The Impact of Authentic Leadership on Knowledge Sharing Behavior with the Moderating role of Islamic Work Ethics

M.Javaid1, N.H.Abdullah2 A.Zeb3 and K.Hussain4
Facility of Technology Management and Business, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, 86400 Parit Raja, Johor, Malaysia.

E-mail: hp160047@siswa.uthm.edu.my

Abstract: This paper aims to explore the effects of authentic leadership on knowledge-sharing behavior and moderating role of Islamic work ethics. There is limited research devoted to the authentic leadership and knowledge-sharing behaviour within the Telecom sectors of Pakistan. The objective of this study is to analyze the impact of authentic leadership on knowledge sharing behavior with moderating role of Islamic work ethics. This is a quantitative research study. Convenience sample method was used as a sampling technique for this research. The data was collected from different two organizations (Mobilink and Ufone) and questionnaire was distributed to 220 employees, working in various multinational organizations of Islamabad (Pakistan). The data was analyzed using SPSS. The result showed that authentic leadership at Telecom organizations was developed positive behavior through knowledge-sharing. Therefore, the association between authentic leadership, Islamic work ethics and knowledge-sharing behavior is positive. The contribution of this study is Islamic work ethics using first time between authentic leadership and knowledge sharing behavior which not used so far.

1. Introduction
Nowadays, knowledge-sharing has been considered as an important organizational asset. Knowledge-sharing involves the exchange of knowledge among employees, exchange the experiences and skills through the whole organization [1]. In knowledge based economy knowledge-sharing plays a significant role for survival and better performance [2]. An organization may have loyal customers, latest technology, financial resources and fixed assets but behavior of employees is the core competency in an organization [3]. Knowledge-sharing is a key enabler of knowledge management. Knowledge-sharing behaviors is not only depends to achieve the objective of the groups or department, but it also lead to superior performance [4]. Therefore, organizations need talented leaders who motivate to employees to displays positive behavior. The importance of knowledge-sharing for innovation and initiatives formulated to promote knowledge-sharing realized by the leaders [5].

Organizations need to pay attention to facilitate knowledge-sharing behavior because there is a lack of research between authentic leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior [6]. In Telecom organization, knowledge-sharing has been under discussion of many researchers [7]. In fact, there are some researcher who explores the relationship of authentic leadership and knowledge-sharing
behavior [8]. In those studies, suggested initial support on the positive relationship between authentic leadership and knowledge-sharing behaviors. Further, several studies have examined the enablers of knowledge-sharing in universities, organizations and public sectors [10]. There is no empirical research to test the effect of authentic leadership on knowledge-sharing behavior using Islamic work ethics as moderator in Telecom organization, Pakistan. Authentic Leadership is a relatively new theory that still needs to be validated [11]. Therefore, this study examines the effect of authentic leadership on knowledge-sharing behavior and tests the outcomes of Islamic work ethics at organizational level.

2. Related Works

2.1 Authentic leadership and Knowledge sharing behavior:

Authentic leadership refers to the leader personally treating each employee and affecting each employee with authenticity to engage in the organization. Authentic leadership understood as a pattern of behavior role to reflect the effects on working employees [12]. The authentic leadership maintains relation between their followers based on sincerity so as to be consistent with positive behaviors [13]. Authentic leader is to be passionately smart to the development of behavior [14]. Authentic leadership has positive influence to their employees when they share knowledge between them for the productivity of organization. Leader behavior involves communicative actions that are observable and words that are understandable [16]. Authentic leader’s mission is to serve collective interests [15], they will foster and shape in their collaborators the behaviors such as knowledge-sharing behaviors that help the organization for productivity. According to [17] indicates that willingness of leaders to share knowledge is a critical factor in building positive behavior among employees. An authentic leader behavior can influence on others employees to create such positive behavior as a standard that is accepted by the people [18]. Authentic leader could also influence on employees behavior such as knowledge sharing behavior.

Knowledge-share (KS) is defined as the method of establishing and distribution of the shared knowledge understanding for the correct knowledge to the individuals at the correct time in an organization [19]. Knowledge-sharing indicates interest, expertise and abilities by which you can come back with your friends, family, people, team and organization. Knowledge-sharing has become the main and most appreciated source in this rapidly moving situation. The aim of knowledge-sharing is to control the features of the acquisition process, ask for help and protection of knowledge, without these procedures, knowledge has no worth. Knowledge must be encouraged, nurtured, established and grouped somehow in command to produce the worth [20]. According to [21], knowledge is information that is organized and analyzed and can be applied to the resolution of problems or decision making process. It plays a big role in increasing the competitive advantage of the organization and is essential to the improvement of productivity of organization [22].

Several studies in past research have shown that, authentic leadership is related positive with other variables like job satisfaction, performance, and collaborators’ organizational citizenship behaviors [23]. Authentic leaders is positively related to a series of desirable results such as, knowledge-sharing indicates interest, expertise and abilities by which you can come back with your friends, family, people, team and organization. [24] studied the relationship between knowledge-sharing, leadership roles, and collaborative culture. In his study, he looked into eight leadership roles and name of roles are facilitator, innovator, producer, coordinator, mentor, broker, director, and monitor. The finding of this research showed that facilitator, mentor, and innovator roles were positively correlated with knowledge-sharing, and there was a negative relationship between the leadership role of monitor and knowledge sharing. In another study, [25] also found that empowering leadership was positively related to knowledge-sharing being positively related to performance. There has been less research devoted to the authentic leadership and knowledge-sharing behaviour within the Telecom sectors of Pakistan. Despite this fact, authentic leadership is hypothesized to create knowledge-sharing behaviour among employees [26]. It seems logical to suppose that authentic leadership have positive impact on knowledge-sharing behaviour among employees.
On the basis of above discussion, it is hypothesized that:

\( \text{H1: There is a positive relationship between the authentic leadership and knowledge sharing behavior.} \)

2.2 Islamic work ethics and Knowledge sharing behaviour:

Islamic Work Ethics is according to the lessons of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) [27]. Muslim religious people follow the Holy Quran and they believe every aspect of human life is given in this book. Human beings is the topic of Holy Quran and it mostly covers the matters of human life [28]. Muslims in the world are increasingly becoming inspired by the principles of Islam. In general, the principles of Islamic work ethics (IWE) focus on the relations between human beings and their creator. Islamic work ethics are based on the principles and teachings of Islam [29]. Indicates that Islam is supposed to be a complete way of life. Most of the research on the ethics of religions was conducted in the West, with emphasis on the Protestant work ethic (PWE) [30]. Both PWE and IWE have a large emphasis on effort, devotion, commitment, imagination and prevention of prosperity accumulates by using illegal resources and collaboration in the organization. Therefore, Islamic work ethics has made a positive role on organizational behavior, and it is expected that it will positively impact on employee’s knowledge-sharing behavior.

Knowledge-sharing is realistic in major religions, cultures and ideologies. The Quran and Sunnah have laid and encouraged Muslim people to share knowledge in order to contribute to the development and welfare of society, including the workplace [31]. Knowledge-sharing behavior is considered to be very critical to an organization success [32], and scholars have suggested that organizations should encourage and involve their employees in knowledge-sharing. Knowledge-sharing as a procedure in which a person exchanges knowledge with others and then jointly creates new knowledge [33]. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized the sharing of knowledge and said, “Do you know who is the most generous? God is the most Generous. After then in human kind, I am most generous, and after me the most generous people will be those who will acquire knowledge and then share knowledge to others” [35].

In past studies, management and organization have devoted minimal attention to Islamic work ethic (IWE) and Islamic work ethics plays a role to influence a variety of desirable job outcomes and organizational innovations [36]. [37], suggested that managers working scored are high related to IWE. Similarly, [38] reported that employees working in government organizations showed stronger support of the IWE. [39], found that IWE within a university environment is significantly related to individuals’ attitudes towards computer use ethics, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. [40] examined the influence of IWE on innovation reported positive relationship between the constructs. [41] found a strong and highly significant correlation between the IWE and individualism scales. However, very few studies have been described on the relationship between the IWE and knowledge-sharing behavior but no studies conducted in Telecom sectors, Pakistan.

On the basis of above discussion, it is hypothesized that:

\( \text{H2: There is a positive relationship between Islamic work ethics and knowledge sharing behavior (KSB).} \)

2.3 The moderating role of Islamic work ethics:

Pakistan in terms of population is the second largest Muslim country in the world [42]. It is important to evaluate the impacts of Islamic work ethics between leadership and knowledge-sharing behaviour in Telecom sectors, Pakistan. Because there are majority of Muslims working in telecom sectors in Pakistan and this relation not used so far in the context of Telecom, Pakistan. The Islamic work ethic may be defined in the Islamic context as the set of moral principles that distinguish right from wrong [43]. Islamic work ethic keeps positively in nature [44]. Therefore, Islamic work ethics has not been
used as moderator between authentic leadership and knowledge-sharing behaviour so far, but on the basis of previous literature, this effort is done to develop this relationship.

Previous research has established that Islamic work ethics plays positive role as a moderator. For example, a study conducted by [45] in Pakistan revealed that IWE moderate the relationship between ethical leadership and job satisfaction. They reported significant combined effect of ethical leadership and Islamic work ethics (IWE) on organizational commitment of employees. [46], in one of the earliest studies on the moderating role of IWE, reported that when IWE is taken as a moderator on the positive relationship of Job satisfaction and organizational commitment. [47] studied the moderating role of IWE on the positive relationship of knowledge-sharing capability and innovation capability and found out that when the IWE and knowledge-sharing capability interact with each other their impact reduce relationship due to moderation. [48], studied the combined effect of job stress and IWE on job satisfaction and turnover intention. Results of the study revealed that IWE moderates the relationship of job stress and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the Islamic work ethics (IWE) focuses on fairness and kindness at work [49] it may moderate relationship between authentic leadership and knowledge-sharing.

This research would help organizational managers to understand the role of IWE in strengthening knowledge-sharing behaviour among the Muslim employees of Telecom, Pakistan. This study intended to investigate the how Islamic work ethics moderator between authentic leadership and knowledge-sharing behaviour in Telecom sectors, Pakistan. The importance of Islamic work ethics (IWE) as a core human process in organizations and assessment of knowledge-sharing behaviour in Telecom sectors Pakistan is necessary.

Based on the above discussion, following hypotheses is developed:

**H3:** Islamic work ethic will lead the positive relationship of authentic leadership and KSB such that the relationship will be stronger when Islamic work ethic is high.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design
This was a descriptive study where the impacts of authentic leadership on knowledge-sharing behavior were measured and Islamic work ethics used as a moderator. This is survey study because the questionnaires were distributed to employees of telecom two companies in Pakistan.

3.2 Sample
Convenience non probability sampling technique was used for data collection. At the beginning of the questionnaires, the purpose of data collection was described. Furthermore, it also assured to the employees that responses were remain anonymous. Data were collected voluntarily. 220 questionaries were distributed and 193 were returned back.

3.3 Measures
Knowledge-sharing behavior was based on 5-items scales by [50]. Authentic leadership questionnaires were developed by [51]. Islamic work ethics was based on the 17-items scale adopted by [52]. 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1) was used to measure the all constructs.

3.4 Data Analysis
Data were analyzed using SPSS version 20. To determine the reliability of instruments was used to Cronbach’s alpha. To determine the reliability of measurement were used to Cronbach alpha, descriptive, correlation and regression analysis.
3.5 Finding & Discussion

Table 1. Alpha Reliabilities of scale Used in the Study

| Variable/ scale                  | Cronbach's Alpha | Number of Items |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Authentic leader                 | .724             | 16              |
| Knowledge sharing behaviour      | .771             | 05              |
| Islamic work ethics              | .794             | 17              |

The alpha reliability of 16 items of AL items was found to be 0.724, which falls in the accepted range. The alpha reliability of 5 items Knowledge sharing behavior was found to be 0.771, which falls into the acceptable range. The alpha reliability of 17 items of Islamic work ethics was found to be 0.794, which falls in the acceptable range.

3.6 Descriptive statistic

Table 2. Mean and Standard deviation of the study

| Variable name                  | Mean  | Std.Deviation |
|--------------------------------|-------|---------------|
| Authentic leader               | 2.52  | .576          |
| Islamic work ethics            | 3.77  | .391          |
| Knowledge sharing behaviour    | 3.76  | .490          |

The mean score of responders on knowledge-sharing scale was 3.76, standard deviation in the score was 0.49, mean score of authentic leadership scale was 2.52, standard deviation was 0.57, and mean of Islamic work ethics was 3.77, standard deviation was 0.39 (table 2).

3.7 Correlation analysis:

Table 3. Correlation

| 1 AL                            | 1     |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| 2 IWE                           | .384**| 1     |
| 3 KSB                           | .307**| .521**| 1     |

Results reveal that authentic leadership was significant positively correlated to knowledge sharing behavior (r = 0.307, p < 0.01). This provided initial support to hypothesis 1 and Islamic work ethics was significantly positive related to knowledge sharing behavior (r = 0.521 p < 0.01). This provided initial support to hypothesis 2.
3.8 Regression Analysis:

Table 4. Regressions analysis of all variables

| Predictors  | B    | \( R^2 \) | \( \Delta R^2 \) |
|-------------|------|-----------|-----------------|
| **Step 1**  |      |           |                 |
| Control Variables | | .025 | |
| **Step 2**  |      |           |                 |
| AL          | .162 |          |                 |
| IWE         | .584 | .299     | .274**          |
| **Step 3**  |      |           |                 |
| AL x IWE    | .162 | .344     | .045**          |

AL x IWE = Interaction Term (authentic leadership and Islamic work ethics).

A hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses of the study. The basic purpose of the research was examining of hypotheses, hence a technique for hierarchical regression research designed by [53]. Table 4 shows a series of regression. Results revealed that authentic leadership had a significant positive impact on knowledge-sharing behavior where the beta value was found to be \( \beta = .162 \). Then IWE was testing with the knowledge-sharing and analysis show the positive result between these two constructs. IWE was found to have a significant positive impact on knowledge-sharing behavior, where the beta value was found to be \( \beta = 0.584 \). Furthermore, IWE was analyzed as a moderator between authentic leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior. Results revealed that the interactive effect of authentic leadership and IWE on knowledge sharing behavior was found to be significant \( \beta = 0.162 \) (Table 4).

4. Conclusion

4.1 Implication to Managers:
The current study is the first study conducted in Pakistan, to investigate knowledge-sharing behavior of employees in Telecom sectors. It is suggested that knowledge-sharing behavior leads to improved performance in Telecom sectors. The result indicates that when the leaders share their knowledge to employees then they will work more effective and productive. It was discovered that the IWE and behaviors can make positive relation between each other in organization. The result also suggested that knowledge-sharing behavior can also facilitate to employees in maintaining a healthy work in organization. Moreover, the evidence of the significant moderating effect of Islamic work ethics also points that it is significance if Islamic work ethics succeed high then employees of telecom sectors do respond good and act excellent.

The findings of this study have many implications for Telecom sectors. Therefore the company administrator and experts are suggested to keep this in mind about the authentic leader must be supportable and helpful with the employees. It makes more training sections between manager and employees to learn them how they can get success and convey the knowledge to each other during work. Management should create a climate of tolerance for error because errors in authentic leadership and knowledge-sharing can be powerful sources of learning [54]. The manager suggest to keep in mind that they can hire those people in telecom sectors who are more responsible and sharing their
knowledge with others because positive sharing behavior make the positive result from the data. Leaders should ensure the implementation of supportive management system. This perception is of great importance with regard to their knowledge sharing behavior.

Further, managers should take steps to ensure the maintenance of psychological safety by supporting individuals’ job autonomy and by promoting innovative values. It also necessary that build in their importance on the basis of Islamic values. Islamic work ethics more reinforced other than Ethics. Managers may also provide more opportunities for employees to have direct contact with the beneficiaries of their work to better understand the impact of their work on others [55].

4.2 Future Recommendation:
This study is providing directions for future research. We employed a convenience sample in this research; future researchers expend the data collection sample. We have adapted a scale previously used in the literature but in future may be develop a more refined scale. We focus in this study on IWE as a moderator, but in future we will use another variable as a moderator between these two constructs. Future research should also effort to achieve a larger population sample size. However, other organizational design and psychological elements may play a role and should be considered in future studies.

4.3 Conclusion:
The current study enhances the knowledge management literature through incorporating the moderating effect of Islamic work ethics between authentic leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior relationship. The evidence of this study, influence indirectly IWE on the relationship between authentic leadership and knowledge-sharing prove that IWE has major contribution toward the promotion of knowledge-sharing in Telecom sectors. Assurance of good behavior between authentic leadership and employees performance is improved the productivity of the organization. This study present research aids leadership in planning policies and strategies to extend knowledge-sharing and following the Islamic rules among Telecom sectors employees and to create a supportive knowledge-sharing culture.

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