



## REVIEW ARTICLE

# Understanding Islamic work Ethics and its Impacts on Employers and Employees in Workplaces

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### Abstract

Islam focused on every issue that concerns the life of human beings. Since working is a part of human life, Islam has made the necessary laws about it. The holy Qur'an is the origin of Islamic morals. When they asked Aisha (the wife of the prophet Mohammed) about his character. She replied that his character is Quran. There are numerous verses in the holy Quran and the Hadithes of Messenger that emphasize the importance of the work in human being and also outline the work ethics that an employer and employee must possess and obey. Therefore, this paper highlights the importance and the effects of Islamic work ethics on the productivity and performance of the individual and the work environments.

**Keywords:** Islamic Work Ethics, Employers, Employees

### Introduction

Recently work ethics is considered to be one of the most important topics that have received the attention of researchers. Because it plays a significant role in human life. Regardless of being paid or unpaid, it is good for individuals' health and mental wellbeing. Work helps individuals to increase their self-esteem as well as self-confidence [1]. So, what is work? The term work was described by many authors and researchers in different ways. The term work was defined according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary as "the labor, task, or duty that is one's conventional means of livelihood" [2]. Besides, the term was also defined as an activity where an individual utilizes physical along with mental effort to do [1]. However, different sociological dictionaries divided work into two components, including paid work (i.e., professional work) as well as unpaid work (eg., housework) [3]. Regardless of which type among them, you are working both of them possess ethics. Work ethics are important in every type of professional job and is mostly sought by both employers and employees. The term ethic according to Velasquez, Andre, Shanks, and Meyer [4] can be defined as well-founded standards of right and wrong that show what individuals should do, generally in terms of rights, commitments, benefits to society, honesty, or specific virtues. Work ethic on the other hand was defined as principles and standards that are the basis for the desired behavior of the business personnel, and the employees undertake to abide by them [5]. Islamic Work ethic was defined as However, can be interpreted as "the set of moral principles which distinguish between what is right from what is wrong in the Islamic context, based on Al-Qur'an and *sunnah*, which is closely associated with Islamic values, belief and practice" [5]. This is because

Islamic system encompasses three fundamental concepts. Which are first, "aqidah", which means belief in monotheism? Second is "ibadah", which means worshiping and obeying the rule of sharia. Third is "akhlaq" which is to fulfill the rules and principles to be followed according to Islamic principles [6]. Therefore, Islamic work ethics must all these three. Nevertheless, Islamic Work Ethics due to the collapse of the Khalifa system, and as most of the Islamic countries interest in modernization and westernization had lost value. However, in recent years, the establishment of Islamic commercial banks in some Islamic countries has again sparked curiosity on this topic. Therefore, numerous studies have been conducted about it. Work ethics is considered to be among the topics that have received the attention of behaviorists and administrators, by examining the various aspects of this topic and the extent of its availability or lack thereof among the employee, and Islamic economic thought has presented many important principles related to this concept.

### Literature Review

Each workplace has an ethical code that guides its decision making and activities to bring about effective output and keep its reputation. Therefore, an organization with good work ethics is more likely to develop its status and maintain its success for a long period [7]. Moreover, Yavuz [8] claimed that these ethical codes also guarantee that employees fulfill their tasks with and honorableness, honesty, and encounter

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the purpose of the work-setting they belong to. Setting up work ethic is important because it increases collaboration and or teamwork among the employees and facilitates their relationship with their employers. Another important part of work ethics is that it furnishes emotional protection [9] that is employers' recognition of the significance of work ethics helps employees to feel secure, because generally, work ethics include no harassment, and also employers who obey work ethics respectfully treat their employees. An employer who respects work ethics does not violate employees' rights. Similarly, an employee who respects work ethics never violates the employers' rights as well and tends to do his utmost in any task that is assigned to him/her. In addition, workers who possess good work ethics, improve the productivity of the organization. Similarly, a strong work ethic is also crucial for a person to succeed in his career. Besides, Cavus and kapusuz [10] argued that developing a powerful work ethic permits an individual to train himself that working hard work is necessary for the workplace. An employer who shapes a positive routine, for example, focusing on his assigned task, staying energetic, completing his tasks on time are associated with developing a good work ethic and will result in making employers be admired to them. Workers who possess good work ethics are competent in maintaining focus on their tasks for a long time.

### **The Effects of Islamic Work Ethics on Employers and Employee**

Together with the development of industrial efficiency, different states regardless of West or East have been encountering ethical chaoses, especially exploitation or oppression of the bottom classes in the work settings. However, Islam as a divine religion comes up with different ethics that can help in reducing this chaotic situation in the workplace among employers and employees. Islamic work ethics specifically was found to have high positive impacts on both employers and employees in workplaces. In their study, Khadijah, Kamaluddin, and Salin [11] showed that IWE came up with positive objectives and impact locus control that satisfy the employers. Ahmed [12], argued that "IWE influences employee's welfare, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, job involvement intention to leave and organizational change". Moreover, previous study findings show that there is a significant influence of IWE on organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and rewards while Islamic work ethics has no significant relation with turnover [13]. Different studies' results claim that Islamic work ethics can help build better morale between employees which in turn can result in greater employee job satisfaction. Ahmad [12] on the other hand, argued that adopting Islamic work ethics increases organizational commitment, level of motivation and as a result, it tends to decrease the number of employees wanting turnover. Therefore, as it helps in maintaining employees in the workplaces on the other side, it also brings cooperation, consultation, equity, unity, and spirituality to the workplace. Spirituality, for example, was

considered to be one of the core elements of Islamic work ethic elements. In addition, Khadijah, Kamaluddin, and Salin [11] claimed that adopting Islamic Ethics is more likely to bring creativity, honesty, and trust to the workplace. It was founded that organizations that take Islamic work ethics into account in their mission and vision declarations and providing a platform according to Islamic principles leads to a better level of job satisfaction among employees and employers and greater in the function of the organization [12]. Therefore, it can be concluded from this that employees who possess and act with or according to Islamic work ethics are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and make their employers be satisfied. Ahmed and Owoyemi [13] added that adopting IWE in organizations raises employers' morals, brings higher job satisfaction levels, improved productivity, and reduces stress levels in the workers [12]. As these results indicate there is a positive impact of IWE on employee job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment. A variety of studies have outlined several dimensions of IWE in different categories. Ali [14] outlined four dimensions of Islamic work ethic. These encompass effort, competition, transparency, and morally responsible conduct. The set of moral values that a Muslim worker should possess regardless of the work he is engaged in include, piety, righteousness, honesty, cheerfulness and good dealing with others, self-censorship [12]. The following two subtitles outline some of the main characteristics that both employers and employees should have in the works-places.

### **Characteristics and Performances that an Employee should possess**

Moral values, rules, and professional ethics are not new topics in Islam, but rather have been stressed in the original Islamic source which is the Holy Quran and the pure Sunnah of the Prophet. Islamic scholars have revealed the performances/ characteristics that Islam expects from an employee from these two valuable sources. Some of these include first efficiency and workmanship. Efficiency in performance and perfection at work are both important matters in the Islamic and human perspective. Trying to be efficient and perfect at work is in the Sunnah of the prophet Mohammed. As he used to urge his companions and followers to improve the work under their hands by saying that "God Almighty will be pleased with those who try to their work perfectly". Of course one may say that we are not perfect and cannot do everything perfectly. However, this statement does not tell us to be perfect in everything, it calling us on taking the tasks we have assigned in as our tasks and do the jobs according to that. By considering while completing that task that if you do a mistake or fail in that task it will affect the workplace that you are in negatively. Therefore, you should complete that task in a way that if one sees it will say that this was done by that person because we know him this way in his tasks. The second is the sense of Responsibility. An important work ethic at the present time is a feeling of responsibility. A worker according to Islamic ethics must feel the responsibility, regardless he is being observed or

not. If though no one controls him while working, he should feel that Allah sees him and knows whatever he is doing. The third is justice and fairness. As it was Holy Qur'an "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, the witness in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just" (Qur'an, 5:8). This verse calls any worker to be just to his employer and his colleague and do not fear to tell the truth if he saw someone who behaves unacceptably in the workplace even it is someone very close to him or himself. Fourth is obedience. An employee according to IWE must obey his employers and the rules that were set up by the workplace he is belonged to. As it was stated in the Qur'an that "O you who believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you (Qur'an, 4:59). This verse indicates the status of the authority owners among us in Islam and therefore, disobeying their orders may lead to unfruitful actions. In the Battle of Uhud, the archers' failure to obey the order of the Prophet caused the Muslims to lose the victory of the war for example. For this reason, a worker must obey and implement the instructions issued by his superior, which are acceptable in religion, law, and custom.

### Characteristics and Performances that an Employer should possess

Islam as its stressed on the characteristic and performances that is expected from the employees, similarly it also emphasized some performances and/or characteristic that Islam expects from employers should possess. These include first, kindness and amnesty with employees. Employers or managers being Kind and pardon with the employees are required in Islam. Gentleness and good treatment to employees have been seen as a powerful strategy of successful institutions. On the other hand, as good treatment of the company owners to their clients is important and can be accepted as the basis of a successful business relationship, similarly, it is can also help in making a certain workplace productive. For instance, a manager who tends to be severe and harsh-hearted to his workers due to their small mistakes is more likely to lose successful workers, and this will lead to a high rate of that company and may result in the reduction in that company's work productivity, and quality of services rendered. Therefore, a successful employer should be kind and forgiver to this employee and take into consideration that there is no faultless person and that and forgiveness is great. Again, the Prophet Mohammed is the best exemplar to give in this regard. As He was sent to be merciful and kind to all creatures regardless of their religion, race, status, and culture, he used to exhort his companion to be kind and for ireful to their workers and servants. God the Almighty praised him for setting a good example in his kindness to his followers in the Holy Qur'an by saying "And by the mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently, and if you had been severe and harsh hearted, they would have broken away from about you (Holy Qur'an, 3:159). The second is being a clear and good direct advisor to their employees. One of the behaviors of the business owners that we will see easily in the workplace is that they shout and

humiliate their employees in the middle of people for their mistakes. According to them, this is the most convenient way to educate their employees. However, Islam is totally against these treatments. One study showed that clear and direct advice has a great impact on the employee's understanding of what the work requires and the boss's view of his performance, and thus enables him to improve his performance and raise his level [11]. Anas Ibn Malik narrated that "he served the prophet at Medina for ten years, and I was a little boy. Every work that I did was not according to the desire of him but he never said to me. Why did you do this? Or why you did not do this (General Behavior, 2). Of course, as a boss, it sometimes may be difficult to maintain silence for any wrong behaviors exhibited by the workers as prophet treated his servant Anas Ibn Malik, but in a polite way and without hurting his pride you can correct their mistakes and show him the right ways. The third is the sense of responsibility. The sense of responsibility of an employer is completely different from the responsibility of the employee. While an employer should feel that he is responsible for the development of the workplace he belongs to and should behave according to that, the responsibility of the employers is on employees. Employers according to IWE are responsible for their employees' well-being, should meet their basic needs, etc. As it was narrated in a Hadith of the prophet Mohammed that "all of you are shepherds and each of you is responsible for his flock". (Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, 212). Among the responsibilities that an employer should complete for his workers according to Islam is to pay them their wages on time. As Abdullah Ibn Umar reported that the Messenger of wantsh, peace, and blessings be upon him, said, "Pay the worker his wages before his sweat has dried" (Sunan Ibn Mājah, 2443). Fourth is justice and fairness. An employer according to IWE must be fair in his behavior and dealings with others. There is a statement by Mohandas Gandhi that "a person should be the change that he wants to see in the world". Similarly, if an employer want his workers to be justice to him, he must be fair to all of his workers first without discriminating against them based on their race, religion, culture, etc.

### Conclusion

This study investigated the significance and the effects of Islamic Work Ethic on both employers and employees. The related literature showed that IWE has a high positive impact on both employers and employees in workplaces. These impacts include employees' wellbeing, organizational citizenship behavior, and job satisfaction. In addition, it helps in maintaining employees in the workplaces on hand; on the other side it also brings cooperation, consultation, equity, unity, and spirituality to workplaces. It was also found that employers who possess and act with or according to Islamic work ethics are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and make their employers be satisfied. From what has been presented above, it is clear that IWE does not differ from others except in the doctrinal background that establishes the Muslim individual to be related to the Creator. The study

also outlined several characteristics that both employers and employees should possess in the work settings according to sharia principles. These characteristics include efficiency and workmanship, a sense of responsibility, justice and fairness, obedience, kindness and amnesty with employees, and being a clear and good direct advisor to employees.

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