EFFECT OF ISLAMIC WORK ETHICS ON EMPLOYEES WORK ENGAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

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This study was designed to investigate the effect of Islamic work ethics (IWE) on employees work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) among employees working in Public healthcare sector in Pakistan. The data was collected from 189 nurses working in the Public hospitals in Pakistan. It was hypothesized that IWE would positively predict work engagement and OCB among employees. IWE was found to positively predict work engagement and OCB. Conducted in a Pakistani cultural setting, the study demonstrates the significance of IWE in enhancing work engagement among employees. Additionally, it also demonstrates the value of IWE in predicting healthcare employees’ OCB.

Key words: Islamic work ethics, employees work engagement and organizational citizenship behavior
position in business community. Moreover, the increasingly competitive work environment and the workforce diversity across the world is demanding researchers to understand the influential role of different religious and cultural elements that regulate business (Eastman & Santoro, 2003). Islamic teaching covers all the dimension of human life including work within the organization (Ahmad, 2011).

Every society has its own culture that shapes people’s lives; societies with a religion-based culture have more influence on people’s ethical values (Porter, 2010). Considering Pakistani society, the majority of the country’s population are Muslims. In the current era of development, the country is facing many problems, slowing progress towards successful organizational development. Of the many reasons for this slow development, ignorance of Islamic ethical values in the workplace is one that needs attention. Rokhman (2010) noted that one of the main reasons for organizational collapse is the lack of ethical values in the workplace. Therefore, highlighting the importance of IWE among organizational management and employees, especially in the healthcare sector which confronts dangerous problems is a field of interest where much can be done.

Some studies have been conducted in the area of IWE and employees attitudes and behaviors at workplace. IWE has been found significantly related to employees job satisfaction (Mohamed, Karim, & Hussein, 2010), organizational commitment (Hayati & Caniago, 2012), job involvement (Khan, Abbas, Gul, & Raja, 2015) knowledge sharing behavior and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB; Murtaza et al., 2016). However, research centering on employees work engagement and OCB has been lacking. In the current dynamic and challenging era employees’ work engagement and OCB are considered essential for successful functioning of the organization (Leiter & Bakker, 2010; Organ, 1988). Similarly, Islamic ethical values emphasize professional engagement at the workplace, so that every individual can become an active and supportive member of the society. Islam also stresses cooperation and collaboration among individuals at workplace which is a type of OCB. Likewise, scholars have also suggested the relevance of IWE to OCB (Murtaza et al., 2016). In Islam life without work is worthless and helping others is a noble deed (A. Ali, 1988). We believe that the study of the effect of IWE on employees work engagement and OCB is important because of its relevance to Islamic codes of life and, to the best of our knowledge until now, no study has been attempted to examine this specific model both empirically and theoretically.

The objectives of the current study are threefold. Firstly, the study will examine how IWE effects employees work engagement and OCB, thereby broadening the existing literature on the IWE. Secondly, work engagement and OCB plays significant role in enhancing organizational effectiveness, the study will also examine the role of the IWE in improving work engagement and OCBs, among employees in healthcare sector of Pakistan. Lastly, the induction of the study framework will provide practical guidelines to flourish the performance of employees working in public healthcare sector. As Islamic teaching emphasize on cooperation, enthusiasm, and hard work at workplace; the current study will demonstrate the vital role of IWE in organizational development.
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THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS

IWE, Work Engagement and OCB

Work ethics is a topic of interest for researcher around the world, and different work ethics measures; for instance, PWE, IWE, BWE, HWE, and CWE have been developed by the scholars in different countries. Work ethics in an Islamic context can be defined as a set of work related values and principles that distinguish right from wrong (Beekun, 1997). Islam considers work as a necessity for fulfilling the human needs as well as for maintaining balance in ones individual and social life (Nasr, 1984).

IWE originates from the teachings of Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (A. J. Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008; Rice, 1999; Darwish A Yousef, 2000). Islam means peace which can be achieved through ones complete submission in front of Allah’s will in all spheres of life (Abuznaid, 2006). Islam encourages every Muslim to find legitimate path of earning money, hard work, and considers laziness as an evil for society (Darwish A Yousef, 2000). Islam teaches and guides every Muslim in all sphere of life (Rice, 1999), both to obey the code of life as explained in Islamic Law and Jurisprudence and submissiveness to Allah’s will is compulsory for every individual (Syed & Ali, 2010).

Many scholars highlight the role of IWE and its effect on employee’s workplace outcomes. A. Ali (1988) is considered the first scholar who conducted research on IWE based on the teachings of the Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (Rice, 1999). The teaching of the Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad are the fundamental source of guidelines for every person and are applicable to every feature of human life equally (Abbasi, Rehman, & Bibi, 2011). Taking into account the significance of IWE streams of studies (A. Ali, 1988; A. J. Ali, 1992; Khan et al., 2015; Mohammad, Quoquab, & Salam, 2015; Darwish A Yousef, 2000; Danvish A Yousef, 2000; Yousef, 2001) emphasize to enlarge the research on IWE in finding the relationship between IWE and employees attitude and behavior at the workplace in different cultures.

Islamic principles stresses more on cooperation, loyalty, hard work, and human dignity (A. J. Ali, 1992). In the Islamic ethical principle work is always considered as a means to nurture personal growth and social relations (A. J. Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008). According to Islamic philosophy those individual who work hard are more likely to be affluent and make progress in life (A. Ali, 1988; Danvish A Yousef, 2000). Additionally in Islam workers are supposed to do well according to one’s ability. The Prophet said “God blesses a person who perfects his craft (does the job right)” and “God loves a person who learns precisely how to perform his work and does it right”. Further he stated that, “No one eats better food than that which he eats out of the work of his hand” and “No earnings are better than that of one’s own effort” (A. J. Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008). Work in Islam is a form of worship, and good work benefits both one’s self and others (A. J. Ali, 1992). So based on the teaching of Quran, and sayings of Prophet Muhammad we expect that the individual who follow the teachings of Islam will be expected to show more engagement and cooperative work behavior.
Employees work engagement is considered as a necessary element for the long-term organizational success. Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker (2002), defined work engagement as the fulfillment of a work related state of mind portrayed by dedication, absorption and vigor. Dedication refers to an individual’s psychological aspect in which he experiences a sense of inspiration, challenge and enthusiasm; whereas, absorption refers to an individual’s who is profoundly focus on his job and doing hard work so as to make it difficult to separate him from the hard working characteristics. Lastly, vigor refers to an individual’s high level of flexibility, efforts and persistence in during work hours (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Employees work engagement has been studied with a variety’s of employee attitudes and behaviors at workplace; For example organizational justice (Ghosh, Rai, & Sinha, 2014), authentic leadership (Alok & Israel, 2012), workplace empowerment (Cho, Laschinger, & Wong, 2006), job resource (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009), and job performance (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010).

Until now a plethora of research studies have been conducted on finding the relationship between IWE and employee’s workplace attitude and behaviors. For example Mohamed et al. (2010) conducted a study on faculty member of different educational institutions in Malaysia and found that IWE had positive effect on faculty member’s job satisfaction. Likewise, Rokhman (2010) found a positive association between IWE and organizational commitment. In another study conducted by Sadozai, Marri, Zaman, Yousufzai, and Nas (2013) found that IWE had a negative correlation with employee’s turnover intention. Further previous studies also suggest a positive association between IWE and innovation capabilities (Kumar & Che Rose, 2012; Yesil, Sekkeli, & Dogan, 2012). Studies have also been conducted on the relationship between IWE and employees workplace behavior. For example the study conducted by Awan, Abbas, Qureshi, and Shahzad (2014) revealed a positive association between IWE and job performance. Similarly Murtaza et al. (2016) conducted a study on educational institutions and reported a positive relationship between IWE and knowledge sharing behaviors.

However, despite numerous studies conducted on finding the effect of IWE on employee’s workplace attitude and behavior, lack of attention has been given to employees work engagement. Islam considers life meaningless without work. In organizational context employees who follow Islamic codes of ethics are expected to engage more in their work. The Prophet said “Indeed Allah loves one who does work, he does it with perfection” (A. J. Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008). Since IWE emphasize more on hard work, we believe that employees with high IWE will be more engaged in their work than employees with a low IWE. Based on the above discussion, we hypothesized that;

**HYPOTHESIS 1:** IWE will be positively associated with employees work engagement

**Effect of IWE on OCB**

In the era of a dynamic and competitive environment, the role of OCB is considered very vital for the efficient functioning of the organization. OCB is usually defined as “the employee’s voluntary behavior that is not included in formal rewards system of the
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organization but enhance the organizational success” (Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zapata-Phelan, 2005; Organ, 1988). Since, the year 2000, more than 400 research studies have been published on OCB related constructs which indicates the considerable increase in the interest of OCB recorded by researchers in the area of management (Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009).

Islamic principles stress more on cooperation among employees at the workplace to established a conducive work setting (Husin, 2012). The work should not only give benefits to the individual themselves but should be beneficial for the whole society (Gibbs, Ilkan, & Pouloukas, 2007). The Prophet on several occasions addressed the issues related to work. He stated that “the best of people are those who benefit others” (Wahab, 2014). According to Islamic teachings, it is the moral obligation of every Muslim to assist their coworkers and organization when needed (Murtaza et al., 2016). Islam emphasizes social relations to meet one’s need and to create harmony in ones individuals and social life (Aldulaimi, 2016). The teachings of Quran emphasize the need for every Muslim to work as a team member, saying: “The believers, men and women, are helpers, supporters, friends and protectors of one another” (09:71). Prophet Mohamed said: “You are not a believer of Allah, unless you like for your brother what you like for yourself” (Aldulaimi, 2016). Islamic codes of ethics always encourage Muslims to demonstrate positive and good behaviors. At the workplace the employees who follow these codes of ethics exhibit more citizenship behavior.

Despite, several studies conducted on IWE and employees workplace outcomes only two empirical studies (Abbasi et al., 2011; Murtaza et al., 2016), have been found that examined the relationship between IWE and OCB. Both studies revealed a positive association between IWE and OCB. Moreover, it has been noted that until now no study has been conducted in healthcare sector which examined the relationship between IWE and OCB. Hence, we expect that employees with high IWE will be more cooperative with their colleagues as compared to the employee who exhibit low IWE. Based on the above discussion, we hypothesized that;

**Hypothesis 2:** IWE will be positively associated with employee’s OCB

**Method**

*Sample and Procedures*

By using a cross-sectional design, the data was collected from 250 nurses working in two big public hospitals in Peshawar city of Pakistan. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed with written consent form among all respondents. The researchers highlight the study’s importance and assured the confidentiality of the information provided. A formal approval was taken from the Chief Nursing Superintendent of the hospital before data collection. The participants of the study also provided their demographic information such as age, gender, education, marital status, organizational tenure and nature of job.

We distributed 250 questionnaires and received 200 questionnaires, 11 questionnaire forms were found to be incomplete therefore we excluded them. Consequently, 189 complete questionnaires were included for data analysis, with a response rate of 75 % which is high compared to previous studies conducted in Pakistani context (Khan et al., 2015). The majority of respondents (82%) were female. About 60 % of the respondents were aged 21–30 years. Most of the respondents (64%) held a bachelor’s degree. (49%) of the total
respondents were unmarried. Majority of the respondents (87%) were permanent employees. Finally, (46%) of the respondents has 1–5 year work experience.

Measures
All the scales were measures using 5-point Likert scales with anchors ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. As English is widely spoken and understand in Pakistan, so the questionnaire was administered in English language. Moreover, all the scales have acceptable reliability of above 0.70

IWE
IWE was measured using a short scale developed by A. J. Ali (1992) comprising of 17 items. Examples include: “Laziness is an evil,” “good work benefits both one’s self and others,” and “Human relations should be emphasized and encourage, etc.” The scale alpha reliability was 0.937.

Work Engagement
The short version (9 items) of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) was used in the study. Examples include: “My job inspires me,” “At my job, I feel strong and vigorous”, and “I am proud of the work that I do.” The Cronbach’s alpha of the scale was 0.918.

OCB
OCB was measured using a scale developed by (Lee & Allen, 2002) comprising of eight items. Examples include: “Adjust my work schedule to accommodate other employees’ requests for time off” and “I show pride when representing my hospital in public.” The Cronbach’s alpha of the scale was 0.869.

Results

Descriptive statistics and regression analysis
The basic characteristics of the sample, including means, standard deviations, and variable correlations, are shown in Table 1.

To test the hypotheses, we used regression analysis. The results in Table 2 shows the effects of control variables and the independent variable (IWE) on the dependent variables (work engagement and OCB). In step 1, we entered demographics of the respondents whereas; IWE was entered in step 2. The result shown in table 2 reveals that IWE is positively associated with employees work engagement ($\beta = .141, p < 0.05$) supporting our hypothesis 1. Similarly, hypotheses 2 predict a positive association between IWE and OCB ($\beta = .163, p < 0.05$). The results shown in table 2 also indicate that IWE has significant and positive association with OCB; so our hypothesis two was also supported.

Discussion
During the past two decades, work ethics from Islamic perspectives has appeared as a field of interest for scholars in Muslim societies studying employee’s workplace attitude and behaviors. Scholars have examined the effect of IWE with variety of employees workplace outcomes such as employees job satisfaction (Mohamed et al., 2010), organizational commitment (Hayati & Caniago, 2012; Rokhman, 2010), innovation capabilities (Kumar & Che Rose, 2012; Yeşil & Kaya, 2012), knowledge sharing behavior (Murtaza et al., 2016). However, there is lack of research conducted on the employees
In the current study, we examined how IWE affects employees work engagement and OCB among employees working in the healthcare sector of Pakistan. The result of the current study demonstrates the positive effect of IWE on employees work engagement. In other words employees who exhibit high IWE are found more engaged in their work as compared to the employees who exhibit low IWE. Further, we also examined the effect of IWE on work engagement and OCB. In addition, streams of research on IWE (A. Ali, 1988; A. J. Ali, 1992; Khan et al., 2015; Mohammad et al., 2015; Darwish A Yousef, 2000; Danvish A Yousef, 2000; Yousef, 2001) stress the expansion of research on IWE in finding the relationship between IWE and employees attitude and behavior at the workplace in Muslim societies.

Table 1. shows the Means, Standard deviations, and Correlations.

| Variables    | Mean | SD  | 1    | 2    | 3    |
|--------------|------|-----|------|------|------|
| IWE          | 1.73 | 0.59| —    | —    | —    |
| Work engagement | 1.70 | 0.71| .141**| —    | —    |
| OCB          | 1.80 | 0.63| .163**| .029 | —    |

Note. N = 189 *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001 IWE (Islamic work ethics), OCB (organizational citizenship behavior).

Table 2. regression analysis for IWE, work engagement and OCB

| Variables         | Work engagement β | OCB β |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Step 1            |                   |       |
| Gender            | .051              | −.051 |
| Age               | .133              | −.004 |
| Organizational tenure | −.040          | .028  |
| Education         | .052              | −.026 |
| Nature of employment | .078             | .001  |
| Step 2            |                   |       |
| IWE               | .141**            | .163**|
| R²                | .020              | .027  |
| Adjusted R²       | .015              | .021  |
| F                 | 3.798**           | 5.096**|

Note. N = 189, *P < 0.05, ** P < 0.01, ***P < 0.001 gender was coded as 1 for male and 2 for female; age was coded as 1 for 20–30, 2 for 31–40, 3 for 41 to 50, 4 for 5 to 60; organizational tenure was coded as 1 for 1–5, 2 for 6–10, 3 for 11–15, 4 for 16–20, and 5 for 20 and above; education was coded as 1 for intermediate, 2 for bachelor, 3 for master and above; nature of employment was coded as 1 for permanent and 2 for contract.
employee’s citizenship behaviors. The findings of our study indicate the positive effect of IWE on OCB. In other words it was found that employees with high IWE are found more cooperative with their colleagues as compared to employee low on IWE. The findings of the current study is also consistent with our view that the teachings of the Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad encourage every individual to do hard work and cooperate with people in need.

Moreover, the findings of the current study is consistent with previous study conducted by Murtaza et al. (2016). Although, no previous study was found which explicitly studied the effect of IWE on employees work engagement; our findings generally support past theory and research (Khan et al., 2015; Rokhman, 2010). For example Khan et al., (2015) found a positive association between IWE and Job involvement. Likewise, Rokhman (2010) found a positive association between IWE and organizational commitment. Similarly, the study conducted by Awan et al. (2014), also demonstrate a positive association between IWE and employees job performance. Hence, our study findings is support the previous studies finding regarding IWE and employees’ workplace outcomes.

Implications of the Study Findings

In the current dynamic and challenging era the employees work engagement and OCB are considered essential for the successful functioning of organizations (Leiter & Bakker, 2010; Organ, 1988). As such, it is important to develop the construct which predicts the desired outcomes. Moreover, it has also been found that managers consider work ethics as important predictor of employee’s workplace outcomes (Miller, Woehr, & Hudspath, 2002). In the current study we examined the important role of IWE in predicting employees work engagement and OCB. Islamic teachings also emphasize on employees professional engagement and cooperation at workplace (Yousef, 2001). This study demonstrates that IWE is a significant predictor of employees work engagement and citizenship behaviors. Moreover, our study findings provide additional support for extending the literature related to IWE; as Islamic codes of life is universal, and applicable to all Muslims equally and guide Muslim in all sphere of life (Rice, 1999). Therefore, organizations working in Muslim countries should implement Islamic codes of ethics in workplace to enhance employees work engagement and OCB. Managers should arrange different levels of seminar on IWE to enhance employee’s engagement and citizenship behaviors.

Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

In the current study, we examined the effects of IWE on employees work engagement and OCB among employees working in healthcare sector of Pakistan. The findings of the study are significant; however, it also has some limitations. First, the cross-sectional method that was adopted for data collection is not suitable for depicting causal inferences. Future studies should focus on longitudinal design method for data collection. Second, the study only focused on the healthcare sector. It is suggested that the study should be extended to other work settings to further develop understanding among the studied variables. Third, by adding other work ethics scales, such as CWE, HWE and multidimensional work ethics profiles, the current study should be replicated in other
countries with different religious values. Fourth, the current study should be replicated in other Muslim Majority countries to increase the findings’ generalizability. Finally, future studies are encouraged to consider examining the effect of IWE on other workplace outcomes such as happiness, psychological wellbeing, and life satisfaction.

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