

How and When Islamic Work Ethic Leads to Employee Voice? The Interplay of Employee Moral Identity and Perceived Voice Opportunity

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How and When Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) Leads to Employee Promotive and Prohibitive Voice? The Interplay of Employee Moral Identity and Perceived Voice

Opportunity

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examines the moderated-mediation effects of employees' Islamic work ethic (IWE) on their promotive and prohibitive forms of constructive voice behaviors through the integrated frameworks of social identity theory and self-consistency theory.

Design/methodology/approach: Using two-source data collection from employees and supervisors, data were collected from 217 participants working in various companies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). After initial data screening, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the factorial validity of the employed measures with AMOS. The hypothesized relationships were tested in the PROCESS macro for SPSS.

Findings: The results of this study supported the integration of social identity theory with self-consistency theory in explaining the indirect effects of employees' IWE on their promotive and prohibitive forms of constructive voice behaviors through the mediation of moral identity. Furthermore, this study also indicated that the indirect effect was conditional on the employees' perceptions of perceived voice opportunity, which significantly moderated the relationship between their moral identity and their prohibitive voice. However, no such effect was recorded for promotive voice.

Originality/value: This study is the first that explains how and when employees' IWE leads them to exhibit promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors through the mediation of moral identity and the moderation of perceived voice opportunity. Thus, this study

contributes to the IWE, moral identity, and employee voice literature by addressing questions with useful theoretical and managerial implications for employees' promotive and prohibitive forms of constructive voice behaviors in the workplace.

Keywords: Islamic work ethic; moral identity; employee voice; perceived voice opportunity; the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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INTRODUCTION

Employee constructive voice, is defined as the employee discretionary prosocial, yet challenging, upward communication of suggestions and concerns to management rather than just criticising others at the workplace (Van Dyne and LePine 1998). It has been acknowledged as a potential source of learning and innovation for organizations to effectively change, adapt, and survive in the rapidly changing business conditions (Perlow and Williams 2003, Morrison 2011). Past research consistently shows that employee constructive voice is positively related to an array of workplace outcomes, such as managerial effectiveness, (Morrison 2011), team learning (Edmondson 2003), in-role performance (Thomas and Feldman 2012), and overall performance (Maynes and Podsakoff 2014). Conversely, the absence or withholding of constructive voice is suggested as a potential threat to an organization for sustaining its competitive advantage (Morrison and Milliken 2000, Greenberg and Edwards 2009).

Considering these benefits, research has explored a wide range of employee dispositional, attitudinal, behavioral, and contextual factors that may motivate or inhibit their voice, particularly the promotive and prohibitive forms of constructive voice. Promotive voice refers to offering suggestions for improvement while prohibitive voice is raising concerns over bad or unethical work practices (Liang *et al.* 2012, Morrison 2014). Meta-analytical findings of Chamberlin *et al.* (2017) suggest individual dispositions (i.e., personal initiative and core self-evaluation) as potentially important predictors of promotive and prohibitive forms of employee voice. Given individuals' dispositions are partly shaped by their work-related religious beliefs (Weber 1905, Ali 1988), we tend to

examine how and when (Muslim) employees' Islamic Work Ethic (IWE: Ali, 1988) lead them to exhibit promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors in organizations. In doing so, we aim to extend the prior IWE and promotive-prohibitive voice literature by several means.

First, IWE, here defined as a set of work-related Islamic principles and values that help the believer to differentiate between good and bad work attitudes and behaviors (Ali 1988, Beekun 1997), has been consistently suggested as an intrinsic motivator of prosocial and inhibitor of antisocial behaviors (Kumar and Che Rose 2010, Murtaza *et al.* 2016, Javed *et al.* 2017, De Clercq *et al.* 2018, Javed *et al.* 2018). However, the relationship between employees' IWE and their promotive and prohibitive voice is yet unexplored. Exploring this relationship is worth considering for two reasons. First, given that employees' IWE guides them regarding positive and negative work attitudes and behaviors, employees' promotive voice, such as encouraging good work attitudes, behaviors and practices through their suggestions and ideas, and prohibitive voice, such as discouraging poor work attitudes, behaviors and practices through their constructive feedback and concerns, are therefore likely to be influenced by their IWE. Second, although both promotive and prohibitive forms of constructive voice are prosocial behaviors, they are riskier, such as they challenge the status quo, are deviant, unsafe, or damaging attitudes, and behaviors of their managers and coworkers, than the other forms of prosocial behaviors predicted by IWE. Thus, by exploring the relationship between IWE and employees' promotive and prohibitive forms of constructive voice behaviors, we contribute not only to the literature on the antecedents of promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors but also to the literature on the prosocial outcomes of IWE.

Second, we answer recent calls for more research exploring potential mediators, based on theoretical explanations, between employees' IWE and their positive behaviors (Usman *et al.* 2015) and propose a new perspective based on social identity theory (Tajfel 1974) and self-consistency theory (Korman 1970). Thus, we explore the mediating effects of employees' moral identity in the relationships between their IWE and their promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors. Specifically, we test a mediational model in which employees' IWE first strengthens their moral identity – moral traits-based self-schema of a person that serves as a guide to their own and others' normative behaviors (Aquino *et al.* 2009) – which, in turn, motivates them to be consistent with their strengthened moral identity by increasing their promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors.

Third, we conduct this research in the context of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the world's largest oil producing country and one of the largest and wealthiest countries in the Middle-East. KSA heavily relies on expatriate workers primarily from the Muslim countries of Asia and the Middle-East (Edgar *et al.* 2016). According to El-Kot and Burke (2014), employees in the Middle Eastern countries score very high on IWE. KSA's demographic and cultural diversity makes it a highly complex workplace where employees have varying perceptions of safety and freedom of highlighting organizational issues to the management (Yeo and Marquardt 2015). Thus, a contextual factor, such as perceived voice opportunity, which is an employee's perception of the extent to which voice opportunity has been provided by the organization (Avery and Quiñones 2002), is likely to be a boundary condition on the mediating effect of moral identity between IWE and promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors. Specifically, we expect that this mediation would be stronger for employees with a high-level of perceived voice opportunity than for employees

with a low-level of perceived voice opportunity. By exploring this potential moderator, we respond not only to the research call placed by Murtaza *et al.* (2016) to examine the interactive effects of IWE and the contextual factors on prosocial behaviors but also to the research calls placed by Morrison (2014) and Venkataramani *et al.* (2016) to examine the contextual moderators of constructive voice behavior.

In summary, our research seeks answers to three important questions: (1) *what* are the effects, including the separate effects, of the IWE on employees' promotive and prohibitive forms of constructive voice behaviors; (2) *how* are these effects transferred via the moral identity mediator; and (3) *when* are these effects strengthened and weakened due to the boundary condition of perceived voice opportunity.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Following the introduction, this paper provides a review of the existing research and theory informing these three questions. The review is followed by the explanation of research methods and data analysis. Finally, we report our research findings and contributions to theory and practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Employee Constructive Voice Behavior

In today's work environment, organizations heavily rely on upward communication from their employees to make correct and timely decisions that adequately meet their present and future challenges (Morrison 2011). One means of encouraging employees' upward communication is letting them make voluntary voice suggestions, provide ideas for improvement, and raise concerns over work-related problems to management with the intent of improving the overall functioning of the organization (Van Dyne and LePine

1998, LePine and Van Dyne 2001, Morrison 2011). While early research defines voice as an employee's 'self-oriented' reaction to unsatisfying organizational treatment (Rusbult *et al.* 1988, Withey and Cooper 1989), later research tends to focus on an employee's 'other-oriented' discretionary prosocial voice behavior that targets improving team and organizational effectiveness (Van Dyne *et al.* 1995, LePine and Van Dyne 1998, Van Dyne and LePine 1998). As such, Van Dyne and LePine (1998) define voice as an employee's initiative for "making innovative suggestions for change and recommending modifications to standard procedures even when others disagree" (p. 109).

In accordance with this definition, Liang *et al.* (2012) categorize employee voice behavior into promotive and prohibitive forms of constructive voice behaviors. According to these researchers, promotive voice refers to voicing suggestions to improve the organizational or work-unit functioning, such as sharing an innovative idea for increasing operational efficiency. Conversely, prohibitive voice refers to voicing concerns over a work practice, procedure, or behavior that is perceived as harmful to the organization (Van Dyne and LePine 1998). While both, promotive voice and prohibitive voice, are forms of prosocial behaviors, they are yet distinct from other forms of prosocial and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), such as helping others, which are far less risky than these forms of voice behaviors (Morrison 2014). Specifically, prohibitive voice is reported as a particularly high-risk prosocial behavior in which an employee potentially challenges attitudes, behaviors, and practices of coworkers, managers, or other members of the organization, thus leaving the employee open to criticism, ridicule, and accusations of disloyalty (Van Dyne and LePine 1998, Wei *et al.* 2015).

Using promotive and prohibitive forms of constructive voice, recent research highlights that these prosocial constructive voice behaviors are distinctively associated with a range of positive work outcomes (Morrison 2014, Chamberlin *et al.* 2017). For example, Li *et al.* (2017) reported that while prohibitive was more related to team safety, promotive voice was more related to team productivity. By extension, more recent work has also begun to explore the potential antecedents of promotive and prohibitive voice, such as psychological safety, feelings of responsibility for constructive change (Liang *et al.* 2012, Chamberlin *et al.* 2017), approach-avoidance orientations (Kakkar *et al.* 2016), transformational leadership (Svendsen *et al.* 2017), ethical leadership (Chamberlin *et al.* 2017), organizational identification (Arain *et al.* 2018), and colleague support (Xie *et al.* 2015). However, no study has yet examined how employees' religiously based work-related beliefs, such as IWE, influence their promotive and prohibitive forms of constructive voice behaviors. Given that recent research confirms employees' IWE as a potential intrinsic motivator of their prosocial work behaviors, such as OCBs, helping, and knowledge sharing (Murtaza *et al.* 2016, Tse *et al.* 2018), we extend this work by exploring the relationship between employees' IWE and their promotive and prohibitive forms of constructive voice behaviors.

Islamic Work Ethic (IWE)

Work-related Islamic beliefs are based on the knowledge-driven from the Quran¹ and the Hadith². According to Abuznaid (2009), in the Muslim world, everyday issues faced by

¹The Quran is the verbatim word of God that was revealed to the last Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and thus, is the most authentic source of Islamic knowledge for Muslism.

²The Hadith refers to the words, actions, and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad.

business people are often guided by faith in order to differentiate between ethical and unethical practices. In more than 50 verses, the Quran mentions the term 'work' in conjunction with the term 'faith' (Uddin 2003), which emphasizes the balance between fulfilling the fundamental ritual responsibility and the responsibility of God's vicegerent on earth through productive work (Beekun and Badawi 2005, Williams and Zinkin 2010). The Islamic concept of man as God's vicegerent on earth "can be a tremendous intrinsic motivator for the Muslim worker" to take care of God's creation on earth (Beekun and Badawi 2005; p.133) not only by himself/herself exhibiting positive and refraining from negative work behaviors but also by 'commanding right' and 'forbidding wrong' to others in the workplace (Cook 2001).

Building upon this Islamic work ideology, IWE has been defined as a set of work-related Islamic principles and values (e.g., dedication, hard work, commitment, frugality, desire to improve community, and societal welfare) that help a believer to differentiate between the good and poor work attitudes and behaviors (Ali 1988, Beekun 1997). According to Ali and Al-Owaihian (2008), IWE consists of four categories of work-related values: effort, competition, transparency, and morally responsible behavior. These four categories emphasize that an individual must exert effort to serve the self as well as the community, to compete with others in a fair manner, to make their actions or activities transparent, and to engage in business activities in ethical and moral ways to develop a buoyant economy. Although some of these work values do exist in other religion-based work ethics, such as the Protestant work ethic (Weber 1905), the IWE is distinct from the others for two reasons: (1) it focuses on collective achievements, and (2) it emphasizes on 'intentions' more than the results (Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008; Rarick, 2007).

While the first empirical study on IWE (Ali 1988) was published more than two decades ago, studies on the implications of IWE for workplace attitudes and behaviors are very limited. In reviewing the 28 studies on IWE published in the last two decades, Usman *et al.* (2015) highlight two important research gaps in the existing IWE literature. First, the prior IWE research focuses more on examining the effects of IWE on work attitudes than on examining its effects on work behaviors. For example, early studies primarily focus on exploring the positive relationships between IWE and an array of positive work attitudes, such as organizational commitment (Yousef 2000, Rokhman 2010, Hayati and Caniago 2012, Ghetani *et al.* 2018), job satisfaction (Rokhman 2010, Khan *et al.* 2015), job involvement (Khan *et al.* 2015), innovation, and attitude towards organizational change (Yousef 2000, Kumar and Che Rose 2010). It is only recently that research has begun exploring IWE as an intrinsic motivator of prosocial behaviors, such as helping behavior (De Clercq *et al.* 2018), OCBs and knowledge-sharing behavior (Murtaza *et al.* 2016), and an inhibitor of antisocial behaviors, such as deviant work behaviors (Javed *et al.* 2018). Second, prior IWE research mostly fails to explore the underlying mediating mechanisms or well-acknowledged theory(ies) from psychology and organizational behavior literature to explain how the IWE influences work attitudes and behaviors (Usman *et al.* 2015).

In a recently published study, De Clercq *et al.* (2018) incorporate conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll 1989, Hobfoll 2001) to suggest IWE as a critical personal resource that “may spur helping behavior, particularly in work contexts marked by the resource-depleting leadership style of despotic leadership” (De Clercq *et al.* 2018; p. 631-32); however, they do not explain the underlying mediating mechanism through which IWE influences helping behavior. Therefore, to further extend this work, we incorporate the

integrated theoretical frameworks of social identity theory (Tajfel 1974) and self-consistency theory (Korman 1970) and propose a mediating model in which IWE first leads to a mediator, such as moral identity, which, in turn, leads to promotive and prohibitive forms of constructive voice behaviors.

Moral Identity

Identity is an individual's deeply rooted self-conceptualization of what he/she is (Erikson 1964). Moral identity is a specific form of identity that refers to an individual's "self-conception organized around a set of moral traits," like friendly, fair, kind, caring, and hardworking (Aquino and Reed 2002; p. 1424). Aquino and Reed II (2002) categorize moral identity into private (i.e., internalization) and public (i.e., symbolization) forms of moral identity. The internalization form of moral identity consists of the moral traits that are central to the self-concept; whereas, the symbolization form consists of the moral traits that are reflected in one's actions in the world (Aquino and Reed II 2002). Although, both forms of moral identity are, partly, shaped by one's religious and social ethics, the internalized form of moral identity is likely to be more strongly influenced by one's ethical beliefs than the symbolized form of moral identity (Arain et al., 2017). For example, an individual's internalized form of moral identity, i.e., "it would make me feel good to be a person who has these (i.e., like friendly, fair, kind, caring, hardworking, etc.) characteristics and "being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am," suggests that it is more strongly driven from the individual's ethical beliefs than that of the symbolized moral identity, i.e., "I often wear clothes that identify me as having these characteristics," which can be driven from other factors like impression management and

social pressure. Accordingly, the empirical studies by Arain et al., (2017) and Skubinn and Herzog, (2016) that have tended to examine the relationship between work-related ethical values, i.e., ethical leadership, and moral identity, focused on the internalized form moral identity only. Furthermore, the internalized form of moral identity is also been found to be a better predictor of prosocial behaviors, such as voice behavior, that has been examined in this research, than the symbolized form of moral identity (Aquino and Reed II 2002, Kennedy et al. 2017). Thus, following these reasons, we focus only on the internalized form of moral identity in this research.

IWE and Employee Moral Identity

Based on social identity theory (Tajfel and Moscovici 1972, Tajfel 1974, Tajfel 1981), Aquino and Reed II (2002) suggest that although moral identity is rooted in a trait-based conceptualization, like other identities, it is susceptible to social referents, including God or religious faith. By relating this argument to an IWE context, we argue that employees' IWE positively influences "moral identity strength," which refers to the degree to which one internalizes moral traits in one's self-identity (Kennedy *et al.* 2017). For many Muslims, Islam is a complete code of life that guides them on how to ethically spend their lives, and IWE, in particular, guides them to differentiate between good and bad work attitudes, behaviors, and practices (Beekun 1997). Therefore, continuous adherence to IWE is very likely to strengthen one's self-conceptualization as a moral person around one's IWE, that one practices in the workplace. The nine traits of moral identity identified by Aquino and Reed II (2002) are in fact very closely linked to most of the beliefs of IWE. For instance, the foremost tenet of IWE, effort, is closely associated with the trait of

hardworking, whereas the tenet of competition calls for fair competition and avoidance of underhandedness which makes it closely related to the trait of fairness. Ali and Owaihan (2008) also note that these two tenets, according to IWE, must not cause intentional harm to anyone. Following that the third tenet of transparency requires and ensures honesty. Whereas the last tenet of morally responsible behavior can arguably include all the remaining 6 traits: friendly, kind, caring, compassionate, generous, and helpful. In accordance with these arguments and the theoretical framework of social identity theory, we hypothesize the following relationship.

H1. Employees' IWE is positively associated with their internalized moral identity.

Moral Identity and Employee Constructive Voice

The proponents of self-consistency theory (Korman 1970, Leary *et al.* 1995, Pierce and Gardner 2004) suggest that employees' motivations for positive work attitude and behavior depend on the knowledge of their self-worth. Based on this core tenet of self-consistency theory, the social-cognitive view of moral identity suggests that an employee's moral identity motivates them to exhibit those work attitudes and behaviors that are consistent with their moral identity (Damon and Hart 1992, Aquino and Reed II 2002, Reed II and Aquino 2003, Aquino *et al.* 2009). According to Reed and Aquino (2003), once employees' moral identity is constructed and strengthened, they would then tend to be consistent with that moral identity by enlarging their circle of moral regard, which refers to a feeling of obligation to show concern for the interests of all the stakeholders (Reed II and Aquino 2003). Consistent with this line of reasoning, the extant research highlights the positive relationship between employees' moral identity and their prosocial and ethical behaviors,

such as OCB, charity, volunteering, and showing greater concern for the larger community (Reed II and Aquino 2003, Gerpott *et al.* 2017).

Based on the integrated theoretical frameworks of social identity theory and self-consistency theory, we argue that employees' IWE positively influence the "being" part of their moral identity, such as who they are as a moral person, which, in turn, motivates them for the "doing" part of the moral identity, such as what they must do as a moral person. Thus, to be consistent in their 'being' and 'doing' parts of the moral identity, employees are likely to increase their circle of moral regard by increasing their promotive and prohibitive forms of constructive voice behaviors that are consistently reported as crucial prosocial behaviors beneficial for an organization (Morrison 2014). Our argument is consistent with findings of the research (Hardy *et al.* 2012, Arain *et al.* 2017) that examine the mediating role of moral identity in the relationship between ethics/religiosity and prosocial behaviors. For example, using a research sample of students from Pakistan, the findings of Arain *et al.* (2017) highlight that teachers' ethical leadership behavior positively influences students' moral identity, which then positively influences students' academic citizenship behaviors directed towards peers and the institution. Similarly, a recent study by Gerpott *et al.* (2017), which incorporates a two-study design and research samples of employees working in the US and European countries, highlights the mediating effect of moral identity between ethical leadership and followers' OCBs, and although this study uses a different conceptualization of moral identity (moral care and moral justification), it suggests using the construct of internalized moral identity in the future research. Additionally, findings of Hardy *et al.* (2012) regarding the mediating effects of moral identity in the relationships between adolescent religiosity and empathy and aggressive

behaviors suggest that “moral identity may be one mechanism by which religiosity leads to positive social interactions” (p. 237). Thus, we hypothesize the following relationship.

H2: Employees’ internalized moral identity is positively related to their promotive voice and prohibitive voice and mediates the positive relationship between IWE and their promotive voice (H2a) and their prohibitive voice (H2b) behaviors.

To this point, we have discussed *how* employees’ IWE, via their internalized moral identity, leads them to their promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors. However, according to Venkataramani *et al.* (2016), “the study of employee voice would be incomplete without understanding how social and relational factors at work may influence such behaviors” (p. 37). Thus, in conjunction with exploring the mediation of moral identity, we also test for the moderating effect of the perceived voice opportunity to explain *when* the mediating effect of moral identity is strong and when it is weak.

Moderating Effect of Perceived Voice Opportunity

Employee constructive voice behavior is prosocial; however, it is a risky behavior. In particular, prohibitive voice may lead to negative consequences, such as poor interpersonal relationships and offending management (Liang *et al.* 2012, Chamberlin *et al.* 2017). Hence, employees’ discretion to exhibit promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors not only depends on their dispositional or personal factors, such as IWE and moral identity, but also depends on the favorable contextual factors such as perceived voice opportunity. Perceived voice opportunity refers to an employee’s perception of the extent to which the voice opportunity has been provided by their organization (Avery and Quiñones 2002).

While the prior research (Avery and Quiñones 2002, Knoll and van Dick 2013) confirms perceived voice opportunity as a potential contextual moderator of employee constructive voice behavior, testing its moderating effect on the mediating relationship between IWE and employee voice, via moral identity, is highly relevant in the context of this study, that is the KSA.

The work context of the KSA is characterized by not only demographic and cultural diversity but also by diversity in HRM policies and practices that are more favorable for locals (i.e., Saudis) than for expatriates (Al-Asfour and Khan 2014, Yeo and Marquardt 2015). Considering the complicated employee relations in the Saudi workplace, it is not surprising that employees working in Saudi companies have varying perceptions about the freedom of speaking up, i.e., the perceived voice opportunity, regarding organizational issues to the top management (Yeo and Marquardt 2015). Thus, regardless of the strength of the moral identity fostered by IWE, employees' discretion to exhibit promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors would depend on how much voice opportunity they perceived in their workplace. Accordingly, we hypothesize the following relationship.

H3. The mediating effect of employees' internalized moral identity between their IWE and their promotive voice (H3a) and their prohibitive voice (H3b) behaviors is conditional on the moderating effect of perceived voice opportunity, such as this mediation is stronger at the high levels of perceived voice opportunity than at the low levels of perceived voice opportunity.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

METHODS

Using a convenience sampling and a supervisor-employee dyadic design, data were collected by distributing hard copies of two different types of research questionnaires, one for the supervisor and one for their employee, at several domestic and multinational companies in Saudi Arabia. The supervisor's questionnaire consisted of the measures of their employees' promotive and prohibitive voice. The employees' questionnaire consisted of the measures of IWE, moral identity, and perceived voice opportunity. The two questionnaires were coded such that they could be later 'matched'; in addition, we believe they provided the best assessment of each variable and reduced the threat of common method variance and self-report bias (Podsakoff *et al.* 2012).

Business undergraduate students distributed 350 supervisor-employee questionnaires to several public and private companies in the KSA. We first contacted and recruited employees who completed the employees' related questionnaire and noted the name of their supervisors. Then, we approached the named supervisors and asked them to complete a survey that rated their named supervisee's promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors. Once both questionnaires were completed, we used the codes to pair them. It is worth noting that one supervisor rated only one employee's promotive and prohibitive voice. We used this strategy to avoid (1) burdening the supervisor with the need to complete questionnaires for multiple employees, which may have affected the quality of their response, and (2) eliminating the possibility of within-group differences in voice rating for multiple employees rated by the same supervisor.

Of the 350 total distributed supervisor-employee questionnaires, 268 dyads were received with a 77% response rate. After discarding the 51 cases with mismatched

dyads and missing values, the remaining 217 matching dyads, were used to assess the hypothesized model. Names of the respondents were erased during the data entry process to ensure anonymity. Among the participating employees, 65% were Saudis, and 35% were expatriates; 64% were males, and 36% were females. The average age was 31.29 years; the average experience was 5.86 years. Of the group, 16% had a master degree or higher, and the remaining 84% had an undergraduate degree.

Measures

Unless stated otherwise, all questions were measured on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent).

IWE was measured by a 17-item scale developed by Ali (1988). However, based on the focus group discussion on the relevancy of this scale in the Saudi context, we excluded one item, '*More leisure time is good for society (R)*,' from the research questionnaire. A sample item of the scale used is '*One should work hard to meet responsibilities.*' The internal consistency of this scale for this study was .93.

Moral identity was measured by a 5-item internalized moral identity scale developed by Aquino and Reed II (2002). Participants were asked to answer the internalized moral identity-related questions using a list of nine moral traits (i.e., caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, hardworking, hopeful, honest, and kind) that were proposed by Aquino and Reed II (2002). A sample item is '*It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics.*' The internal consistency of this scale for this study was .85.

Perceived voice opportunity was measured by using a 3-item scale developed by Knoll and van Dick (2013). A sample item is *'In my organization, there are arrangements for voicing concerns, ideas for improvements, and the like.'* The internal consistency of this scale for this study was .88.

Promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors were measured by using a ten-item scale developed by Liang *et al.* (2012). A sample item of promotive voice is *'He/she raises suggestions to improve the unit's working procedure.'* A sample item of prohibitive voice is *'He/she proactively reports coordination problems in the workplace to the management.'* The internal consistency of this scale for this study was .84 for promotive voice and .85 for prohibitive voice.

Control variables: Employee age, gender, experience, nationality (Saudi or expatriate), and the relationship tenure with the current supervisor (i.e., how long has they have been supervised by the supervisor who is reporting their voice behaviors) were used as control variables due to their likely effect on proactive voice (Van Dyne and LePine 1998, Liang *et al.* 2012, Morrison 2014).

RESULTS

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Before proceeding to our hypotheses testing, we conducted a CFA on the main model variables to confirm their independence. We conducted the CFA using structural equation modeling software AMOS version 23. In accordance with convention (Hair *et al.* 2010), we used a combination of fit indices, comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), to assess the adequacy of our model and compared our

hypothesized model with a number of reasonable alternative measurement models (Bentler and Bonett 1980). The CFI and TLI scores above .90 and the SRMR and RMSEA scores below .07 are judged to confirm a good fitting model (Hair *et al.* 2010).

We tested four alternative models. Model 1 is our hypothesized 5-factor model consisting of separate scales for IWE, moral identity, perceived voice opportunity, promotive voice, and prohibitive voice. Model 2 is a 4-factor model where IWE and moral identity are combined into a single factor. Model 3 is an alternative 3-factor model where promotive voice, prohibitive voice, and perceived voice opportunity are combined into a single factor. Finally, Model 4 is a 1-factor solution where all items for all scales are loaded onto a single factor. Table 1 confirms that our hypothesized model (Model 1) is a better fit of the data (CFI = .93, TLI = .92, SRMR = .06, and RMSEA = .05), than all the other alternative models. Therefore, CFA Model 1 was used in the subsequent analysis. Given these results and the good Cronbach alpha reliability scores across all our measurement scales, we proceeded with the remainder of our analysis.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Descriptive Statistics

All the subsequent analyses were conducted using SPSS version 22 and the PROCESS macro version 2.16.3 (Hayes, 2012). Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations of our model variables. As expected, our key independent and dependent variables correlate and do so in the predicted directions. For example, IWE is positively correlated with moral identity ($r=.44, p<.01$), promotive voice ($r=.18, p<.01$) and

prohibitive voice ($r=.28, p<.01$). Moral identity is positively correlated with promotive voice ($r=.19, p<.01$) and prohibitive voice ($r=.30, p<.01$). Moreover, perceived voice opportunity is positively correlated with promotive voice ($r=.34, p<.01$) and prohibitive voice ($r=.27, p<.01$). Consequently, we continued with our main model testing.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

Model Testing: Mediation Model (H1 and H2)

To test hypotheses 1 and 2, we ran the PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes 2012). Table 3 provides a summary of these findings. As predicted, employees' IWE is positively related to their moral identity ($B=.57, t=7.04, p<.001$). It appears that employees' strong commitment to IWE strengthens their internalized moral identity. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is supported. In turn, employees' moral identity is positively related to their promotive voice ($B=.19, t=2.01, p<.05$) and mediates the relationship between their IWE and their promotive voice ($\gamma=.11, [.01, .23]$). Thus, hypothesis 2a is supported. Similarly, employees' moral identity is positively related to their prohibitive voice ($B=.24, t=3.27, p<.01$) and as evidenced through 95% confidence interval, mediates the relationship between their IWE and their prohibitive voice ($\gamma=.14, [.06, .24]$). Thus, hypothesis 2b is also supported.

These results show that as an employee's IWE improves, their willingness to engage in suggestions to enhance organizational effectiveness (promotive voice) and constructive feedback on halting those practices that may harm organizational effectiveness (prohibitive voice) also improves. Interestingly, despite showing a stronger mediation effect size for prohibitive voice than for promotive voice, moral identity partially

(partial mediation) explains the positive relationship between IWE and prohibitive voice fully (full mediation) explains the positive relationship between IWE and promotive voice. These differential mediation effects of moral identity are consistent with the findings of Chamberlin *et al.* (2017) that suggest that certain individual or personal factors influence promotive voice more strongly than prohibitive voice.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

Model Testing: Moderated-Mediation Model (H3)

To test hypothesis 3, we ran the PROCESS Model 14 (Hayes 2012). Table 4 provides a summary of these findings. As predicted, the positive relationship between employees' moral identity and their prohibitive voice is significantly stronger when employees report a high perceived voice opportunity. Specifically, an examination of the conditional indirect effects of IWE on prohibitive voice at the three selected levels of perceived voice opportunity (i.e., -1 SD, mean SD, and +1 SD), supported the moderated-mediation relationship that increased with the increased levels of the moderator. Such as the mediation effect was significant at both the mean level (Effect = .14; S.E = .05; LL = .06 & UL = .24) and the above mean level (Effect = .21; S.E = .06; LL = .09 & UL = .35) but not at the below mean level (Effect = .08; S.E = .05; LL = -.02 & UL = .17) of perceived voice opportunity that contained zero between lower level (LL) and upper level (UL) confidence intervals.

Contrary to what was hypothesized, the positive relationship between employees' IWE and their promotive voice was not strengthened for employees reporting a high

perceived voice opportunity. Specifically, the moderated-mediation effects were non-significant at all the three selected levels of perceived voice opportunity, i.e., at the below mean level (Effect= .05; S.E = .05; LL = -.05 & UL = .18), at the mean level (Effect = .05; S.E = .05; LL = -.05 & UL = .18), and at the above mean level (Effect = .05; S.E = .07; LL = -.09 & UL = .19). These results, therefore, accepted H3b and rejected H3a. It appears, in our sample at least, that employees' perceived voice opportunity may be considered a more important boundary condition on the positive effects of IWE for employees' moral identity and prohibitive voice than for promotive voice.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

DISCUSSION

Based on the integrated theoretical frameworks of social identity and self-consistency theories, this study hypothesized and tested for the moderated-mediation model, in which employees' IWE first strengthened their moral identity, which, in turn, led to their promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors. This mediation was further moderated by their perceived voice opportunity. Using supervisor-employee dyads, the data of this study provided full support for the mediating effect of IWE on voice behavior. However, partial support for the moderated-mediating effect of IWE on voice behavior was recorded; this was significant for prohibitive voice only but not for promotive voice. These findings are largely consistent with the theoretical underpinnings.

Specifically, the supported H1 of the positive relationship between employees' IWE and their internalized moral identity is consistent with the findings of prior studies that examine moral identity in organizational and child development contexts. For instance,

Mayer *et al.* (2012) and Zhu *et al.* (2016) reported a significant and positive association between ethical leadership and moral identity. Similarly, a recent study by Arain *et al.* (2017) confirms a significant and positive association between ethical leadership and moral identity. Particularly, their findings show that teachers' ethical leadership first strengthens students' moral identity, which, in turn, leads to students' academic citizenship behaviors. Furthermore, the prior research in child development literature, such as Ebstyne King and Furrow (2008), Hardy and Carlo (2011), and Hardy *et al.* (2012), also suggests a positive correlation between youth's religious commitment and their moral identity development (Hardy and Carlo 2011). Considering that IWE represents one's religion-based work ethics, these reported findings are comparable to the positive relationship between IWE and moral identity reported in this study.

The supported H2a and H2b regarding the mediating effects of employees' internalized moral identity between their IWE and their promotive and prohibitive voice, respectively, are also consistent with prior studies. Specifically, Hardy *et al.* (2012) found support for the mediating effect of moral identity between adolescent religiosity and empathy and aggression behavior. A recent study by Gerpott *et al.* (2017) that examines moral identity in a leader-follower relationship in organizational context highlights the mediation effect of follower identity in the relationship between ethical leadership and follower's OCBs.

Overall, the positive (indirect) relationship between employees' IWE and their promotive and prohibitive voice is also consistent with the Islamic literature on the concept of 'commanding right' and 'forbidding wrong' (Cook 2001), which suggests that it is a duty of every Muslim to encourage good (i.e., promotive voice) and discourage poor work

practices (i.e. prohibitive voice). An empirical study by Murtaza *et al.* (2016) also found that IWE had significant and positive relationships with OCB and knowledge sharing behavior. Since voice behavior is also a form of prosocial work behavior, the supported H2a and H2b are consistent with their findings.

Finally, for the supported H3b and the rejected H3a of the moderating effects of perceived voice opportunity on the mediating effect of moral identity between IWE and prohibitive voice but not for promotive voice, we have no similar precedent study with which to compare this result. However, again, an indirect comparison can be made with the study by Knoll and van Dick (2013), which recorded a significant and positive relationship between voice opportunity and prohibitive employee voice. One justification for the non-significant moderated- mediation effect for promotive voice is that the promotive voice is a less risky form of voice than prohibitive voice, which has a very likely adverse effect on an interpersonal relationships (Morrison 2014, Chamberlin *et al.* 2017). Thus, considering the demographic and cultural diversity of the workplace in the KSA, it is very likely that, regardless of perceived voice opportunity, employees with a strong moral identity exhibit promotive voice more than prohibitive voice, due to less or no fear, that it would hurt or damage their interpersonal relationship. However, this finding is not the case with a prohibitive voice, which is likely to be perceived as offensive to peers and senior management; thus, it requires employees to consider the availability of voice opportunity before exhibiting prohibitive voice.

Theoretical Contributions

This study offers useful theoretical contributions to existing IWE and voice behavior literature. For instance, with an exception to a recent study by De Clercq *et al.* (2018) that incorporates the conservation of resource theory to explain the relationship between IWE and helping behavior, the prior IWE research primarily lacks a strong theoretical framework to explain how IWE affects employee attitudes and behaviors in the workplace (Usman *et al.* 2015). However, our study addresses this research gap by incorporating the integrated theoretical frameworks of social identity and self-consistency theories that fully explains how employees' IWE translates into employees' promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors. Furthermore, our findings regarding the differential mediation effects of moral identity for promotive and prohibitive voice, such as a full mediation for the former and a partial mediation for the later form of voice, support the recent research that suggests treating promotive and prohibitive voice separately, both theoretically and empirically (Liang *et al.* 2012, Kakkar *et al.* 2016).

Considering the complicated work relationships in the KSA, this study also confirms the moderating effect of perceived voice opportunity as a boundary condition on the mediating effect of moral identity to explain when the indirect relationship between IWE and voice (prohibitive voice) is stronger or weaker. Thus, this study also responds to the research calls placed by Murtaza *et al.* (2016) to examine the interactive effects of IWE and contextual factors on prosocial behaviors and by Morrison (2014) and Venkataramani *et al.* (2016) to examine the contextual moderators of constructive voice behavior. To conclude, our research answers the three research questions, such as *what*, *how*, and *when*, regarding IWE and constructive voice relationship by explaining how the positive relationships between employees' IWE and their promotive and prohibitive voice

behaviors are first mediated by their moral identity then further moderated by their level of perceived voice opportunity.

Practical Contributions

Our research also delivers important practical benefits. We contribute to the growing literature highlighting the virtues of IWE for employees' prosocial work behaviors (Murtaza *et al.* 2016, De Clercq *et al.* 2018), helping organizations to gain a better understanding of how religion-based work values may influence employees' moral identity and the subsequent promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors. Understanding employee constructive voice from the IWE perspective is practically useful because Islam is the second most widespread religion in the world after Christianity; with the fastest growing populations of Muslims in Asia, Africa, and Europe. There are 57 Muslim countries in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), which is the second largest international body after the United Nations; there is an estimated population of more than 1.5 billion Muslims in the world. Currently, Muslims represent approximately 23% of the world population (Johnson and Grim 2013), and this percentage is expected to grow to approximately 26.4% by 2030 (Grim and Karim 2011). Thus, the findings of this study have useful managerial implications, particularly for the organizations working in Muslim countries.

Furthermore, exploring employees' IWE, in conjunction with the interplay of their moral identity and level of their perceived voice opportunity, as a potential intrinsic motivator of employees' promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors in the KSA is interesting because varying perceptions of perceived voice opportunity contrasts with the IWE, which strongly emphasizes fair and equal treatment to all employees, regardless of

their nationality, color, or race (Ali 1992, Ali and Al-Owaihyan 2008). Thus, the findings of this study have useful managerial implications for organizations working not only in Muslim countries but also in non-Muslim countries to understand the role of perceived voice opportunity in motivating employees for promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors to manage diversity and compete in the arena of global competition (De Clercq *et al.* 2018).

In accordance with the results of this study, we suggest that managers focus on their employees' religiously based work ethic, such as IWE, which may first strengthen employees' moral identity and then motivate them to be consistent with their strengthened moral identity by engaging in promotive and prohibitive forms of constructive voice behaviors. One means of promoting employees' commitment to the IWE and their subsequently strengthened moral identity is through exposing the employees to moral and ethics-related symbols. For instance, a recently published study by Desai and Kouchaki (2017) shows that moral symbols, such as words, images, mundane objects, and subordinates, play a significant role in discouraging unethical work behaviors. Thus, by designing a workplace structure in which employees are exposed to ethics-related symbols that are congruent with their religion-based work ethics, managers may strengthen employees' moral identity and the subsequent exhibition of promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors.

Furthermore, the finding concerning the significant moderating effect of perceived voice opportunity also suggests that managers ensure that their employees perceive sufficient voice opportunity to exhibit voice, particularly prohibitive voice, without fear. Thus, we suggest that managers introduce more informal channels of communication for employees to voice their suggestions and concerns and establish one-on-one

communication with each employee using servant or ethical leadership styles that strengthen employees' moral identity and subsequent engagement in pro-social behaviors (Arain et al. 2017; Gerpott *et al.* (2017)

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although this study makes useful contributions to the IWE, moral identity, and voice behavior literature, it also has certain limitations. For instance, as explained in the discussion portion of the paper, the findings of this study are consistent with previous studies. However, the reverse causality effect among the studied relationships cannot be eliminated due to the cross-sectional data set used in this study that was collected at a single point of time. Therefore, we recommend that future researchers replicate our findings using a longitudinal design that would enable the researchers to establish the causal order among these relationships.

Additionally, this study focused only on the internalized moral identity, whereas, the future studies may opt to use both internalized and symbolized forms of moral identity to make the comparison of the two, shedding more light on the similarity or differences in the functioning of the two forms of moral identity. Furthermore, we investigated only one context-based moderator, perceived voice opportunity. However, future researchers may also explore other contextual factors, such as voice climate (Morrison *et al.* 2011); dispositional moderators, such as avoidance-approach orientations; and proactive personality, which may also influence the mediating effect of moral identity between IWE and voice behavior. Similarly, there is a need to conduct more studies investigating the effect of IWE on diminishing negative work behaviors, such as counterproductive and

deviant work behaviors, employee silence, knowledge hiding, and sexual harassment. Such studies would broaden our understanding of the implications of IWE for both positive and negative workplace outcomes.

Considering that we focused on religion-based work ethics using IWE and conducted this study in the KSA, our findings may not be observed in a non-Muslim work context. Thus, future research may extend our study by (1) replicating and possibly extending our tested research model in another leading Muslim country, such as Pakistan or Indonesia. In addition, future research could (2) include any other religion-based work ethic, such as the Protestant work ethic, and compare it with the IWE in both a Muslim and a non-Muslim context to examine whether the findings of this study are generalizable to another context. Furthermore, some researchers highlight that in the KSA work context (i.e. HRM policies and practices), there is not only a difference between locals and expats but also among expats from different origins. More specifically, HRM policies and practices are more favorable for locals (i.e., Saudis) and expatriates from certain developed countries, such as the US and the UK, than for expatriates from developing countries, such as Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh (Al-Asfour and Khan 2014, Yeo and Marquardt 2015). Therefore, this could be a good line of inquiry in future research.

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FIGURE 1: Hypothesized Research Model

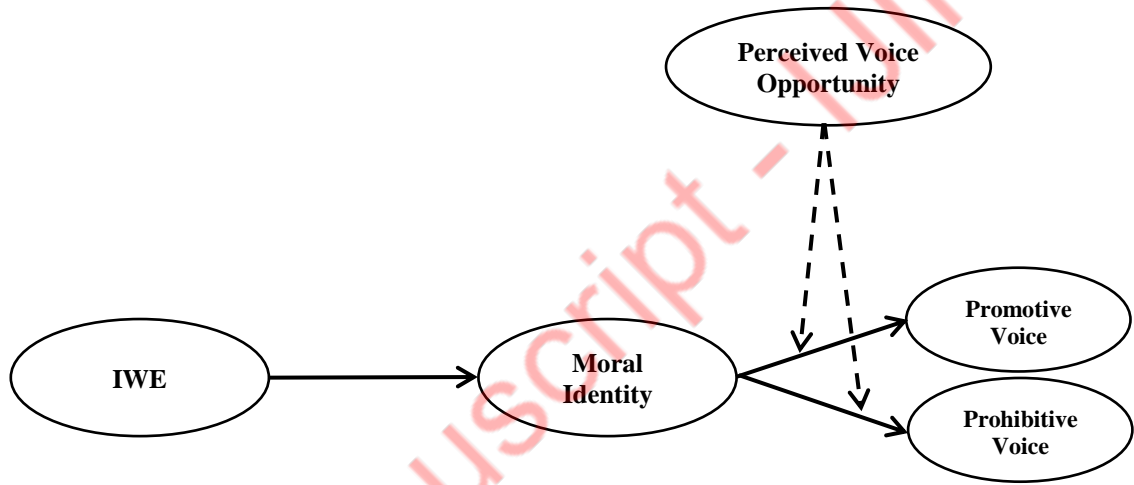


TABLE 1: CFA Models Fit Indices

<i>Measurement (CFA) Model Comparison</i>		<i>SRMR</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>TLI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>
Model 1	Five-factor baseline model, i.e., IWE, moral identity, voice opportunity, promotive voice, prohibitive voice.	.06	.93	.92	.05
Model 2	Four-factor alternative model, i.e., IWE was merged with moral identity.	.08	.81	.80	.08
Model 3	Three-factor alternative model, i.e., promotive voice, prohibitive voice, and perceived voice opportunity were merged.	.10	.71	.69	.10
Model 4	Single-factor model, i.e., all measures were loaded on a single latent factor.	.17	.51	.48	.13

Notes. N = 217; IWE = Islamic work ethic; SRMR = Standardized root mean square residual; CFI = Comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker Lewis index; RMSEA = Root-mean square error approximation

TABLE 2: Descriptive Statistics and Inter-Correlations

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>
1. Gender	1.36	.48										
2. Age	31.29	8.40	-.18**									
3. Experience	5.86	6.45	-.13	.70**								
4. Nationality	1.35	.48	-.17*	.11	.11							
5. Relationship tenure	4.68	4.60	-.15*	.31**	.42**	.04						
6. IWE	4.25	.56	-.01	.07	.12	.07	-.02	.93				
7. Moral identity	4.23	.73	.08	.02	.02	-.03	-.12	.44**	.85			
8. PVO	3.72	.99	-.06	-.04	-.08	-.01	-.03	.34**	.35**	.88		
9. Promotive voice	3.54	.9	-.06	-.08	-.07	.08	-.08	.18**	.19**	.34**	.84	
10. Prohibitive voice	3.80	.74	-.04	.04	-.02	.08	.04	.28**	.30**	.27**	.18**	.85

Notes. N = 217; Diagonally Cronbach's (α) values are given for each scale; Gender was coded as 1 = Male and 2 = Female; Nationality was coded as 1 = National and 2 = Expatriate; IWE = Islamic work ethic; PVO = Perceived voice opportunity.

** = $p < 0.01$ level; * = $p < 0.05$ level.

TABLE 3: Summary Regression Table of Mediation Model (H1 and H2)

Model 1		Moral Identity (M)					
<i>IVs</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>				
<i>Constant</i>	1.72	.45	3.85***				
<i>Gender</i>	-.11	.10	1.14				
<i>Age</i>	.01	.01	.46				
<i>Experience</i>	.00	.01	.02				
<i>Nationality</i>	-.07	.09	-.78				
<i>Relationship tenure</i>	-.02	.01	-1.60				
IWE (X)	.57	.08	7.04***				

Model 2		Promotive Voice (Y)			Prohibitive Voice (Y)		
<i>IVs</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>				
<i>Constant</i>	2.30	.62	3.71***				
<i>Gender</i>	-.14	.13	-1.12				
<i>Age</i>	-.01	.01	-.93				
<i>Experience</i>	-.01	.01	-.30				
<i>Nationality</i>	.15	.13	1.14				
<i>Relationship tenure</i>	-.01	.02	-.45				
IWE (X)	.18	.12	1.55				
Moral identity (M)	.19	.09	2.01*				

<i>Indirect Effects</i>	<i>Effect(γ)</i>	<i>BootSE</i>	<i>[LLCI, ULCI]</i>		<i>Effect(γ)</i>	<i>BootSE</i>	<i>[LLCI, ULCI]</i>	
Moral identity	.11	.05	[.01, .23]		.14	.05	[.06, .24]	

Notes. N = 217; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; PROCESS Model 4; B = Unstandardized coefficients; IWE = Islamic work ethic

TABLE 4: Summary Regression Table of Moderated-Mediation Model (H3)

Model 1		Moral Identity (M)					
<i>IVs</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>				
<i>Constant</i>	-2.50	.45	-5.58***				
<i>Gender</i>	-.11	.10	1.14				
<i>Age</i>	.01	.01	.46				
<i>Experience</i>	.00	.01	.02				
<i>Nationality</i>	-.07	.09	-.78				
<i>Relationship tenure</i>	-.02	.01	-1.60				
IWE (X)	.57	.08	7.04***				
Model 2		Promotive Voice (Y)			Prohibitive Voice (Y)		
<i>IVs</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	
<i>Constant</i>	3.48	.62	5.52***	2.77	.51	5.44***	
<i>Gender</i>	-.10	.13	-.75	-.06	.10	-.56	
<i>Age</i>	-.01	.01	-1.00	.01	.01	.85	
<i>Experience</i>	.01	.01	.17	-.02	.01	-1.47	
<i>Nationality</i>	.16	.13	1.30	.11	.10	1.12	
<i>Relationship tenure</i>	-.01	.02	-.66	.02	.01	1.04	
IWE (X)	.07	.12	.60	.18	.10	1.85	
Moral identity (M)	.09	.10	.96	.25	.08	3.18**	
PVO(V)	.27	.07	4.17***	.12	.05	2.22*	
Moral identity x PVO	-.01	.07	-.01	.12	.06	2.03*	
<i>Indirect Effects</i>	<i>Effect(γ)</i>	<i>BootSE</i>	<i>[LLCI, ULCI]</i>	<i>Effect(γ)</i>	<i>BootSE</i>	<i>[LLCI, ULCI]</i>	
Index of moderated mediation: Moral Identity	-.01	.04	[-.08, .06]	.07	.04	[.01, .15]	
-1 SD	.05	.05	[-.05, .18]	.08	.05	[-.02, .17]	
Mean	.05	.05	[-.05, .18]	.14	.05	[.06, .24]	
+1 SD	.05	.07	[-.09, .19]	.21	.06	[.09, .35]	

Notes. N = 217; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; PROCESS Model 14; B = Unstandardized coefficients; IWE = Islamic work ethic; PVO = Perceived voice opportunity.