

## **The Employees' Awareness and Attitudes Towards Islamic Banking Products: a Survey of Islamic Banks in Bahrain**

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**Abstract:** This study is aimed at analyzing the employees' awareness and attitudes towards the Islamic banking products. Each of the constructs; awareness and attitude are derived from theories and previous researches. Based on the descriptive analysis of 102 collected data of employees in the five Islamic retail banks in Bahrain, the study concluded that the respondents largely had knowledge of Islamic banking products but do not use it and majority of the respondents have a positive attitude towards Islamic banking practices. These findings invariably convey the standard of employees' awareness and attitude towards the Islamic banking products and services in Bahrain. This information will be useful for further evaluating and benchmarking the competitiveness of employees in Islamic Banking and Financial Institutions.

**Key words:** Awareness • Attitudes • Employees • Islamic Banking Products

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Understanding the assessment and evaluation of Islamic banking products is vitally crucial to the Islamic Banks' employees. The employees must be the first who are aware of the goodness of the products, while having positive attitude to ensure those products are acceptable by the customers. This could be a significant contribution to the development of, particularly, Islamic banks and other Islamic Financial Institutions, at large, whereby the employees knew what they promote and sell to their customers.

The employees of Islamic banks will be able to convince the customers by having full knowledge about the products and its benefits. As it is been stated that all the principles of Islamic Banking and Finance guided with and adhered to Al-Qur'an and Hadith should be acknowledged and comprehensively understandable and practicable. This made employees who are working at the Islamic and non Islamic-based Financial institutions are different. The possession of knowledge and experience by the employees is used as the vital resources for the

companies purposely to achieve better performance and growth, thus the awareness and attitude become the important elements.

Islamic banking industry is the fastest growing segment in the banking system whereby its market share of assets has risen from 2% in the late 1970s to 15% up to mid 1990s [1]. Since 1971, Islamic banks have grown even larger in size as well as in numbers. In the last twenty years, it experienced actual emergence of Islamic banking that being a feasible banking system. Admittedly, the leading vision of these banks continues to be the success of social and financial development through the delivery of financial products and services using the principles and teachings of Islam. To realize their own mission, it is essential for Islamic banks to continuously study the enhancing behavior, attitude and awareness of their clients mainly in the retail segment which usually constitutes as the main aspect of the banking business enterprise [2].

Previous studies have only demonstrated the level of awareness, attitude and understanding of conventional banking amongst customers. There have been insufficient

studies done in assessing the level of employees among Islamic banks, thus this study aims to analyze the aforementioned gap.

### Literature Review

**Islamic Banks in Bahrain:** Essentially, Bahrain is the most developed country in term of Islamic finance structure within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). This country truly promotes and positions itself being a global hub for Islamic finance. To achieve this unique objective, the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB), through its comprehensive regulatory platform, opens up its gateway towards local and international Islamic financial institutions to operate within the country [1].

Bahrain's banking sector has remained as a cornerstone for development of the local economy. The entire banking sector represents more than 85% of overall financial assets. In addition, the dual banking system of Bahrain comprises both of conventional and Islamic-based banks. The conventional banking sector consists of retails, specialized, wholesale and consultant offices of international banks. Additionally, the Islamic sector includes retail and wholesale banks that provide a variety of *Shariah* (Islamic Law) compliant services and products. The only regulator governed the financial system in Bahrain is the CBB (Central Bank of Bahrain). The high number of Islamic financial institutions in the country demonstrated as the leading Islamic financial center in the region. In the year 2011, the Islamic banks' share is around 12% of Bahrain's banking sector [1].

Many experts and authorities of Islamic banks have even stated that Islamic banks are generally not really or less impacted by the global financial crisis compared to conventional counterparts as a result of salient features and characteristics of Islamic banking where all financial transactions must be trade-based, asset-linked and equity-based financing.

**The Islamic Financial Products of Islamic Banks in Bahrain:** Islamic banks in Bahrain present a large amount of product offerings and services. Table 1 displays amongst the most commonly used products and services that are available in Islamic retail banks as well as a brief description on their most common characteristics. According to CBB statistical bulletin report in December 2013, *Murabaha* accounts amounted US\$3.9 billion represent 49% of Restricted and UnRestricted accounts (RUR) for Islamic banks, generally this type of financing is proven to be extremely financially-rewarding that

significantly less risky, followed with *Ijara* (lease) that has US\$1.0 billion accounts represent 13% of the RUR. The unconsolidated subsidiaries and associates present the largest share in the RUR, as it amount of US\$3 billion of the total RUR. *Mudaraba* and *Musharaka* contracts indicates a share of 0.6% and 0.1%, correspondingly. A creative component of Islamic banking showed in its profit loss sharing model, that mostly dependent upon *Mudarabah* (profit sharing) and *Musharakah* (partnership) of Islamic contracts. Meanwhile, a majority of these percentages clearly show the behavior of Islamic banks that aimed of introducing the allowable products under the *Shariah* as well as emphasize on the *Riba* prohibition. This explanation and analysis had been prepared by Dar & Presley [3].

Additionally, it is worth-noted that the total amount banks assets of all banks in Bahrain has reached at US\$ 191.2 billion by the end of 2013. The proportion of Islamic banking institutions in the banking assets was US\$23.3 billion, which represents 8.2 percent of the total banking assets.

### The Awareness Towards Islamic Banking Concept:

Awareness towards the Islamic banking products and services refer to the understanding or acknowledgement of the existing tradable items, the content of products/services as well as the functions. The knowledge of these are acquired by having in touch with the products and services directly or hearing from other sources on it. Beside the growing development of Islamic banking in all over the worlds particularly in Bahrain, the awareness employees who work at those banks are not rigorously evaluated and assessed.

A study conducted by Ramdhony [5] in Mauritius on the awareness of customers on Islamic banking terminology and the view of toward the Islamic banking products. It found that 82% are having awareness out of those 14% that are not aware of Islamic banking products. This study also highlighted a significant relationship between people's awareness and religion. The more pious people, the greater chance getting to familiar with the Islamic banking products. Technically, those respondents have ranked their understanding on Islamic banking products/terms as follows; (i) *Riba* (27.2%); *Shariah* (33.6%); *Mudharabah* (19.8%); *Musharakah* (19.8%); *Sukuk* (16.4%); *Takaful* (28.4%); *Murabaha* (18.1%) and *Ijarah* (22.8%). Moreover, 66% of the respondents mentioned that the religious beliefs only motivate people to deal with an Islamic banks. It also found that majority

Table 1: The most widely used products/services offered by retail Islamic banks in Bahrain

Product / Services	Description
Murabaha	An instrument used for financing the purchase of goods and services where the Islamic bank purchases these on behalf of the customer
Mudarabah (joint venture)	The provision of capital to a partial-equity partnership in return for a share of profits, but where the losses on funds lent are borne by the financier (bank's client)
Musharakah (equity participation)	Full-equity partnerships where the provider of funds and the entrepreneur directly and wholly share in the business. It is commonly known as Diminishing Partnership contract.
Bai Salam (Forward Sale)	Advance or pre-paid sale contracts of agriculture products
Istisna (Manufacture-based)	Manufacturing contracts to cover work in progress and paid by the Islamic bank on behalf of the customer
Ijara (Lease)	Lease financing in the form of operating leases only
Ijara Muntahia Bittamleek	Lease financing in the form of financing (capital lease) leases only. It is commonly known as Lease-to-own
Qard Hassan	Benevolent loans offered Usury free

Source: CBB [4]

of respondents by 84% thought exclusively and had better impression on banks' return. While on the investment choice, 50% of the respondents unexpectedly acknowledged for large amount of money to be deposited in Islamic banks.

Another study by Omer [6] of 300 Muslims in the United Kingdom about their patronage aspects and awareness to Islamic financing methods. It found that the *Shariah*-compliant products appeared to be effectively accessible through Islamic finance "windows" available on conventional banks. It also revealed that the lack of education become a main reason amongst Muslims in the United Kingdom to understand the Islamic finance concepts. That is certainly consistent with other findings and literatures that Muslims living in a notionally Muslim country develop a significant awareness and knowledge of Islamic banking as compared to immigrant Muslims. Although many Muslims in United Kingdom appeared to understand the Islamic methods of finance, the religious commitment remain as the most important element of choosing the Islamic banking services.

An important discovery appeared to know students' knowledge level towards understanding the Islamic financial products. Akhtar and Akhter [7] conducted a survey on employees in Islamic banks' in India and found various understanding level of awareness towards the Islamic banking products. While, Okumus [8] found that the customer's awareness towards Islamic banking products in Pakistan and Turkey are perfectly shape in some of the products such as current and time deposit accounts. However, a number of the Islamic financial products such as *Murabaha* and *Ijara*, are often not aware among the customers. While Awan [9] ascertained the customer awareness towards the Islamic products and services through a chance to access those products

and services and customer satisfaction either at the fully-fledged Islamic banks or dual-window banks operating in Pakistan. Another findings revealed that the customers are less focus to religious belief in banks' selection process. Additionally, the products' concepts and excellence of services are the factors that have less significant in selecting Islamic banks.

In Malaysia, Nordin [10] studied the awareness among 45 business enterprise and customers towards Islamic banking system. It found that a lower used of Islamic banking products and understanding of Islamic financial system particularly concerning the aspect of profit-sharing concept. All of the participants began utilizing Islamic banking in less than 5 years ago, despite the fact of the banking establishment by 15 years.

The studies on awareness associated with understanding of concept. A study on understanding of Islamic banking products among the customers and employees of the Islamic banks in Malaysia by Norafifah [11], found that the respondents were not interested of having banking transactions in Islamic banks because they believed that only the name of the banks had been changed to reflect that it was an Islamic-based bank whereby the interest, which is prohibited in Islam, was still practiced. Overall, the researchers determined that the customers' and employees' understanding the concepts and practices of Islamic banking is still vague. The authors recommended that to prevent any misunderstanding on this concept, adequate training must be given to the employees. While, Rammal [12] posited that some participants who had believed in a *halal* banking product cannot be found even aware of the profit and loss sharing concept. This reveals that they do not acknowledge a fair and better concept which brings reasonable profits.

**The Attitude Towards Islamic Banking Concept:** Allport [13] defined an attitude as a mental or neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence on the individual's response to all objects and situations to which it is related. In a simple definition of attitude is a mindset to act in a particular manner due to both an individual's experience and knowledge.

In Bahrain, Metawa and Almossawi [2] determined that the most important aspect in identifying the attitudes of Islamic banks' clients was religious beliefs than profitability. Additionally, the majority of Bahraini bank consumers were pleased with the standard of Islamic bank services, especially the investment accounts. They found that the essential aspect appeared to be incentive expanded by the banks, accompanied by influence of best friends and family and location. Their research also pointed out that socio-demographic elements including age category, income level and learning level were considered as the important factors on concepts' selections. While, the findings on discovering religious belief as the most significant reason contradict with the analysis conducted by Haron [14].

There were studies which examined the customers and employees' attitude towards Islamic banking products, amongst others are Lee [15]; Jalaluddin [16]; Abdullah and Abdul Rahman [17]; Gait [18]. Lee [15] concluded that the main factor attracting Muslims attitude towards Islamic Banking is the religious belief, followed by goodness of products and services. Meanwhile, Jalaluddin [16] examined the attitudes of 385 business enterprise firms towards the profit or loss sharing approach of finance in Australia. It found that the intention as a result of having an interest towards profit/loss sharing method is derived based on business support, a higher level of risk sharing between lenders and borrowers, risk default of the traditional system as well as interest rates, the profitability linkages and desired rate of return.

The literature on attitudes, perceptions and knowledge of Islamic financial products and services in comparison with those conventional banks empirically had been analyzed extensively by Gaith [18]. Based on their review of the relevant literature, they found that religious conviction was a key factor in the use of Islamic products and services. The consumers also identified that bank reputation, service quality and pricing as being relevance to this matter. Moreover, they determined the

predisposition to Islamic finance methods as subsumed to a complete characteristic of choosing conventional bank. However, in their survey in 2009 on 296 Libyan business firms on attitude towards Islamic finance found that 72.3% of the Libyan business firms are interested to employ Islamic finance. The inspiring factors for business firms to essentially use the Islamic finance are religious beliefs, after that productivity, business support as well as services.

Meanwhile, Abdullah and Abdul Rahman [17] who did a study on Muslim businessmen in Malaysia discover that 80% of the respondents stated that an intention to use Islamic financing is a consequence of religious beliefs commitment that aligned with *Shariah*-based approach. Other essential elements appeared are the capital guarantee and revenue. While, 58% of the users of Islamic financing are encouraged to use Islamic financing due to the awareness that Islamic finance brings proper rights to people and more profitable as compared to conventional financing. However, according the non-customers of Islamic financing, they believed that Islamic finance and conventional products are usually have no significant difference, while Islamic financing is considered more expensive than conventional financing.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Research Design:** This research is based on descriptive analysis consisting of demographic and variables' instruments related to the topic. Based on previous researches, a quantitative research is seen to be more appropriate with this field [19]. Quantitative method explored in which an individual gathers mathematical data to describe and evaluate it by utilizing statistical technique.

**Sample Frame:** A disproportionate stratified random sampling is used in this study. The respondents are the employees from five Islamic retail banks in Bahrain, namely; Bahrain Islamic Bank; Al Baraka Banking Group; Khaleeji Commercial Bank; Ithmaar Bank; and Al Salaam Bank. A total of 150 questionnaire are distributed through an electronic survey system, however, 102 respondents are responded. The chosen banks were selected based on their tenure of operations in the country, size, local presence and international network exposure.

Table 2: Internal Reliability Test

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Awareness of Islamic Banking	8	0.865
Awareness of Islamic Product And Services	15	0.799
Attitude Towards Islamic Banking Practice	12	0.811

**Internal Reliability Assessment:** The reliability refers to consistency. It concerns with the robustness of the questionnaires and whether it will produce consistent findings at different times and under different conditions. This reliability test is assessed by the Cronbach's Alpha values. As depicted in Table 2, the internal reliability test for the three constructs are higher than 0.70, hence the results are reliable.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Descriptive Analysis

**Demographic Profile:** The demographic profile consists of age, religion, educational level, occupation and monthly income level etc.

Out of 102 respondents, there are 47 male and 54 females whereby 37 (36.3%) of them are in range between 20 to 30 years old, while 7 (6.9%) of the respondents are in age of 60 and above. For the educational level, 22 and 32 of the respondents are having diploma and under graduate degree respectively. The bachelor degree has the highest frequency by 48 (46.8%) the respondents. While for the occupation, the respondents who are working in business/financial and accounting fields have the most frequency by 24 (10.7%) and 25 (8.9%) respectively. 58 (50.7%) of the respondents earned their monthly income level between BD 1001-2500. This might due that most of them are in the middle level of carrier and age. While, 16 (26.8%) respondents received less than BD 1000 monthly income and 28 (18.9%) respondents received above BD 2001. Majority of the respondents have long relationships with Islamic banking system which is 40.2% for 6 to 15 years, while 28.4% prefer to deal with credit card as the main selection of Islamic bank's system.

**Respondents Awareness and Attitude of Islamic Banks Products and Services:** As depicted in Table 4, it shows that among the eight products offered by Islamic Banks, 97 respondents (95.10%) are aware and use the deposits account products and have the highest awareness level. Secondly, for the Investment Structure Accounts [SPV], it shows that 49 (48.04%) respondents are aware but do not use such accounts. Thirdly, the Financing Facilities [Ijarah Financing] has 52 (50.98%) respondents that aware

but do not use such facilities. Fourthly, for the financing products [Credit Cards], 55.88% or 57 respondents are aware and use it, while, 51.96% respondents are aware but don't use money market instruments. With regard to Traveler's cheques, 55 or 53.92% respondents are aware but do not use it. Finally, for the over draft and Trade Finance (Letter of credit), 50 (49.02%) and 55 (53.92%) respondents are respectively aware but do not use the products. This conclude that that the respondents largely had knowledge of Islamic banking products but do not use it.

As illustrated in Table 5, it shows the responses of 102 respondents on the awareness towards Islamic banking products in Bahrain. Below is the highlighted responses:

- 64.71% of the respondents are conscious about financial products offered by Islamic banks.
- 50.00% of the respondents thinking that Islamic Banks are well known locally and globally.
- 53.92% of the respondents would like to switch from conventional banks to Islamic banking
- 46.08% of the respondents do believe that Islamic banks operate according to Shariah law.
- 55.88% of the respondents thinking that Islamic banks are not relevant to Muslims.
- 48.04% of the respondents have the confidence on the risk sharing model
- 45.10% of the respondents agree Islamic Banking advertisements are not misleading
- 46.08% of the respondents agree that Islamic banking products in Bahrain are not similar to conventional banks products

Meanwhile, the response of individuals inferring their understanding level of the concept of Islamic banking systems means that they are aware on the concept. It shows that 74% of the respondents are agree that the concept of providing asset backed loan in Islamic Banking does have a positive impact on the financial system. Moreover, the responses depicted that around an average of 57% respondents are aware and agree with the concept of Islamic banking. The same percentage of respondents agrees that Islamic banking is available for Muslims as well as non-Muslims; Islamic banking

Table 3: Respondents Demographic Profile

Items		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	47	46.1%
	Female	55	53.9%
Age	Less than 20 years	0	0.0%
	20-30 years	37	36.3%
	31-40 years	33	32.4%
	41-50 years	25	24.5%
	51-60 years	7	6.9%
	61 and above	0	0.0%
Education Level	Less than High School	0	0.0%
	High School	0	0.0%
	Diploma	22	21.6%
	Under graduate Degree	32	31.4%
	Graduate Degree	48	47.1%
	Other	0	0.0%
Occupation	Management	19	18.63%
	Business and Financial	20	19.61%
	Computer	14	13.73%
	Accountant	24	23.53%
	Others	25	24.51%
Income per month	Less than 500 BHD	5	1.0%
	501-1000 BHD	11	10.8%
	1001- 1500 BHD	20	19.6%
	1501 – 2000 BHD	17	16.7%
	2001 - 2500 BHD	21	20.6%
	2501 – 3000 BHD	13	12.7%
	3000 BHD and Above	15	14.7%
What type of account(s) do you have	Current account Islamic	63	61.8%
	Saving account Islamic	70	68.6%
	Current account non- Islamic	75	73.5%
	Saving account non- Islamic	76	74.5%
	Fix Deposit account	9	8.8%
	Wadiah account	11	10.8%
	Investment (Sukuk, Mudarabah etc )	10	9.8%
	Investment (Bonds, Derivatives etc)	10	9.8%
How long have you been dealing with Islamic banking	Less than 5 years	20	19.6%
	6 to 15 years	41	40.2%
	Above 15 years	30	29.4%
	N/A	11	10.7%
Main reason for selecting an Islamic Bank?	Shariah Compliance	12	11.8%
	High profit on Investment	14	13.7%
	Availability of Finance facility	21	20.6%
	Quality of Service	19	18.6%
	Credit Card deals with [Quard Hasan]	29	28.4%
	Bank Reputation	7	6.9%

Table 4: Respondents' Awareness of Islamic Product and Services

Products and Services	Aware and use it		Aware but do not use it		Not aware of it	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1. Deposit Accounts [Current account, Saving Account]	97	95.10	3	2.94	2	1.96
2. Investment Structure Accounts [ SPV ]	31	30.39	49	48.04	22	21.57
3. Financing Facilities [ Ijarah Financing ]	29	28.43	52	50.98	21	20.59
4. Financing Products [ Credit Cards ]	57	55.88	36	35.29	9	8.82
5. Money Market [ Central Bank of Bahrain Issuance ]	28	27.45	53	51.96	21	20.59
6. Traveler's cheques?	22	21.57	55	53.92	25	24.51
7. Overdraft?	20	19.61	50	49.02	32	31.37
8. Trade Finance (Letter of credit)	19	18.63	55	53.92	28	27.45

Table 5: Respondents' Awareness towards Islamic Banking

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Moderately Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1. Consciousness about financial products offered by Islamic Banks.	2	1.96	14	13.73	17	16.67	66	64.71	3	2.94
2. Islamic Banks are well known locally and globally.	0	0.00	22	21.57	24	23.53	51	50.00	5	4.90
3. Optional to switch the conventional bank to Islamic bank.	1	0.98	20	19.61	23	22.55	55	53.92	3	2.94
4. Islamic banks operate according to Shariah law.	1	0.98	21	20.59	30	29.41	47	46.08	3	2.94
5. Islamic banks are not relevant to Muslims.	3	2.94	22	21.57	19	18.63	57	55.88	3	2.94
6. Islamic Banking is based on risk sharing model	5	4.90	20	19.61	24	23.53	49	48.04	4	3.92
7. Islamic banks advertisements are not misleading.	7	6.86	20	19.61	29	28.43	46	45.10	0	0.00
8. The Islamic banking products available in Bahrain are not similar to the products of conventional banks.	4	3.92	24	23.53	26	25.49	47	46.08	1	0.98
9. The concept of providing loans only when they are backed with an asset has a positive impact on the financial system	0	0.00	7	6.86	15	14.71	75	73.53	5	4.90
10. Islamic banking is available for Muslims as well as non Muslims	0	0.00	21	20.59	23	22.55	53	51.96	5	4.90
11. Islamic banking prohibits interest in all form of transactions	1	0.98	18	17.65	30	29.41	49	48.04	4	3.92
12. Parties in Islamic Banking cannot predetermine a guaranteed profit	1	0.98	18	17.65	26	25.49	53	51.96	4	3.92
13. Returns on Islamic banking are based on gift and profit sharing basis instead of interest	1	0.98	12	11.76	37	36.27	50	49.02	2	1.96
14. Islamic banking prohibits major uncertainty in all form of transactions	0	0.00	15	14.71	26	25.49	59	57.84	2	1.96
15. Islam banks only invest in businesses that are not prohibited by Islam or <i>hala</i> businesses	0	0.00	12	11.76	28	27.45	58	56.86	4	3.92

Table 6: Attitude towards Islamic Banking Practice

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Moderately Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1. Financing based on profit loss sharing between the lender and the borrower will be advantageous for both parties.	0	0.00	7	6.86	12	11.76	81	79.41	2	1.96
2. Financial matters and religion are inseparable.	1	0.98	23	22.55	24	23.53	52	50.98	2	1.96
3. Islamic banking provides a solution to contemporary financial problems	2	1.96	11	10.78	28	27.45	59	57.84	2	1.96
4. Islamic banking is at par with the principles of modern finance	1	0.98	18	17.65	25	24.51	55	53.92	3	2.94
5. Investments are more secure in Islamic banks	4	3.92	17	16.67	28	27.45	51	50.00	2	1.96
6. Islamic banks' goal is not only limited to maximization of shareholders' wealth but also includes enhancement of standard of living and welfare of society	2	1.96	19	18.63	27	26.47	53	51.96	1	0.98
7. By associating themselves with Islamic banks people will become more ethical in their values	1	0.98	16	15.69	29	28.43	55	53.92	1	0.98
8. Islamic banks offer more benefits than conventional banks	1	0.98	20	19.61	43	42.16	38	37.25	0	0.00
9. Information on certain Islamic banking products on leaflets/ brochures/ websites is sufficient and can be easily understood	0	0.00	26	25.49	31	30.39	41	40.20	4	3.92
10. Islamic banks offer interesting products that attract customers more than conventional banks	2	1.96	18	17.65	26	25.49	53	51.96	3	2.94
11. The features and benefits of the Islamic banking products offered by Islamic banks are known to you	0	0.00	18	17.65	27	26.47	53	51.96	4	3.92
12. Compared to conventional banking products do you believe Islamic banking products are unique	2	1.96	20	19.61	31	30.39	45	44.12	4	3.92

prohibits interest in all form of transactions; Islamic banking cannot predetermine a guaranteed profit. They also agree that returns on Islamic banking are based on gift and profit sharing basis instead of interest; Islamic banking prohibits major uncertainty in all forms of transactions and that Islamic banks only invest in business that are not prohibited by Islam or *hala*.

With all these figures, it indicates that most the respondents believe that Islamic banking products are unique and have a sense of dealing with others. In addition, they believe that Islamic banking laws are derived from Al Hadith and the Holy Quran. This also concludes that 56% of respondents are aware on the the Islamic banks products, in other words, that more than half of the population have the awareness and understanding on the Islamic banking concept.

Furthermore, as depicted in Table 6, it shows that majority of the population by 79.41% are agree that financing based on profit loss sharing between the lender

and the borrower will be advantageous for both parties. Whereas almost half i.e. on average 53% of the population agree that financial matter and religion are inseparable and that Islamic banking provides a solution to the contemporary financial problems. The same percentage also agree that Islamic banking is at par with the principles of modern finance which is more secure and its goals are not only limited to maximization of shareholders wealth but will also make people more ethical in their values. This conclude that majority of the respondents have a positive attitude towards Islamic banking practices.

## CONCLUSION

This study consists few limitations such as; (i) skewness of population that limit to the employees of the selected banks, thus the final result may not represent the population in sectors; (ii) various backgrounds of

respondents may result variety of awareness against people working in other career fields due that any level of awareness will have significant relationship with their occupation and income level. The forthcoming researchers could perhaps add the variables of assessing the awareness and attitudes of employees, while cover many number of banks as the sample of the study.

The findings of the research convey the standard of employees' awareness and attitude towards the Islamic banking products and services in Bahrain. This information will be useful for evaluation and benchmarking the competitiveness of employees. Some strategies may be considered to increase and promote awareness by holding the workshops related to marketing strategies on the products offered by the Islamic banks. The banking institutions also would find some ways to educate their employees about the Islamic terms and conditions throughly.

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