and job satisfaction (Cavanagh & Bandsuch, 2002), relieve their physical and psychological symptom of stress (Koenig, 1995), and enhance the organizational performance (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Nonetheless, some studies have shown that expressing religious beliefs at the workplace can be destructive because it leads employees to divisiveness and accusations of discrimination (Cavanagh & Bandsuch, 2002).

Successfully managing diversity appears to be complicated and troublesome when some employees discriminate against each other or when some organizations do not share or embrace their co-workers' beliefs and perceptions. This might affect the employer's unfavorable team outcomes (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). It also creates resistance to diversity versus minority among employees (Hostager & De Meuse, 2008). The vast majority of these studies appear focused on private organizations. They neglect the public-sector organizations, which, similarly, take an essential role in the economy. Hence, studies investigating the relationship between confessional diversity and career satisfaction in public organizations are nonexistent. In this regard, it becomes essential to examine confessional diversity in diverse workforces in the Lebanese Ministry of Finance.

Consequently, the purpose of this study is to establish a correlation between confessional diversity on recruitment and selection, workplace commitment, and career satisfaction at the Lebanese Ministry of Finance.

The COVID-19 pandemic has obstructed the economy globally and affected worker health and mobility. Authorities impose lockdown rules, curfew, and social distancing guidelines to restrain the disease's extent; multiple sectors and business activities have suffered. Accordingly, examining the prevalence of diversity perceptions in the workplace is an important topic to investigate, mainly it influences employees' commitment to remain in their host organization under a pandemic. According to Khalafallah et al. (2020), the rate of career satisfaction was increased compared to rates stated in the pre-COVID era. Therefore, recruitment and affective commitment are likely to become more problematic in a post-pandemic (Filimonau et al., 2020).

This study's significance lies in its attempt to fill the management literature gap, which remains very underdeveloped on confessional diversity matters. The literature also struggles to enhance organizational attentiveness, which can be explained by employees' experiences of career difficulties linked to religious discrimination. Second, it observes the perceptual effects of confessional diversity on recruitment and selection, workplace commitment, and career satisfaction by ignoring merit-based and moral matters that may hinder individuals' career options and opportunities.

The proposed study begins with a literature review on confessional diversity pursued by an overview of the Lebanese community, where the study took place, and a summary of the theoretical background. Next, it includes a review of recruitment and selection procedures in the Lebanese public sector, workplace commitment, career satisfaction, and engagement and draws hypotheses. The methodology is presented, followed by a results discussion, a conclusion, and a section on limitations, implications, and recommendations.

Literature Review and Hypothesis

This study's conceptual framework examines the impact of confessional diversity on recruitment and selection, workplace commitment, and career satisfaction at the Lebanese Ministry of Finance.

Recruitment and Selection

Employers look for the most suitable people for particular jobs and positions. Job applicants intend to employ their skills, knowledge, qualifications, and experiences when recruited and selected. The reason they do so is to ensure employment and income. Therefore, practical organization commitment must start with proper recruitment and selection processes followed by employment and evaluations.

The recruitment process provides the job applicant with prospects about what the job requires and what the organization proposes. Organizations aspire to attract and stimulate prospective employees to apply for a job in an organization and satisfy the need for human resources (Fong et al., 2011; Tienari et al., 2002). Therefore, there are various methods of recruitment to fulfill this purpose. Recruitment methods can be either internal or external (Marsden, 1994). Moreover, requirements differ in different work organizations and across different societal environments. Selection involves a set of activities that candidates are screened. Those activities aim at choosing the suitable applicant for the said vacant post (Byars & Rue, 1997). It is challenging to strike the equilibrium between what the candidate can and wants to do and what the organization requires.

In the public sector, employment was based on the concept of a "career service" of security and permanent employment and was enclosed throughout an internal labor market (Colley, 2001). Therefore, recruitment and selection in the public sector's traditional model is centralized and run by a central public agency (Brown, 2004). Since the public sector is likely to be induced by variables other than profit maximization, government compensation eventually depends on public sector 'workers' capacity to compete over the implementation of human resource management policies that retain, attract, and develop the best talent.

In Lebanon, the public sector is the main component of the current government and is subjected to religious-political patronage. Such patronage permits politicians to use these offices to return the favor and to reap votes, which carries out conscious and unconscious and official and unofficial activities that affect many aspects of citizens' lives. Applicants in Lebanon are appealed to join the civil service posts because of the wages, which on average are equal to private-sector wages, and because of prestige and security of tenure, civil services jobs guarantee, such as shorter working hours, social and health insurance, and retirement guarantees. To protect the civil service from religious intervention and political pressures, the Lebanese Civil Service Council has set off myriad improvements in its public personnel recruitment practices to attract qualified people from the labor force and assure the merit system.

Hence, equality policies and legislations are unable to tackle certain inequality practices. Various studies on discrimination in recruitment and selection (such as Rooth, 2010; Beattie & Johnson, 2012) have exposed subliminal and unconscious stereotypes that recruiters employ. Following a set of criteria, inequality and discrimination in recruitment and selection are still evident (Shen et al., 2009). Therefore, discrimination may take various forms. Formal discrimination can affect access to the vital job, compensation, advancement opportunities, and evaluating their performance. Informal discrimination may confront employees once they are employed.

Affective Commitment

Organizational commitment or employee loyalty is conceptualized as an essential factor influencing organizational effectiveness and employees' well-being. (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001) defined commitment as "a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets." According to Sheldon's definition, commitment is the identity's connection to the employee with a particular organization (Sheldon, 1971). In particular, organizational commitment commonly refers to an employee's acceptance of and commitment to the organization and the tendency to continually bond oneself with the organization's policies and activities (Kaya & Ceylan, 2014).

Scholars have made abundant attempts to define the potent relationship between personal factors and organizational commitment. Some researchers contend that people like to belong to groups rather than not belonging (Brewer, 1979). Some indicate that working within a homogenous group, where fellows are similar to the self, is affirmative and helpful for the organization; it also promotes commitment to the workplace (Buckley et al., 2007; Chatman et al., 1998; Godthelp & Glunk, 2003; Riordan & Shore, 1997; Tsui et al., 1992). As a result, the more homogeneous

the workgroup is, the higher the loyalty (Riordan & Shore, 1997), group integration between members (O'Reilly et al., 1989), and contribution to the performance will be (Chen et al., 2006). Meyer and Allen (1997) asserted that employees, who were strongly committed to their organizations, get involved in and feel devoted to their organizations. In another study, Ketchand and Strawser (2001) argued that it is critical to have employees committed to their employing organization in order for these organizations to be successful in today's competitive environment.

From the wide variety of definitions found in the literature, organizational commitment represents an individual's psychological link to the entire organization (Baek-Kyoo & Taejo, 2009) with a strong belief and acknowledgment of its purposes and values in order to attain its goals and to preserve participation (Yousef, 2000).

Meyer and Allen's (1997) framework on organizational commitment proposes three different types of commitment, which encompass the following:

1. Attitudinal or affective commitment is defined as the positive emotional ties to loyalty, identification with, and workplace involvement via positive work experiences.
2. Continuance commitment or turnover attention reflects the perceived economic and social gains versus the possible cost losses of leaving the work.
3. Normative commitment expresses the feeling of obligation and sentiment of pressure to maintain employment.

Affective commitment is considered the most constant and most robust predictor of positive organizational outcomes (Yu, 2005). Therefore, the research paper will discuss affective commitment following the findings of Meyer and Allen (1997). Affective commitment at the workplace is defined as a cheerful devotion among the employee and his organization (Meyer et al., 2006). It possibly affects his/her work contribution and behavioral outcome, which definitely might influence performance and turnover (Avey et al., 2008; Ensher et al., 2001). Affective commitment can be formed through comprehensive communication inside the organization, participating employees in decision-making, particularly on their expertise or welfare subjects, and allowing employees to acquire information (Dirani & Kuchinke, 2011). The feeling of comfort and competence among employees contributes to enhancing affective commitment through human resource management practices and gives their organizations vital competitive advantages (Avey et al., 2008).

However, individuals are discriminated against when they feel denied privileges or rights (Fox et al., 2015), when they are held back by bias (Fuchs et al., 2018), or when they suffer from injustice and insufficient organizational commitment on the part of the victim (Messarra, 2014). The

feelings of hopelessness, mistrust, despair, alienation, stress, and depression, among others, are common among people who are victims of bias. The negative perceptions are not limited to the working environment, as employees tend to drag those feelings home to their families, friends, and loved ones.

Recruitment and selection could affect employees' affective commitment to remain in the organization (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015). Developing and managing affective commitment starts at recruiting and first entry practices in an institution (Mercurio, 2015). Affective commitment is positively affected when organizations use careful recruitment and selection techniques and create fundamental practices that help new members learn and acquire new organizations' values (Caldwell et al., 1990). Organizations with a high level of affective commitment are organizations that implement socialization experiences for newcomers by defining their role in the organization and familiarizing them with its norms. Relieving anxiety is positively correlated with a commitment to the organization (Meyer et al., 2006).

Career Satisfaction

A career is a central pillar in every person's path. A career is related to professional activities rather than to extracurricular interests or hobbies. A career does not necessarily have to produce income (Azevedo, 2014). Alboher (2007) examined one person's concept with multiple careers, which is a new model for work and/or life success. In equivalence, one could balance multiple vocations and spread commitment among them rather than primary and secondary engagement (Kirtton, 2006). The time and energy that employees devote to their careers depend on the success that they have achieved and the life stage they are in (Alboher, 2007). According to Layder (1993), individuals can hold parallel careers and commit to each of them in equal proportions.

Career satisfaction may be defined as the intensity of happiness a person experiences through his overall occupation choice (Lounsbury et al., 2007). A person might be unsatisfied with his current job experience even though he is confident of making the right career choice (Zingesser, 2004). Maslow's theory (1943) suggested a whole repertoire of needs through which employees could be motivated at all levels of the need hierarchy without paying them more money. Another theory by Locke (1976) highlights the discrepancies between what one wants in a job and what one obtains.

Researchers found that making the wrong career decisions drive people to dissatisfaction with their jobs (Rangel et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2020). Career dissatisfaction is the consequence of making a career decision based only on external factors. (Imel, 2002) strongly argued that some people base their career choices on their aptitudes and

circumstances alone and ignore their deep interests, values, and other internal factors. This results in experiencing dissatisfaction with their job. Porter and Steers (1973) reported that dissatisfied employees are less productive and might have a high absence rate while satisfied employees are more innovative, productive, and loyal.

In Lebanon, teaching is the only parallel career a civil servant can practice. Gomez-Mejia et al. (2007) observed a recent change in career development because career paths and opportunities are less conventional and structured than three decades ago. Currently, frequent technological change and downsizing strategies characterize the business world instead of employment security.

Conversely, and as aforementioned, the Lebanese public sector civil servant benefits from career-long tenure, employment security, social and health insurance, and retirement guarantee (Robalino & Sayyed, 2012). A career focuses on objective and subjective aspects, which were usually restricted to proceeding in organizational hierarchies. Furthermore, fewer career persons struggle to climb up the hierarchical ladder within the boundary and for a life career satisfaction within their professional and private fields.

Confessional Diversity

Diversity in cultural identities, economic programs, religious beliefs, political systems, and other ethnic groupings is positively correlated with human society and is one of the constants of contemporary life mechanisms. Workforce diversity refers to the coexistence of employees from various perspectives and approaches at a workplace (Ely & Thomas, 2001) and with different attributes, such as race, gender, ethnicity, language, color, religion, and health status (Kossek et al., 2006; Kreitz, 2008). For a long time, the workplace has been considered a neutral sphere. The relationship between confessional diversity and the workplace was inexistent. However, this relationship has radically changed with globalization, increased immigration, and the importance of science and technology. Nowadays, the workplace is more diversified. Employees come from distinct cultures and ethnic and religious backgrounds. Consequently, they feel more at ease discussing their faith and values at the workplace (Barro & McCleary, 2003; Cantone & Wiener, 2017; Dean et al., 2014), and they are no longer satisfied with keeping their religious beliefs outside their working environment. This could be valid for the Lebanese republic with its unique cultural values, combined with a conflicting organizational environment that might ruin outcomes.

Religion has been known as one of the significant elements that influence an individual's value system and, consequently, shapes an organization's cultural environment (Kutcher et al., 2010). After September 11, 2001, the incidents of religious discrimination for the minorities in

western democracies, especially against Muslims, flourished (Akbaba, 2009; Ali et al., 2015; Oskooii, 2016). Subsequently, most western researchers and practitioners have perceived this rise of confessional working diversity as a new managerial challenge, which needs to be attended to.

Confessional Diversity in Lebanon

Understanding the history of Lebanon permits a deeper understanding of why confessional diversity still exists. Lebanon, a small country located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, is incredibly diverse culturally, religiously, and politically. The Lebanese regime is based on two primary documents, written and unwritten, and some customary rules. The Constitution, established in 1926, developed throughout the French mandate, was amended several times. Later, it was represented in the Charter of 1943, after the Lebanese independence. New amendments have been made after that, which were concerned with particular constitutional rules (Salem, 1997). The political power and governmental positions in the country were shared informally on a confessional basis. Such that the President of the Republic, the Commander-in-Chief of the army, and the Central Bank are always Maronite Christians, the Prime Minister is Muslim Sunni, the Speaker of the Parliament Muslim Shi'ite, and all the other governmental and military offices and posts are proportionally shared by the various communities (Bali & Lerner, 2016). It is evident from the preceding that the National Charter was a clear expression of the state of division in Lebanese society. It was an expression of the confessional diversity and its impact on the Lebanese political system. According to the old Constitution, seats in the parliament and other public administration positions were distributed through the demographic situation in 1932 according to a ratio of 6 Christians to 5 Muslims (Knio, 2005).

After that, the National Charter was the subject of another amendment through an agreement known as "The Taif Accord." The Accord was held under the auspices of Saudi Arabia in 1989. It officially ended the civil war and reasserted the confessional formula. The Taif Accord expressly granted a 50/50 ratio of representation between Muslims and Christians. The power remained between the "triumvirates," the President as a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister Head of Government as a Muslim Sunni, and the Parliament's Speaker as a Muslim Shi'ite. However, the 126 seats in the parliament and all other ministries, posts, offices, diplomatic corps, and government positions were allocated proportionally according to sectarian affiliation among Christians and Muslims, as indicated by their demographic proportion in the country (Badaan et al., 2020).

Consequently, the Lebanese government now formally acknowledges and respects each confessional community's

right by securing an assumed fair sharing of institutional, political, economic, and social power. Currently, recruitment and selection in the Lebanese public sector are based on mandatory confessional diversity to ensure fair representation of all religious groups (Hudson, 1999).

Societies with little or no control of confessional diversity may yield inequality, imbalance, or participation deficiency. A study done on the workforce shows that minorities are more likely to change jobs when they perceive discrimination. This results in work with less affective commitment (Shoobridge, 2006). Moreover, the danger arises when individuals sense mistreatment or discrimination due to their religious affiliation. Individuals would, thus, develop poor work-related behaviors, such as self-doubt, low confidence, and detaching oneself from the job.

Hence, we hypothesized that:

H1: Recruitment and selection have a positive and significant influence on affective commitment.

H2: Affective commitment has a positive and significant influence on career satisfaction.

H3: Confessional diversity has a positive and significant influence on recruitment and selection (staffing).

H4: Confessional diversity has a positive and significant influence on affective commitment.

H5: Confessional diversity has a positive and significant influence on career satisfaction.

Method

Procedures

The sampling method employed is purposive sampling. Participants needed to hold specific attributes to qualify for the study. Principally, the participants are of Lebanese nationality and work within the Ministry of Finance in Lebanon. Having satisfied those two criteria, participants were able to partake. The proposed study respects the necessary ethical considerations. A letter was sent to the Ministry of Finance's higher management. The letter sought the management's consent about distributing the proposed rating scale within the Ministry's entourage. The rating scales were circulated and completed to succeed the consent. Participants were informed that their information would be kept confidential to guarantee anonymity. Names and/or details revealing personal information were not required. Moreover, participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were allowed to withdraw at any point should the need arise.

Sample

Participants within the Lebanese Ministry of Finance were randomly selected and invited to participate. Questionnaires were distributed and collected in person during January 2021. A total of 195 surveys were distributed to employees from different categories working in the Ministry. Out of those, 179 were returned, out of which 20 surveys were incomplete and were not included in the research. As a result of the outlier check, 159 surveys retained, indicating a 79.5% response rate. This study's sample profile, regarding gender, age, marital status, religion, educational level, job category, and tenure, is presented in Table 1 below.

The sample included 159 participants which revealed that 54.7% were male. 68% of the participants are married. The mean age was 39 years (standard deviation = 0.672). Participants' religion was 57.9% Christian, and 42.1% were Muslims. The majority holds a university degree, and they were in the fourth category with 66.1%. Lastly, 44% of employees have 12 to 19 years of experience.

Measurement

The researcher assembled the set into one document for convenience purposes. Nonetheless, the assembled document incorporates demographic details and 32 questions that express four sections. Each section deals with a different concept within the study. The relevant surveys were translated from the source language into the target language using the back translation process (Brislin, 1970). Back translation was used in this study to create an Arabic version and then return it to the English version to check equivalence. A pilot sample was developed and distributed to 5 employees at the Lebanese Ministry of Finance to ensure the understandability of questionnaire items.

Measures were adopted in the present study from the relevant literature (see Appendix 1). Participants are first asked to respond to a range of demographic questions, including gender, age, marital status, religious sect, educational level, position, and tenure. Demographic characteristics of participants are supposed to have explanatory value in the

research (Tsui, 1990). Respondents are also asked to rate the items according to the five-point Likert scales ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." For each item within the rating scale, participants were asked to choose one impression only.

Recruitment and Selection

An adapted and shortened form of the Edgar and Geare HRM practice questionnaire (Edgar & Geare, 2005) was used. The scale has four items that precisely captures the core measures necessary to assessed the strength of recruitment and selection process in the Lebanese Public Sector (the recruitment and selection process in this organization are impartial; all appointments in this organization are based on merit; this organization does not need to pay more attention to the way it recruits people; favoritism is not evident in any of the recruitment decisions made here).

Affective Commitment

Meyer et al.'s (2006) integrative process model that consists of six items was used to measure affective commitment.

Career Satisfaction

The employee's career satisfaction was operationalized using six items based on the study of Greenhaus et al. (1990).

Confessional Diversity

Confessional diversity was assessed through 16 items derived from Messarra and El Kassar's (2010) study on religious diversity.

Data Analysis

Once data was collected, the documents' ratings were admitted using the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) by using version 3.0 of the SmartPLS as a statistical analysis platform (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016) and

Table 1 Sample profile

Total respondents	159			
Gender	Male (54.7%)		Female (42.3%)	
Age	18–25 (4.5%)	26–35 (30.3%)	36–50 (55.4%)	51–64 (8.8%)
Marital status	Single (30.8%)		Married (68%)	
Religion	Maronite (29%)		Catholic (19.5%)	
	Druze (8.2%)		Shia (22%)	
Educational level	Technical (10%)		Orthodox (9.4%)	
			Sunni (12.6%)	
Grade	Two (3.7%)	Three (28.3%)	Four (66.1%)	University (90%)
Tenure	0–5 (15%)	6–11 (25.5%)	12–19 (44%)	Five (1.9%)
				More than 20 (15.5%)

following the 2 step method (Hair et al., 2011). The first step involves assessing the psychometric properties of the measurement model, and the second step, the analysis of the hypothesis of our structural model.

Connections and correlations were then concluded to reject or accept each of the mentioned hypotheses. Those are included in the discussion section. The main reason the use PLS-SEM platform was employed is to ensure the accuracy of attained results. PLS-SEM is recommended for the following conditions; accurate results are derived, no need for large sample sizes, evades limitations or incidences linked to model identification, model complexity, measurement levels, and factor indeterminacy (Hair et al., 2017).

Reliability and Validity

Specific factors to the instrument employed to warrant the study's reliability and validity. Consistency in the instrument's findings renders reliable (Gomes et al., 2015), and the effectiveness in measuring what is chosen for the instrument to measure deems the study a valid one. The factor loadings score for all constructs was above 0.5 suggested by (Hulland, 1999; Truong & McColl, 2011), except for nine items

score Q24, Q27, Q29, Q31, Q32, Q33, Q34, Q35, and Q39. Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) are used to measure consistent reliability. Convergent validity was measured using the AVE that tests the correlation between the items for the same construct (Hair Jr et al., 2016). The minimum acceptable AVE is 0.50 or higher. Values are presented in Table 2.

Next, we determine the discriminant validity, which is the extent to which a construct is empirically distinct from other structural models' constructs. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), we compared the AVE of each construct with the squared inter-construct correlation of that same construct and with all other reflectively measured constructs in the structural model. As shown in Table 3 below, AVE's square root for all constructs needed to be higher than the inter-construct correlation for each construct in our measurement model. Therefore, using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion, we confirm all constructs' discriminant validity in our model.

Finally, we measured the collinearity and multicollinearity between and among the predictor variables by examining the variance inflation factor (VIF) values as shown in the table below. The results show that all of the VIF values fell

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability/ Validity Indicators

Variables Name	Item	Loadings λ	Mean	S.D	Kurtosis	Skewness
Recruitment and Selection	8	0.678	2.885	1.098	-1.247	0.087
	9	0.763	2.354	1.080	-0.840	0.561
	10	0.651	2.385	0.993	-0.295	0.518
	11	0.775	2.323	1.094	-0.443	0.633
Affective Commitment	12	0.756	3.615	0.961	0.400	-0.940
	13	0.786	3.344	0.977	-0.524	-0.470
	14	0.720	2.552	1.079	-0.627	0.622
	15	0.797	2.521	1.090	-0.600	0.609
	16	0.816	3.458	1.060	-0.112	-0.849
	17	0.715	2.427	1.048	-0.330	0.775
Career Satisfaction	18	0.725	3.354	1.099	-0.695	-0.697
	19	0.842	3.115	1.114	-1.237	-0.271
	20	0.612	2.885	1.189	-1.440	-0.228
	21	0.739	2.500	1.099	-1.322	0.287
	22	0.709	2.865	1.124	-1.394	-0.086
	23	0.767	3.094	1.100	-1.091	-0.523
Confessional Diversity	25	0.603	2.438	1.078	-0.549	0.620
	26	0.565	2.146	0.989	0.450	0.946
	28	0.761	2.438	1.069	-0.479	0.712
	30	0.622	2.146	1.190	-0.013	0.918
	36	0.614	1.677	0.714	2.458	1.268
	37	0.771	2.323	1.085	-0.598	0.616
	38	0.600	2.562	1.171	-1.031	0.401

***= $p < 0.001$. Items excluded as a result of low loadings: Q24, Q27, Q29, Q31, Q32, Q33, Q34, Q35 and Q39

Table 3 Discriminant Validity-Fornell and Larcker's criterion

Constructs	CA	rho	CR	AVE	AC	CS	CD	R&S
AC	-0.547	0.874	0.003	0.595	^a 0.772	0.618	0.477	0.316
CS	0.830	0.849	0.875	0.541	0.556	0.736	0.449	0.489
CD	0.785	0.811	0.837	0.426	- 0.411	- 0.376	0.653	0.518
R&S	0.696	0.710	0.810	0.517	0.255	0.394	-0.291	0.719

CA Cronbach's alpha, **CR** Composite reliability, **rho** rho_A reliability indices, **AVE** Average variance extracted ^a=Diagonal values in bold are the square root of AVE, ^b = *Italicized* values above the square root of AVE are Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios

Table 4 Structural model multicollinearity (VIF values)

Constructs	AC	CS	R&S
CD	1.160	1.313	1

under 3, reflecting the absence of collinearity or multicollinearity issues between and among the independent variables in our hypothesized model (Mason & Perreault Jr, 1991; Becker et al., 2015) (Table 4).

Evaluating the Structural Model

After checking the validity and reliability of the measurement model in the previous stage of the analysis, we proceed in the second stage to test whether the structural model's formulated hypotheses are statistically significant or otherwise. The evaluation was done under the guidance of Hair et al. (2019) through the examination of path coefficients β , the R^2 values, the t -values, predictive relevance (Q^2), and effect sizes (f^2) which is ensured in Table 5 given below.

We find that recruitment and selection have no positive and significant effect on affective commitment ($\beta = 0.107$, $p > 0.05$). In contrast, we find that affective commitment positively and significantly affects career satisfaction ($\beta = 0.442$, $p < 0.05$). We also find Confessional diversity also had a positive and significant effect on recruitment and selection ($\beta = 0.353$, $p < 0.05$), on affective commitment ($\beta = 0.403$, $p < 0.05$). Confessional diversity was

found to positively affect career satisfaction ($\beta = 0.249$, $p < 0.05$). However, according to the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019), we observed the beta coefficients (β), statistical significance (P -value), and (R^2) value. Also, we interpret the substantive significance (f^2) reflected as the effect sizes, values higher than 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, depict small, medium, and significant effects size, respectively (Sullivan & Feinn, 2012).

Finally, we used the PLS predict functionality in Smart-PLS to observe the outcome variable's predictive validity in our study model (Shmueli et al., 2016). The PLS predict analysis yielded Q^2 values for each of the constructs as follows affective commitment (0.115), career satisfaction (0.108), and recruitment and selection (0.047). Since they are all greater than zero, it signals the model's sufficient predictive relevance and predictive validity. However, while the obtained error summary statistics, including the root mean squared error (RMSE), and the mean absolute error (MAE) values, were compared to the linear regression model (LM) that mean that the model has high predictive power, as shown in Table 6 below (Shmueli et al., 2019).

Table 5 Results of the path analysis

Hypothesis	Model Fit Indices: SRMR = 0.102; NFI = 0.514					Results
	β values	t statistics	p values	f^2	R^2	
H1: Recruitment & selection -> affective commitment.	0.107	0.987	0.162	0.013	0.398	Not Supported
H2: Affective commitment -> career satisfaction.	0.442	2.142	0.020	0.244	0.600	Supported
H3: Confessional diversity -> recruitment and selection	0.353	2.126	0.017	0.143	0.338	Supported
H4: Confessional diversity -> affective commitment.	0.403	1.724	0.042	0.179	0.398	Supported
H5: Confessional diversity -> career satisfaction.	0.249	1.808	0.035	0.077	0.600	Supported

$p < 0.05$, one tailed

Table 6 PLS Predict Analysis

Latent Construct Prediction Summary	RMSE	MAE	Q ²
Affective Commitment	0.963	0.733	0.115
Career Satisfaction	0.966	0.802	0.108
Recruitment and Selection	0.999	0.785	0.047

Theoretical Framework Model (Fig. 1)

Discussion

Our research's crucial purpose was to suggest a research model concerning the effect of confessional diversity on recruitment and selection, affective commitment, and career satisfaction. The employment system in the Lebanese public sector is centralized through central organizations that were responsible for settling recruiting process, hiring decisions, and formulating rules for employment, training, and career development. Data acquired from employees in the Lebanese Ministry of Finance were selected to measure the hypothesized relationships. First, the results verified negative support between the recruitment and selection and the affective

commitment, which explains how employees in the public sector in Lebanon experience difficulties related to the affective commitment. Simultaneously, recruitment and selection in the public sector focus on attracting qualified people and ensuring the merit system. Hence, these policies and legislations are not capable of practice to tackle certain inequality practices. Therefore, the individuals' qualifications like the level of education or the years of professional experience are ignored during the recruitment and selection process, which may confront employees' affective commitment once they are employed. Second, affective commitment represents the love of belonging to an organization, and this feeling could not be expressed from the recruitment process, but it develops through time. This positive feeling towards the organization is related to the correct way in which the employees are treated. Accordingly, this means that the recruitment and selection process in the Lebanese public sector was very weak to influence affective commitment which is interpreted as the employee's emotional attachment, identification, and involvement within the organization. Concerning the relation between affective commitment and career satisfaction, this study shows a positive relationship between them (which is consistent with the proposed hypothesis). As affective commitment refers to emotional attachment to the workplace, employees with a high level of affective commitment do not

Fig. 1 Smart PLS Model image

plan to change their career, and they perceive that changing a career will be costly to them. Furthermore, the current study added to the literature and got similar results; that affective commitment positively impacts career satisfaction (Makhathini & Van Dyk, 2018). In this setting, employment in the Lebanese public sector is characterized by the traditional notions of career service, stability, and lifetime employment. This study investigates the impact of confessional diversity on recruitment and selection, affective commitment, and career satisfaction. The result indicates a positive and significant impact of confessional diversity on all these variables. The applicant's sect and bias often influence the recruitment and selection process in the Lebanese public sector, which means that confessional differences between applicant groups are amplified. The result is that applicants' selection is often assessed based on their confessions to which they belong, especially for high category jobs. This study also suggested that when employees are selected according to recruitment and selection process that promote confessional diversity and support the idea that diversity is an opportunity and not a problem (Cox, 1994), can mitigate the potential problems on affective commitment and career satisfaction are influenced positively by the confessional diversity.

The problems besetting the public sector required a different model for operating this sector. Our results have important implications for the Lebanese public sector. The promotion of confessional diversity among employees in the Lebanese public sector should be further connected with merit-based treatment rather than to the sects to which they belong. Concurrently, it is clear from this study that policies and legislations should implement effective HRM practices that take into consideration the level of education or the years of professional experience during the recruitment and selection process, particularly for high category jobs. The evidence shows that securing equal and equitable opportunities is a necessity for the Lebanese public administrative reforms, while neglecting equality may waste talented employees by mitigating emotional attachment and career satisfaction.

Limitations

This current study has several limitations. First, this data was collected from a small sample size from the public sector in Lebanon. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized on a larger scale. Further research is needed to extend this study to other cultures and identify differences between the private and public sectors. Second, further studies could assess the effect of confessional diversity on other behavioral outcomes, such as turnover, coping with change, and job satisfaction. Finally, continuance and normative commitments were not included in this research. However, future research

should consider the continuance and normative commitment and their interactions with the other study variables.

Conclusions

Drawing from the above discussion, it can be concluded that studying the impact of confessional diversity in the Lebanese public sector was a challenge. However, the attachment of Lebanese people to religious identity and confession is more rooted at the expense of national commitment. Confessional diversity leads to inequalities. Accordingly, solutions or recommendations for confessional diversity issues in the Lebanese public sector are related to the national, educational, and social levels. Recruitment and selection in a sectarian environment affect the quality of personnel recruited into the public sector. Therefore, it is recommended to implement effective recruitment and selection practices based on evaluating candidates' skills and carrying out background checks rather than on the sects to which they belong. These effective recruitment and selection practices can provide some equal employment opportunities.

Supplementary Information The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-02823-7>.

Data Availability The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declarations

Ethics Approval All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were under the institutional and/or national research committee's ethical standards and the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Consent to Participate All study participants consented to participate in the study.

Consent for Publication Author consented to the publication of this article.

Conflict of Interest Author declares that he has no conflicts of interest.

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