

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISLAMIC WORK ETHIC AND ORGANIZATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AMONG THE EMPLOYEES THROUGH THE LEADERSHIP AS A MEDIATOR IN THE CANADIAN ORGANIZATION: A PILOT STUDY

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**Abstract:** Leaders plays a significant role in success of any organization as they formulate strategies, make decisions, and implement them at workplace. As the employees ' dissatisfaction in Canadian organization are increasing overtime, which ultimately lower their organization engagement. It arises a need to ascertain numerous aspects to enhance the organizational engagement of employees in Canadian organization, therefore the main aim of this research study is to identify the moderating role of leadership among the association of Islamic Work Ethics and Organizational Engagement. In order to conduct this research study, four major independent variables, i.e. devotion, cooperate, modesty and honesty, one moderating variable i.e. leadership, and one dependent variable i.e. organization engagement, are utilized. A comprehensive literature review was conducted to provide theoretical support to the research issue, mainly emphasizing Muslim religious beliefs and Islamic theories. Moreover, questionnaire is used as a research instruments consisting specific questions for each variable, and required data was collected from 234 Muslim employees working in Canadian organization. The data gathered through survey is analyzed in the Statistical software IBM SPSS, while using different statistical techniques i.e. frequency analysis, correlation matrix and regression analysis (ANOVA). The results of this research reveal that Honesty, Devotion, Cooperation and Modesty have significant relationship with Leadership, in addition Honesty, Devotion, Cooperation and Modesty have significant relationship with Organization Engagement. Moreover, Leadership moderates the relationship between Modesty and Organization Engagement, and the relationship between Cooperation and Organization Engagement.

**Keywords:** Canadian Organizations, organizational engagement, employee modesty, ethical leadership, employee devotion, employee cooperation, employee honesty, Islamic work ethic.

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## 1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In Canada, Islam is the second-largest and fastest-growing religion. The Muslim population in Canada is larger than the Muslim population in Qatar and Bahrain combined (Envionics Institute, 2016). Ali (2005) noted the Islamic work ethic had a significant influence on organizations by Muslim leaders. Many Muslims have leadership positions in Canada (Esposito, 2005; Khan, 2002; Pipes & Duran, 2002). However, most research has been concerned with Jude-Christian ethics, especially the Protestant work ethic in western business settings. Meanwhile, although a few researchers have participated in addressing and highlighting the Islamic work ethic their contributions are very limited Thus, this research attempts to study the relationship between Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) and organizational engagement.

According to Soldo (2017), researchers in Canada do not have enough information regarding the relationship between Islamic performance moral philosophy, strict beliefs, and organizational word of Muslims in the workplace. This quantitative reciprocation exploration meditation will rate a view of 234 Muslims Practicing professionals using a Likert-style survey. Participants will perceive the successive criteria: (a) be Muslim and attend the conscientious beliefs of the Islamic trust, (b) be engage in headship proposition, and (c) inhabit in Canada.

Adherence to work ethics shape economic development and positively influences various dimensions of attitude towards organizational change. However, deterioration in work ethics may lead to decline in general performance of business entity. Many cases of corporate scandals and collapse provide evidence that moral misconducts among the employees may contribute to the financial disaster of the company. For example, the Enron corporation debacle shows that the company's culture had profound effects on the ethics of its employee in which finally destroy the company (Manan & Kamaluddin, 2015). Often management procedures are quite visibly suffering from ethical dilemmas. Ethical behavior of employees is a challenge for today's organizations facing significant problems with it. According to the survey of 300 companies, over 85% of senior executives indicate that employee conflict of interest, inappropriate gifts, sexual harassment and unauthorized payments are among their top ethical concerns (Abbasi, Rehman, & Bibi, 2011). The unethical practices, push some corporations to critical situation, like low organizational commitment, intention to leave the organization, low organizational performance, revenue losses even bankruptcy (Khan, Khurram; Abbas, Muhammad; Gul, & Asma, 2015). The main curiosity of the research to do this research was the absence of work-manual of Islamic work ethics in the literature of human resources, as per Abbasi, Rehman, & Bibi (2011). According to the mentioned researchers, "there is a continuous search for new paradigms, new approaches, and new techniques in management that could create the much-needed competitive edge or niche in order to excel in this rapidly changing business environment without damaging the reputation. Human resource constitutes the focal point of these new paradigms; the greater the significance of this constituent; the less is its recognition. HR gurus observed that managing people is hard because there's no manual to tell you how to deal with human beings effectively" (Abbasi et al., 2011).

Consequently, in Islam, "humans are responsible for all their actions and will be judged in the hereafter based on their degree of commitment to their mission on Earth; this responsibility is related to every single action in all aspects of life. Islamic teachings cover different aspects of life either in clear and detailed instructions or general guidelines, and in both cases, Muslims are asked to commit to these teachings" (Ismaeel & Blaim, 2012). While the mechanisms and tools of Islamic business ethics application change over time, the underlying concepts of Islamic ethical system are constant since they were derived from a transcendental source (i.e. revelation from Allah (the God)). When trying to develop its application, Islamic business ethics need to remain congruent with its fundamental concepts (Ismaeel & Blaim, 2012). Therefore, it is worthy and important to examine an empirical study on the practice of the Islamic work ethics and its effect on employee engagement that could be materialized in a form of leadership.

In Islam work is perceived as religious duty. "Work is a dedicative effort in striving to increase one's interest economically, socially and psychologically, as well as to sustain social prestige, to advance societal welfare and reaffirm faith. In other words, work is a mean to safeguard the five essential human needs namely their faith, their self, their intellect, their posterity and their wealth. Hence, it is important for human being to pursue whatever work is available whenever it is available subjected to the will of Allah" (Manan & Kamaluddin, 2015). In the study conducted by "Islamic work ethics is important to create organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Applying the justice, honesty, generosity, trust and other IWE's components will bring motivation and appreciation in the workplace, which are related to the commitment of employees to the organization and satisfaction in their jobs" (Nasution & Rafiki, 2019).

The main motivation to conduct this study was a list of facts and stats that highlighted the moderation of leadership in the relationship between Islamic work ethics and Organizational Engagement, in order to vastly understand how the leadership concept could elaborate the relationship between Honesty, Devotion, Cooperation, and Modesty from hand, and organizational engagement from another hand. One study conducted by Dirk, Ul, Usman, Umer, & Norashikin (2018) a conclusion of this study stated that Islamic work ethics influence a more balanced leadership style and reduce "despotic" leadership, which in return increase organizational engagement among staff (Dirk, Ul, Usman, Umer, & Norashikin, 2018). Other evidences from a study conducted by Shamsudin, Rahman, & Romle, (2015) showing that "Islamic work ethics influence indirectly the relationship between authentic leadership and knowledge-sharing, which prove that Islamic work ethics has major contribution toward the promotion of knowledge-sharing. Assurance of good behavior between authentic leadership and employee's performance is improved the productivity of the organization" (Shamsudin, Rahman, & Romle, 2015).

**According to the above, this study is conducted to answer these questions:**

1. What is the effect of (Honesty, Devotion, Cooperate, & Modesty) on organizational engagement?
2. What is the mediation effect of Leadership between (Honesty, Devotion, Cooperate, & Modesty) and organizational engagement?

**According to what have been discussed before this section, this research is designed to achieve these objectives:**

1. To investigate the effect of (Honesty, Devotion, Cooperate, & Modesty) on organizational engagement.
2. To investigate the mediation effect of Leadership between (Honesty, Devotion, Cooperate, & Modesty) and organizational engagement.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Aside from religious convention, workplace spirituality has a potential significance with the flourishing of worker, associations, and social orders. "It interfaces the quintessence of laborers with his or her exercises and undertaking, bringing about upgraded responsibility with the association and employment fulfillment. Innovation supersedes customary workplaces to expand the incomes of the partners with no real use influencing the incomes, along these lines making lost authoritative spirituality at numerous workplaces. As indicated by Van der Walt and de Klerk (2014), from past years in the field of research work, workplace spirituality has increased crucial significance which would create trust inside representatives. The scholarly research hole is as yet present as this theme is still in its creating stage and numerous observational research works indicated huge communication between workplace spirituality and positive assignment yield and employment fulfillment. In the present time, organizations are confronting numerous obstacles because of the nonattendance of spirituality in the workplace, for instance: stress, non-attendance, and authoritative legislative issues (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). Companions who felt that significance exists in their work and have a feeling of association and collaboration in the workplace gave better execution and even included an incentive by their commitment toward the advancement of the work space (Gull and Doh, 2004).

Workplace spirituality inspires past practices of interconnectivity and a sentiment of trust between people, who are a piece of a specific work process, which in this manner affect agreeable emotions and prompt a general authoritative culture that is driven by inspiration, exemplified by a constructive reaction, and unanimity and amicability among the people, subsequently, elevating the combined execution of the people, and thus helping to the hierarchical perfection all in all, as recommended by Afsar and Rehman (2015). Religion and workplace spirituality are shafts separated. Workplace spirituality is more centered around the subject of resistance, tolerance, the vibe of interconnectivity, reason and adequacy of the brain to the standards of the association, coordinated together to shape individual qualities, though religion is set apart by a particular conviction framework, a specific arrangement of confidence and set of convictions (Afsar and Rehman, 2015). Workplace spirituality wins in the way of life and builds peer information and it empowers their sentiments toward others (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003). It is tied in with looking for spirituality way in work, as an opportunity to continue and to increase the value of the network genuinely. It incorporates consideration, compassion and support of others, and about truth and trust to themselves as well as other people. Companions and association should utilize their qualities all the more appropriately by incorporating them in their work. Notwithstanding, combination between the vertical and even otherworldly qualities and measurements causes associations to create interlinked inspirations and activities.

Spirituality in administration likewise enables associations to satisfy their objective of adequacy. At the point when in a particular association if a pioneer is profoundly solid, it implies that the way of life winning in that association would likewise be sound and he would go about as a scaffold between the chiefs and workers (association) to convey viably and to feel themselves to be similarly in charge of authoritative objectives. There are three measurements of workplace spirituality: participating in work, network sense, and internal life association. A man's internal identity is situated toward his work and communication to the network in workplace is known as workplace spirituality (Kinjerski and Skrypnek, 2006).

### 3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

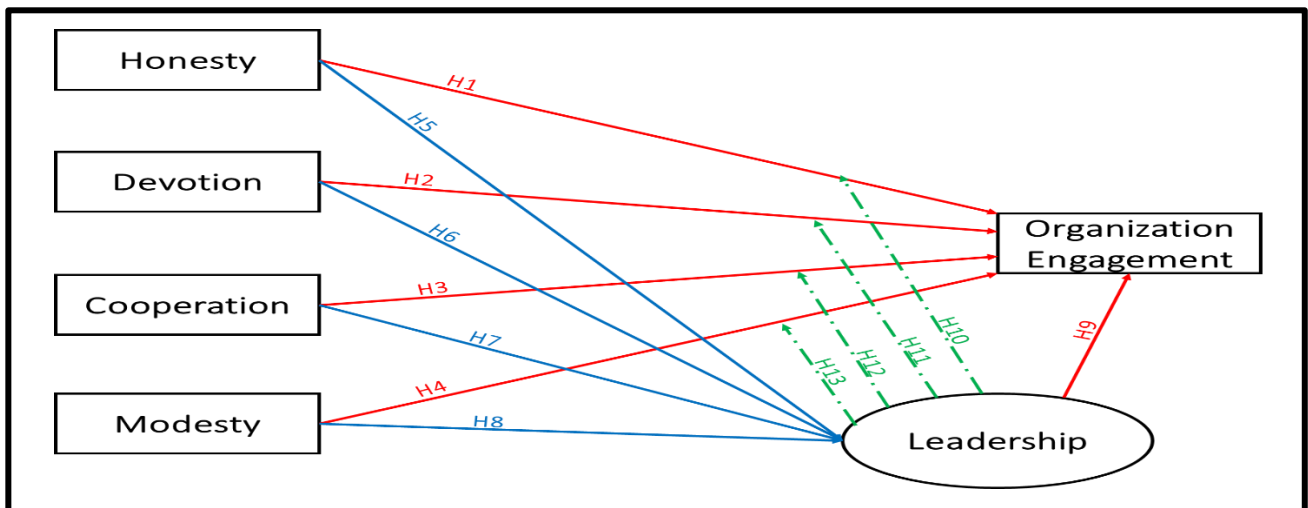
According to a study in 2011 by CAIR, the number of Islamic non-profit organization has increased by 74% between 2000 and 2011. The average attendance of these organizations has more than doubled from 1994 to 2011 (Bagby, 2011). Compared to other faiths having 71% of religious organization staffed with full-time, paid leaders, Islamic non-profit organizations only have 41% full-time, paid staff with a leader (Bagby, 2011). Moreover, 55% of Canadian Islamic nonprofit organizations have no paid professional staff, and a low 10% have at least three full-time, paid professionals (Rehman, 2004). Underfunding is also a challenge in Islamic nonprofit organizations even though the attendance rate is higher than other faiths, as the annual median revenue is half compared to other religious organizations (Bagby, 2011; Rehman, 2004). Canadian not profit organizations govern and operate as profit organizations, functioning similarly to profit organizations. All organizations need financial support to survive (Baruch & Amalho, 2006). The way organizations secure funds and use resources efficiently are important aspects of nonprofit organizational effectiveness (Hendricks et al., 2008). Therefore, Muslim leaders play a significant role to engage employees to achieve the organization's goals effectively.

Among other indicators, the organizational engagement of religious organizations is based on the degree an organization meets the needs of its employees in order to engage them. Examples of an employee's needs are the services the organization provides (Boehm & Yoels, 2009; Hendricks et al., 2008; Huehls, 2009), its ability to acquire the environmental resources required to fulfill organizational needs (Aldrich, 2009) and the extent to which the leader's behaviors are reflective of the practice and utilization of employees (Aldrich, 2009; Analoui et al., 2010; Boehm & Yoels, 2009; Hendricks et al., 2008; Huehls, 2009). Most research on leadership and organizational engagement support the concept of leadership effectiveness being the single most critical factor to achieve organizational success (Avolio et al., 2009; Bandsuch et al., 2008; Bass, 2008).

Organizations must serve the interests of stakeholders by identifying and defining the skills of a visionary and effective leader, who can achieve optimum organizational engagement and impact overall organizational effectiveness (Ayman & Korabik, 2010; Babcock-Roberson, & Strickland, 2010). Muslim leaders have the responsibility to maintain the confidence of stakeholders by leading and managing the strategic and operational functions of the organization (Beck et al., 2008). For this reason, the study focuses on exploring the effect of leadership as a moderator between organizational engagement and Islamic work ethics among Muslim leaders in nonprofit organizations in Canada. Researchers agree effective leadership is the ability to influence and align the follower's attitude, motivation, and beliefs with accomplishing organizational goals and increasing the employees' engagement. Likewise, effective leaders in religious organizations are also committed to the organizational engagement (Beinecke, 2009). Leaders who are considered successful and effective begin with a vision that reveals the organizational goals and engage the employees to achieve these goals and increase the productivity (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Effective leaders impact the direction followers and communities take towards the achievement of organizational success, and engagement (Ather & Sobhani, 2007; Boseman, 2008). Leadership impacts have been discussed in literature concerning leadership effectiveness with transformational leadership being the most noticeable (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders have the ability to improve a transforming vision, communicate the vision to engage the employees the organization's (Herold et al., 2008). In the context of Muslim leaders, effective leadership is defined as the ability to influence and engage followers to devotedly put in extra effort to achieve common objectives (Ayman et al., 2009; Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). The conceptual framework of this study as depicted in Figure 1, presents the examination of the leadership styles among imams and their relationship with leadership effectiveness in U.S. Mosques. Many studies have proven the relationship between the leadership styles and leadership effectiveness in religious organizations (Al-Hilali, 2012; Brown, 2009). However, this study was conducted in a different location with the focus on the imam in the role of a leader and no other parts of the organization such as the board of directors.

A link is established between effective imams and the organizational effectiveness of mosques. The study can assume once the relationship between the Muslim leadership style and leadership effectiveness is proven, Muslim leaders in Canadian nonprofit and profit organizations can improve leadership behaviors by applying Islamic work ethics in their workplace to engage their employees. This study needs to explore how Muslim leaders can affect organizational engagement through implementing Islamic work ethics on their workplace environment. In other words, Muslim leaders implement Islamic work ethics to their employees in nonprofit and profit organizations, they improve overall organizational engagement and achieve the organizations' goals."



**Figure 1: the conceptual framework of this study**

From the "previous literature review the main problem is that employers are searching for approaches to engage the employees to their workplaces. The literature review clearly defined if employees find personal purpose and sense at work, they will be engaged to the organization (Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003). The previous literature review which conducted by Tischler, Biberman, and McKeage (2002), Kale and Shrivastava (2003), Fleming (2004), found that by starting religiousness in the workplace, some employees can engage mentally, emotionally, and physically to the workplace.

Fewer studies are found on leadership in the Muslim US context. Aabed (2006) studied Islamic leadership theory and practice among American Islamic organizations Al- Hilali (2012) suggested Muslim leaders tended to use strict style of leadership resulting in loss of employees' engagement and involvement. Akhtar (2000) performed a comparative study on organizational engagement in US Islamic non-profit organizations, while Elsegeiny (2005) completed a qualitative study on leadership from the perspective of Islamic organizations. Although Salie (2008) studied leadership role and organizational engagement in Muslim Michigan organizations, the study was limited because of its regional scope and results could not be generalized to other Muslim organizations in other regions of the country. Muhammad (2008) examined the leadership effectiveness of US Muslim leaders based on educational differences of being educated in US versus abroad. However, from the previous literature review Muhammad (2008) found an increasing need for transformational leadership skills and behaviors who can implement Islamic work ethics accurately in organizations. Al-Hilali (2012) was the first to quantitatively examine, using the Full Range Leadership Model, the relationship between leadership and subjective organizational engagement, including leadership of Muslim leaders, of board of directors in US nonprofit and profit organizations."

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

Ali (1992, 1988), Yousef (2000, 2001), and Ali and Al-Kazemi (2007) conducted research on the relationship between the Islamic work ethic and organizational commitment. Ali (1992, 1988), Yousef (2000, 2001), and Ali and Al-Kazemi (2007) have all used a quantitative design. A quantitative approach was determined to be an appropriate method in discovering the relationships between of the research variables for the study. Quantitative data provide statistical information and quantitative statistical analysis is an appropriate method for measuring attitudes (Creswell, 2002). The study documented the association between the variables, whether the association is positive linear ( $r = .75$ ), negative linear ( $r = -.68$ ), no correlation ( $r = .00$ ), or a non-linear relation (Creswell, 2002). The correlation coefficient has been set at  $-1.00$  to a  $+ 1.00$ , with  $.00$  indicating no linear association between the variables (Islamic work ethic, religious beliefs, and organizational commitment). This research study used a quantitative approach in order to identify the relationship. The research design is selected keeping in view the nature of research study, as the main objective of this study is to identify the moderating role of leadership among the association of Islamic work ethics and organizational engagement of Muslim employee. In order to attain this research objective positivism research philosophy is adopted which mainly rely on numerical structure, and quantitative research design is adapted to support the research philosophy. Therefore, the statistical analysis of numeric data is conducted in order to identify the association among dependent and independent

variables i.e. organizational engagement and Islamic work ethics (honesty, devotion, cooperate and modesty) as well as moderating variable i.e. leadership. In order to examine the association between these variables, the selected research design involving positivism research philosophy, quantitative research method, and convenient research sampling is most appropriate research design of the study.

## 5. RELIABILITY

Initially, data is gathered from 30 respondents in order to conduct a pilot reliability test of research items. It was used to measure the internal validity of research items. In order to calculate Cronbach's coefficient alphas, data of six major variables (which includes four independent variables, one moderator and one dependent variable) is used. The results of reliability test are shown in the table given below, which indicates the internal consistency of research items used in the questionnaire.

**Table 1: Scale Reliability Alpha**

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized items
Organizational Engagement	0.766	0.775
Leadership	0.757	0.769
Honesty	0.749	0.752
Devotion	0.879	0.887
Cooperate	0.798	0.800
Modesty	0.805	0.813

Note: Cronbach's Alpha is acceptable at  $0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$  and good at  $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$  (George & Mallery, 2003).

As shown in the table above all variables have an acceptable level of Cronbach alpha while anchoring is shown good internal consistency. These results suggest the appropriateness of questionnaire which is used in this research study.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The use of modern accounting information systems contributes to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of companies. In addition, in the position of industrial companies, these systems have become very necessary. To this end, current research examines the requirements for the use of modern accounting information systems in the context of industrial companies.

In this research study, the impact of Islamic work ethics on the organizational engagement was measured while considering the moderating effect of leadership. Four different variables are selected as Islamic work ethics are selected in the research study, i.e. devotion, cooperate, modesty and honesty. The research findings indicate significant association among variables and accept seven hypotheses out of eight. There are few limitations for this study which limits the generalization and applicability of the research. However, these limitations can be addressed by conducting future research on the subject matter. Following are some important recommendations,

- The research findings indicate that there is dire need for organizations to consider the importance of Islamic ethics in their daily work environment, most specifically the modesty and cooperation should be focused. Organization can give a presentation on importance of Islamic work ethics during the job orientation process of newly recruited employees, in this way they can start their career with positive and ethical thinking.
- Cooperation and modesty at the work place play a major role in wellbeing of employees and society, as with the cooperation employees can attain any goal successfully within time. Further, modesty teaches the employees to respects their co-workers both physically and mentally, which further leads towards eradication of harassment issues at the work place. Therefore, organization should enforce the Islamic ethics of modesty and cooperation at all levels of management.

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