

# The Implementation of Modified Watch Keeping Schedule for Muslim PCG Personnel during the Month of Ramadhan

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this research is to find out and recognize the potential issues that may be brought about by the non-implementation of the modified duty work schedule resulting in the suboptimal performance and worrisome levels of cognitive effectiveness of our personnel, due to sleep deprivation, and to prevent chronic health effect. This study is phenomenological research with a qualitative method using the focus group discussion. The guide question was administered personally or posted through an online platform prior to the actual conduct of the FGD for familiarization of the respondents on the possible overarching research question. The research yielded the findings and conclusion that the dominant solution to resolve the problem is the crafting of a standard operating procedure for the implementation of a modified duty work schedule for PCG Muslim personnel during the month of Ramadhan.*

**Keywords:** Watch Keeping, Watch Standing, Duty Watch, Ramadhan Modified Schedule, Cognitive Effectiveness

## 1. Introduction

According to research, members of the armed service are not getting enough sleep. Sleep deprivation in the uniformed service dates back to ancient Greeks. While all departments of the military appear to be infiltrated into this long sleep sacrifice tradition, the "24/7" nature of continuous deployment in a defensive environment exacerbates the problem. The marine environment, in particular, is characterized by increased sleep disorders, sleep deprivation, and fatigue (Miller, 2011).

Historically, vessels have been continuously deployed with qualified personnel standing and monitoring at various important locations on the vessel (usually ship bridges, combat centers, engineering rooms). This crew requirement necessitates a sizable number of crew to allow to devote time to other tasks and break activities. Surveillance schedules depend on organizational culture, previous experience in command leadership, and the number of qualified seafarers available for surveillance. This is the main limitation of ships with a small crew.

Watch keeping or watch standing (work duty schedule) are characterized by the amount of watch sections needed to continually stand sentinel and are typically described as 2, 3, or 4 section watch stand, requiring 2, 3 or 4 individuals, respectively, to stand face watch at a selected location to encompass the entire day. Efforts have been made to scale back manning in a shot to align costs to a shrinking defense budget. Studies on naval vessels showed that watch schedules traditionally used at sea led to sleep deprivation, sleep fragmentation, suboptimal performance and worrisome levels of cognitive effectiveness, in some cases, it may cause chronic health effect, among others, sleep disorder, metabolic disorder, cardiovascular disorder, and gastrointestinal disorder (internet source: <https://www.hsdl.org>).

Under the provision of Presidential Decree No. 2911 as amended by P.D. No. 322, provides that:

Sec. 3. (a) During the fasting season on the month of Ramadan, all Muslim employees in the national government, government-owned or controlled corporations, provinces, cities, municipalities and other instrumentalities shall observe office hours from seven-thirty in the morning (7:30 a.m.) to three-thirty in the afternoon (3:30 p.m.) without lunch break or coffee breaks, and that there shall be no diminution of salary or wages, provided, that the employee who is not fasting is not entitled to the benefit of this provision.

In addition, pursuant thereto, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) promulgated Resolution No. 81-1277 dated November 13, 1981 which states in part:  
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2. During "Ramadan" the Fasting month (30 days) of the Muslims, the Civil Service official time of 8 o'clock to 12 o'clock and 1 o'clock to 5 o'clock is hereby modified to 7:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. without noon break and the difference of 2 hours is not counted as undertime Ramadhan Muslim personnel

For the Islam faith, the month of Ramadhan is the holiest month, because it is the month in which Allah, the Most High, revealed the noble Quran, as the final testimony, to the beloved prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), the last of the Messengers of God, who received the revelation of the Quran from a special messenger sent by God for this purpose: the angel Gabriel, who correctly read the words of the Lord to him. During this month, Muslims are obligated to fast from early sunrise to sunset. During the time of daily fasting, no amount of food should

be taken as this invalidates it and whoever does not follow what is prescribed during this blessed month without good reason, will commit a mortal sin. This is based on the pronouncement of the Qur'anic wording and Hadith or the prophetic tradition declared that: Allah said: *"O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you so that you may develop an awareness of God."* (Quran 2:183). The Prophet Muhammad said: *Islam is built on 5 pillars: worshipping Allah and not believing in anything worshiped outside of Him, praying, giving alms, performing Hajj at Mecca and fasting in the month of Ramadan.* (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī, Book No. 8).

Furthermore, this is the month in which Almighty Allah sends His incalculable blessings which should not be taken lightly to attain the reward of Paradise on the Day of Judgment. During the days of this holy month, Muslims are encouraged to follow certain fasting etiquettes to make it easier and less burdensome for them, as all the mandatory obligations are prescribed without making life difficult and stressful, but to test their true faith in all the commandments of the Almighty Creator. Among the guidelines is enjoining the early dawn meal and a meal to break the fast after sunset, as such, Muslims wake up after midnight in order to prepare their food and stay awake for the dawn prayer which is also mandatory. Thus, Muslim faithful need a little additional time for their dinner break, traditionally, to break the fast is to eat a little snack, do a ritual cleansing and pray before eating dinner.

Certainly, if the PCG Command can make it as a policy for the implementation of the modified work duty schedule for Muslim personnel during the month of Ramadhan, then we can benefit the optimal performance and high levels of cognitive effectiveness of our troops. Additionally, it may prevent chronic health effect, i.e., sleep disorder, metabolic disorder, cardiovascular disorder, and gastrointestinal disorder and at the same time we can practice the principle of leadership, which is now more than 60 years after its first publication in an Army Field Manual on Leadership in 1951, still taught, basically unmodified ever since and nonetheless used by all the Armed Forces in primary schooling along with Marines, Air Force, and Navy - from entry level privates to officers at all stages, among others, is to know our people and look out for their welfare.

## 2. Literature Survey

The researcher based his research study on the following theories: Shift Work Theory by Muhammad Jamal (1981); Coping Theory by Richard Lazarus, et. al. (1984); Theory of Complexity by Edgar Morin (2007), and Theory of Evolutionary by EB Ezenwanne (2011).

Shift work is defined as working at variable times of the day (e.g., morning, afternoon, and night) or working at consistent but unusual times of the day (e.g., fixed afternoon shifts, fixed or fixed night shift). This is an employment activity designed for use or providing service 24 hours a day, every day of the week (often abbreviated to 24/7). It is common practice to view days as divided into shifts, defined periods of time during which different groups of workers complete their tasks. The term "shift work" includes both

long night shifts and work schedules in which employees change or rotate shifts. According to Jamal in his theory, shift work is a powerful source of stress as it opposed to the human circadian system and this conflict creates multiple physiological, psychological and psychosocial problems for shift workers.

In their theory of coping, Lazarus, et. al. suggested that, it is a vast field of study that is classified into various independent parameters. Theories that focus on states and characteristics of coping recognize a person's internal resources and mental capacity to gauge how well they can adapt to a situation. On the other hand, the approach-oriented macro- and micro- analytic coping theories revolve around the concreteness or abstraction of coping mechanisms.

In the Theory of Complexity, Edgar Morin (2007) posited that complexity is a phenomenon of nature as well as of human cultures, which is studied by complexity theory, which is put into practice through complex thinking (or complex thought), which in turn is a set of methods and techniques that include what he called the "cognitive operators of complex thinking."

In the same way, complexity theory and complexity thinking do not replace systems. Simplicity cannot replace complexity. Things are not as simple as many people would like to be. Therefore, "complexity is a problem word, not a solution word."

In the Theory of Evolutionary, EB Ezenwanne (2011) also known as the adaptive theory of sleep, suggests that periods of activity and inactivity evolved as a means of conserving energy. Thus, all species have adapted to sleep during periods of time when wakefulness would be the most hazardous.

As humans evolved, hiding overnight increased the odds of survival. So sleep has become an adaptive or evolutionary advantage and has become part of the species' neurochemistry. However, most experts reject this idea because sleep leaves animals (including humans) vulnerable and helpless, which does not support the notion that sleep helped our ancestors safer.

Bamba et al. (2008) conducted a systematic review of studies assessing the health and work-life balance impacts of organizational-level interventions to modify work schedules according to shift. The researchers found beneficial effects of three types of interventions. Increased rate of change has been associated with improved sleep and reduced fatigue (e.g., from seven consecutive morning shifts to up to three or four consecutive morning shifts). Switching from reverse to forward also improved sleep. Self-scheduling - the ability for "individual shift workers to control which shifts they work, when they start working, or when their holidays happen." It is associated with fewer work breaks, less fatigue, better work-life balance, and improved productivity.

Suwazono, et. al. (2006) evaluated the relationship between shift work and the onset of diabetes in male workers in a steel company. They used medical examination records of

the participants from 1991 to 2001. Those with diabetes or some other condition prior to the start of the study were excluded and other variables may have influenced to the risk of controlled diabetes in the statistical analysis. They found that shift workers had a significantly higher risk of diabetes than regular workers.

Haus and Smolensky (2006) have considered some of the possible effects of circadian rhythm disruption on shift workers. This can lead to insomnia or poor sleep during the new schedule adjustment period. It can also lead to changes in hormone levels, which can affect cell growth and division. In addition, workers are rarely completely used to the unexpected. Even after a long period of night work, only a small number of workers show adaptations of their biological systems to the nocturnal pattern, in part because night workers often return to a normal sleep/wake cycle on days off.

According to Eyoita (2005) there is no doubt that a lack of sleep can explain poor performance at work or at school. There are obvious life-threatening problems related to human judgment errors such as traffic accidents. Sleep deprivation is clearly the cause of many fatigue-related decision-making errors, leading to a number of deaths. One obvious consequence of lack of sleep is that it makes the body and mental organs less intact and functioning. On the other hand, it has been noted that the quality of sleep is as important as its duration.

Fawzy et al., (1990) in a study on melanoma patients indicated the correlation of positive coping with improved cellular functions and immunity. Results showed that critically ill patients who receive supportive counseling or attend regular health awareness programs are more successful in dealing with their illnesses.

For Scheier & Carver (1985) in mental health studies on coping have indicated that there is a robust neurobiological connection between stress and adjustment. A host of experiments and literary reviews have proven that the stress management techniques we use help in restoring functions at the molecular levels in the body.

Preiser & Cilliers (2010) acknowledging complexity therefore has a profound impact not only on the status of scientific practices, but also on the status of our knowledge claims as such. More specifically, because our knowledge of complex phenomena is limited, our practices should be informed by, and subject to, a self-critical rationality.

### **3. Methodology**

This study is a phenomenological research with a qualitative method using the focus group discussion.

Group discussion is part of the qualitative research tradition. It involves a focus on specific problems, with a predefined group of people, participating in an interactive discussion. The goal of the group discussion is to gain multiple perspectives on the research topic in a 60-90 minute period and to create an environment in which the participants feel comfortable expressing their views. A relaxed, non-

threatening environment is important to provide participants with a safe environment where they can share their ideas, beliefs, and attitudes within the company of like-minded people, socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicity, and gender.

The researcher conducted it by administering a guide question to target respondents prior to the actual discussion to familiarize with the general and well-framed research question. During a group discussion, participants share their views, listen to the views of others, and can refine their views based on what they have heard. Then review each section and check for comprehension. Once satisfied that they fully understand the research and their rights as a participant, ask for their consent to be in the focus group. After they sign the forms, to also sign them. If the study protocol requires them to obtain oral consent, they shall sign the consent form to document that their oral consent have been obtained. Protocols may require that oral informed consent be tape-recorded in full or in part, before and sometimes again after the focus group. Lastly, offer them a copy of the informed consent form, written in a language they understand.

The questionnaire is divided into two (2) parts. Part I, is the overall research question, which was asked of the participants and the response have been collected, evaluated, compared, and finally interpreted in a way that makes it possible to answer the overarching research question. Part II, is the Sustainability, Feasibility, and Acceptability Test wherein the respondents may answer by choosing the appropriate letter corresponding to their answer.

After which it was collected, evaluated and compared, and finally interpreted which is described in the data gathering procedure.

### **4. Results/ Discussions**

In this chapter, the researcher will present the result of the decoded responses of the informants. In addition to the presentation of the result, the researcher will also point out the interpretation, implication, and analysis based on the theories relied upon and used in this study.

From the responses gathered in each of the guide questions which was presented during the conduct of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) who were the Natural Group wherein it consist of multiple participants belonging to a pre-existing formal group prior to the study.

For item number 1 question, all of informants answered unanimously which is 100%. The same percentage of responses was also gathered on the follow up question.

For the Islam faith, the month of Ramadhan is the holiest month, because it is the month in which Allah, the Most High, revealed the noble Quran, as the final testimony, to the beloved prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), the last of the Messengers of God, who received the revelation of the Quran from a special messenger sent by God for this purpose: the angel Gabriel, who correctly read the words of the Lord to him. During this month, Muslims are obligated to fast from early sunrise to sunset. During the

time of daily fasting, no amount of food should be taken as this invalidates it and whoever does not follow what is prescribed during this blessed month without good reason, will commit a mortal sin.

For item number 2, all of the respondents have answered the same which is equivalent to a percentile rank of 100%. Each of them are actually posting as sentinel although they differ as to the nature of the unit they belong to. Some are deployed outside their unit and some are deployed within the office. In addition, their schedule are different since the office is implementing a rotating shift work.

Shift workers and night workers are often tired and sleepy due to work schedules. Being too tired makes it difficult to concentrate, increasing the risk of mistakes or accidents. This can pose a risk to both workers and the public. The stress of shift work can also make health problems worse, such as heart disease or digestive disorders.

For item number 3, the group responded, as to what difficulty they have experienced, if any, while posted as duty sentinel during fasting in the month of Ramadhan, which is related to their physical health and cognitive functioning. The answers was coded as "physical" for illness related to physical health and "motor" for disease related to neurological concern. A total of 50% answered "physical" and 50% "motor".

During the days of this holy month, Muslims are encouraged to follow certain fasting etiquettes to make it easier and less burdensome for them. Among the rituals are the early dawn meal and a meal to break the fast after sunset, as such, Muslims wake up after midnight in order to prepare their food and stay awake for the dawn prayer which is also mandatory.

For Jamal (2009) in his study on the theory on Shift Work he explained that there is a stronger association between shift work and morbidity than mortality, suggesting that the choice of shift work or, for example, use of occupational medicine screening might weaken the association with mortality. In addition, cardiovascular disorders (CVD) are more common in older adults who are no longer exposed to work-related CVD risk factors.

For item number 4, the respondents were asked on how do they coped up with their experience which is considered difficult as they are posted as duty watch keeper while fasting. It resulted to, 16% who said that, since a modified work duty schedule is implemented in their unit for the duration of the Ramadhan fasting, they are able to take a rest, in order to cope up with the difficulty. 48% responded that, although they are given time to rest but depending on their comrade who is willing to assume as standby and/or on the Petty Officer-in-charge on duty who would allow for them to take a rest.

Relatively, for Suwazono, et. al. (2006) they evaluated the relationship between shift work and the onset of diabetes in male workers in a steel company. They used medical examination records of the participants from 1991 to 2001. Those with diabetes or some other condition prior to the

start of the study were excluded and other variables may have influenced to the risk of controlled diabetes in the statistical analysis. They found that shift workers had a significantly higher risk of diabetes than regular workers.

All of these characteristics can affect how much stress and fatigue a person feels due to their work schedule. If people feel too stressed and exhausted, they may not be able to do their jobs safely and effectively. Or they may develop health problems.

In their theory of coping, Lazarus, et. al. suggested that, it is a vast field of study that is classified into various independent parameters. Theories that focus on states and characteristics of coping recognize a person's internal resources and mental capacity to gauge how well they can adapt to a situation. On the other hand, the approach-oriented macro- and micro- analytic coping theories revolve around the concreteness or abstraction of coping mechanisms.

Concomitantly, Scheier & Carver (1985) as regard the mental health studies on coping, have indicated that, there is a robust neurobiological connection between stress and adjustment. A host of experiments and literary reviews have proven that the stress management techniques we use, help in restoring functions at the molecular levels in the body.

For item number 5, on their awareness of a law on modified schedule for Muslim during the month of Ramadhan. A total of 100% of the informants responded that they are aware. This may be attributed to the radio message submitted by the office of the CHS recommending the approval of the Command via the concerned central staff on the application of the provision of PD No. 2911 as amended by PD No. 322 (Annex "B").

For item number 6, on their conformity with the adoption of the Traditional Ramadhan break of the AFP, a total of 100% of the respondents do not agree with the adoption of it.

For item number 7, on how they like to choose between taking a Ramadhan break (similar to that is informally implemented by the AFP) or a Christmas break. A total of 16% responded to avail of the Ramadhan break while 75% prefer to take the year-end break.

For item number 8, on the inquiry if the respondents feel morally and spiritually uplifted when they are able to practice with their religious obligation of fasting. A total of 100% responded that they are morally and spiritually uplifted if they able to fulfill their religious obligation.

Religious Cognitive Emotional Theory (RCET) points out that if human beings have not physical health but their thoughts and everyday beliefs are realistic, they do not know their purpose and the meaning of life and do not answer the essential questions about their lives; they cannot have healthy emotions, behaviors and feeling of comfort and satisfaction in their lives. Thus, everybody seeks the meaning of life, existence and God.

The purpose of religion is to give a new direction to human



life style, keeping in mind the immediate future and contemporary point of view. Religion contains many eternal values as basis of direction out of which one remained principal (Kumar, 2008).

If there is no fundamental basis for morality, then morality is bound to fail. He continues to emphasize that any attempt to arrive at basis for morality that is independent from religion is bound to fail. Secular ethics have no fundamental motive to be good. It is too superficial. It lacks of metaphysics and a basis for values and obligations (Mayrodes, 1986).

For item number 9, on the inquiry of respondents' belief that they will gain an optimal performance and cognitive effectiveness when they take a Ramadhan break. A total of 100% responded that they will gain optimal performance and high levels of cognitive effectiveness if they could take a Ramadhan break or the modified work duty schedule that is implemented in the PCG. On a follow up question, 100% of them manifested that as implemented in the PCG upon the request of the CHS Unit a radio message for widest dissemination is issued to carry out the implementation of modified work duty schedule for Muslim personnel who are observing the Ramadhan fast.

This may be tested using a statistical analyzation of tree classification of respondents. In this kind of statistical test using computer software, it is an exploratory research method to illustrate associations between variables not suited to traditional regression analysis. It is an easily interpreted method for modelling interactions between health-related variables that would otherwise remain obscured.

For item number 10, the respondents were asked if they are amenable with the modified work duty schedule being implemented in the PCG. It clearly appeared that 100% of them are favorable to the modified watch keeping schedule implemented by the PCG Command.

For item number 11, will show how the respondents will be benefited if it would be made as a policy the implementation of a modified watch keeping during the month of Ramadhan. A total of 100% responded that it helped them a lot by being able to take some rest. For them, it is a means of coping up with difficulty they undergo due to lack of sleep in observing their religious obligation of fasting during the month of Ramadhan at the same time posting as duty/office watch.

Further test may also be conducted with the use of statistical analyzation of tree classification of respondents. In this kind of statistical test using computer software, the classification and regression tree method is a useful exploratory form of research capable of providing insights into what is happening across the population and may be used to develop models to evaluate and improve care, stratify risk and determine prognoses.

According to the Complexity theory by Morin (2007) he posited that complexity is a phenomenon of nature as well as of human cultures, which is studied by complexity theory, which is put into practice through complex thinking

(or complex thought), which in turn is a set of methods and techniques that include what he called the "cognitive operators of complex thinking."

Items number 12 to number 14, is a question that intends to test the Feasibility, Suitability, and Acceptability of the three (3) identified Courses of Action. For this study, the researcher have supplied the following course of action: crafting an appropriate procedure purposely for the implementation of the modified work duty schedule during the fasting season on the month of Ramadhan; adapting the existing policy of the Armed Forces of the Philippines regarding the traditional Ramadhan break, and formulating a standard operating procedure on selecting either to take a Ramadhan break or Christmas break for Muslim Personnel.

Feasibility is the brilliant concept that it can be done in such a way the concept may be executed with the resources available. It is a do all the spadework to see if the great idea is practicable. Acceptability is when seeing it in the overall picture, it is worth the cost. It seeks to justify the objectives pursued, the methods used to achieve them. Suitability is that aspect of testing that determines that the action will in fact solve the problem.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the responses of the informants on the question if they practice the habit of fasting during the month of Ramadhan. It appears that 100% of total number of the respondents responded in the affirmative. Fasting refers to the abstinence during daytime from eating, drinking and sex starting from dawn to dusk is prohibited for all adult Muslims who are not seriously ill or chronically ill, traveling, elderly, people who are breastfeeding, diabetic or menstruating. In addition, Muslims refrain from sinful words and deeds during fasting or the month of Ramadan. The act of fasting is said to divert the heart from worldly pursuits, the purpose of which is to purify the soul by freeing it of harmful impurities. Muslims also believe that fasting helps instill compassion for the poor who have no food and helps them learn to give and not to receive.

From the reply of the informants on the question if they are posting as duty watch keeper while fasting during the month of Ramadhan, 100% replied on the affirmative.

Any person on watch at a given time (also watch stander). A spell of duty. It is inconceivable that an oceangoing ship could be operated around-the-clock without shift work and, from the earliest days of navigation there are records showing the division of crews into groups known as watches. Nowadays, the merchantman's nautical day is most usually divided into six 4-hour time periods, but sometimes follows the warship routine of five 4-hour and two 2-hour watches. The shorter periods— called "dogwatches"—ensure that seamen are not always on duty at the same time, whether the crew is divided into the usual three watches, which gives them eight hours between spells of duty, or in two (watch-and-watch) standing a grueling four hours on and four off.

It can therefore be concluded that the dominant solution to

resolve the problem is the crafting of a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the implementation of a modified work duty schedule for PCG Muslim personnel during the month of Ramadhan. As it provides a far-reaching approach aimed at benefitting the optimal performance and high levels of cognitive effectiveness of our troops. Additionally, it may prevent chronic health effects, i.e., sleep disorder, metabolic disorder, cardiovascular disorder, and gastrointestinal disorder and at the same time, we can practice the principle of leadership which among other things, is to know our people and look out for their welfare. Lastly, it is suitable, feasible, and acceptable among the three courses of action tested and considered in this study.

## 6. Future Scope

Based on the results of the study, further improved research can also be recommended to uncover some possibilities for improvement for a more effective solution and recommendations for the problem that may seem resemblant to the current one. One other thing, if partial sleep deprivation is to be studied in the future, a more comprehensive study should be performed using a longitudinal design. Managers need to be aware of how productivity is affected by sleep deprivation and fatigue. Workplace sleepiness, whether caused by a simple lack of sleep or an undiagnosed or untreated sleep disorder, can have an important impact on how workers are able to do their jobs.

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