

Impact of Islamic Work Ethics on Courageous followership behavior: Evidence from International Non-Profit Organization in Pakistan

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Abstract

The research study aims to investigate the impact of Islamic Work ethics (IWE) on five behavioral dimensions of courageous followership among faith based non-profit organizations in Pakistan. After having comprehensive literature review on Islamic work ethics, courageous followership and its dimensions, the researchers collected data from a sample of 245 program manager and project team managers using validated scales. Regression coefficient is estimated through AMOS. The findings offer valuable insight, that out all five dimensions of courageous followership, Islamic Work Ethics has stronger effect on behavior of a follower to take moral action ($\beta = .46$) which is one of the core principles of Islam “enjoining good and forbidding evil”. Additionally this research study will significantly help to demystify Islamic values and work ethics in western world as it has generated the discussion on Islamic work ethics’ in relation to courageous followership behavioral theory initiated by western theorist. The present study concludes that Islamic work ethics plays a constructive role in courageous followership development, therefore we need to train individuals in organizations to practices Islamic work ethic; be courageous in followership role and raise voice against unethical practice, major teaching of Islamic principles. This will directly contribute to culture of honesty, truthfulness and will lead towards peace and progress in our society.

Keywords: Islamic Work ethics (IWE), Courageous followership, assume responsibility, serve, Challenge, take part in transformation, Moral action.

I. Introduction

In our societies we are infatuated with leadership and underestimate the role of followership, the themes are indivisible. Moreover, in our organizations we have a culture of dispiriting the courageous followership behavior. The majority of people

associate themselves with popular discourse of leadership and increasingly negative load towards the idea of followership (Blom, & Alvesson, 2015). Most of time we have a tendency to speak derogatively about the role of followers being weak people. Most of the subordinates/followers have an aptitude of supporting leaders in their good decision making. Even few subordinates have competences to point out poor decisions of leaders. But unfortunately we don't train our staff/subordinate how to be courageous follower, to questions or support leader. Rather our focus of training is to become a good leader and development only leadership skills.

The eminence of good leadership and excellence of a courageous followership leads towards the success of organization. Therefore the role of subordination cannot be overwhelmed by the paraphernalia of workplace by leaders. Nevertheless, as we know in reality, the subordinate/follower role in the organization is usually dominated by leadership. The society supports leadership a lot but have you ever thought what courageous followership is? Instead of passively following the leadership trend the courageous followership (Challef, 2009) is a behavior of an individual who assume responsibility themselves, serve the organization, challenge the poor decision of a leader, involve in organization change and raise voice against unethical behavior of a leader.

Furthermore, Islam provides a comprehensive way of life, which is based on ethical values that guide individual in all sphere of economic as well as social life (Rice, 1999). Islamic work ethics are based on Islamic principles and values according to teaching of Quran and Sunnah. According to Islamic work ethics (IWE) any action which intend to do harm to others and based on immoral practices is unlawful (Murtaza et al. 2016). Moreover it is believed that these work ethics focus on collaboration, commitment to work and evading of immoral work practices (Khadijah et al. 2015). The Islamic work ethics boosts the edifice of procedural justices which upsurge satisfaction of employees in the organization (Khan & Rasheed, 2015). This will build the culture of accountability and satisfaction among the employees. Similarly, courageous followership behavior develop a follower who assume responsibility, serve the organization and especially raise voice against unethical practices (Challef, 2008). The ability to make ethical judgments and stand up against unethical and illegal decision is crux of courageous followership. This behavior helps in enhancing organizational commitment and organization citizenship behavior.

Islamic work ethics has been studies with number of organizational outcome but most of studies are of conceptual in nature (Mohammad, Quoquab, Salam, 2015). The research in Pakistani context on Islamic work ethics also calls for investigation of its impact on other employees work related attitudes (Usman, Shehzad & Khan, 2015). In case of courageous followership only one research study has been conducted based on role of followership in building exemplary leadership (Ghias, Hassan & Masood, 2018) which also recommends to study courageous followership with different organizational behavior. The relationship of Islamic work ethics and courageous followership is still unexplored. Thus this study set out to propose and test empirically the impact of Islamic work ethic on five dimension of courageous followership.

Traditionally, the role of follower in organization is viewed as passive and deferent which is due to established assumptions from management literature that leadership is all about authority (Uhl-Bien et al, 2014). The leader with high authority

starts behaving unethically and create an environment of volatility and lack of accountability giving rise to corruption and unethical working environment. The passive behavior of followers blindly following the leaders give rise to toxic triangles in society; corrupt leader, passive follower and environment of corruption (Riggio, Challef&Lipman-Blumen, 2008). Pakistan being an Islamic state is facing issues of poor leadership in public and private sector. Our public and private sector organizations are crippled with corruption. If we want to improve our institution we need to focus on role of followers in our organization.

Execrably, when we focus on development of individual or for training purpose our prime focus is to train people to become leader. Although leadership skill is important but as Aristotle saying “*First learn to follow, then lead*” therefore good followership skill development is also important. The focus of this research article is that we should reverse the lens and highlight the role of followership in societal development. Unless we will not train our staff/subordinate to become courageous followers, raise voice against unethical practices the society cannot get good leadership. The primary emphasis of this research is to build association of Islamic work ethics with courageous followership behavior, so that we can remove misperception of western world about Islamic values and work ethics and additionally, we can build a culture for growth of courageous followership.

In the Country like Pakistan, where Islam is the State Religion and Muslims are the second largest numbers in the world, well above ninety-six percent. According to The Telegraph, in 2070, Islam will be the largest religion in the world (Pew, 2017). Therefore, researchers and academicians are tempted to understand, learn and explore how people’s belief, faith, and ethics interact in the workplace and how it contributes to effective personal and organizational goals accomplishments. For the very same rationale, the presented study is formulated to investigate the association of Islamic Work Ethics and Courageous Followership. The significance of research study can be traced back to the fact that human actions are governed by their beliefs systems. It will help researchers to positively use these forces for personal as well as organizational growth and sustainability. Additionally, it will demystify Islam in western world as this study will generate the discussion on Islamic work ethics impact on theory of courageous followership which was developed in western context.

II. Literature Review

A. Islamic Work Ethics

Ethics deals with the behaviors of human covering moral issues, attitudes and ethical beliefs (Gini, 1997). Islamic work ethics is derivative of the Holy Book, Hadith, performance and teaching of Holy Prophet Muhammad PUBH and the four caliphs of Islamic History (Ali & Al-Kazamei, 2005; Rizk, 2008). Islamic Work ethic play a role of differentiator between rights and wrong. Islam provides a platform where everyone can live their lives according to themselves. There are no priorities, no discrimination, no poor, no rich and no concept of black and white. All human beings are unique in their way and equal in front of Allah. Islamic work ethics is directly related to the Holy Quran and with the life of the last Messenger of Allah .Both al Quran and Hadith are major teaching techniques in Islam grounded on principles and values helpful for organizations to succeeded (Aldulaimi, 2016). Muslims mostly obey the rules and principles of Islam and practice them in their everyday life and work hard honestly. Honesty is the major

principle in Islam which leads to success. The emphasis of IWE is that every Muslim should work hard and earn living with honesty and fair means (Youseef, 2001). Work ethics in Islam has broader meaning than working hard and making money. Islamic work ethics are based on dimensions of honesty, dedication, service and accountability (Ibrahim, 2017) which help in ethical development of individuals working in organization.

B. Courageous Followership

Chalef (2009) coined the word courageous followership based on five characteristics of follower or subordinate. Courageous follower assume responsibility, serve the organization, dare to challenge the leader, take part in organization transformation and raise voice on leaders unethical decisions. The leader and follower struggle hard to get competitive advantage for organization, so relationship between them is very crucial (Martin, 2015). With the changing global dynamics the segregating mark differentiating the role of leader and subordinate has transformed dramatically as today's leader dependent more on knowledge and expertise of followers. The advent of 21 century role of a leader and follower need more emphasis on shared leadership. The concept of shared leadership emerged from self-leadership that helps to develop individuals to take responsibility of their own direction in order to facilitate leaders. The courageous followership behavior helps to develop an individual who believe in shared leadership, self-direction and want that both leader and organization should succeed (Chalef, 2008). The development of courageous followership behavior helps to build mindset of individuals to see their role as partner and future leaders (Ghias, Hassan & Masood, 2018).

C. Islamic Work Ethics and Courageous Followership

Islamic work ethics develop capacity of individuals to follow values system based on fairness, commitment to work and courage to make change in organization (Abeng, 1997). Courageous followership behavioral dimensions also enhances organizational commitment of employees (Dixon & Westbrooke, 2003). IWE also helps in building locus of control and mediates the relationship between role ambiguities and locus of control. It teaches life meaningfulness in work and enhances commitment and satisfaction of employees at work place (Yousef, 2001). Furthermore, enhances the loyalty of individuals working in the organization as a result boost social, economic and moral impact on organization environment (Ali & Al-Kazemi, 2007; Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008). The individuals who have capability to practice IWE have more innovation capabilities (Kumar & Che Rose, 2009) which is also related to courageous followership behavioral dimension of challenge that enhances individual capacity to accept change and work for innovation in organization (Carsten et al., 2010).

The individuals who practice IWE consider their work as worship, work diligently with honesty and dedication (Husin, 2012). Likewise, the courageous followership behavioral dimension of assume responsibility also help in build capacity of individual to understand their values, work with dignity and show loyalty to organization (Schwab, 2017). In Pakistani context the research study reveals that IWE enhances organizational justice and job related outcomes of employees and weakness the turnover intentions of employees (Khan. et al., 2013). Correspondingly, research in ethics revealed that Islamic work ethics enhances discipline, punctuality and trustworthiness in employees (Wan Husin, 2012). Courageous followership behavior is also a form of

proactive behavior that calls for justice and honest dedication at work place. The dimension of courage to challenge emphasis for the quality behavior to speak truth in all circumstance which can also a related of Islamic work ethics. In a Quran verse (4:135) it is mentioned that *“O you have believed be persistently stand firm in justice, witness to Allah, even if against yourselves, parents or relatives. Whether is rich or poor, Allah is worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just”*. The behaviour to challenge emphasis for the quality behavior to speak truth in all circumstance willing to stand up, to stand out, to risk rejection, to initiate conflict for better interest of organization (Challef, 1995).

In a Quran verse (ArRa`d 13:11) it is mentioned that *“Verily never Will Allāh change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls)”*. The courageous follower who taking part in transformation themselves identify need of change and improvement in organization and take initiative with innovation and audacity (Challef, 1995).

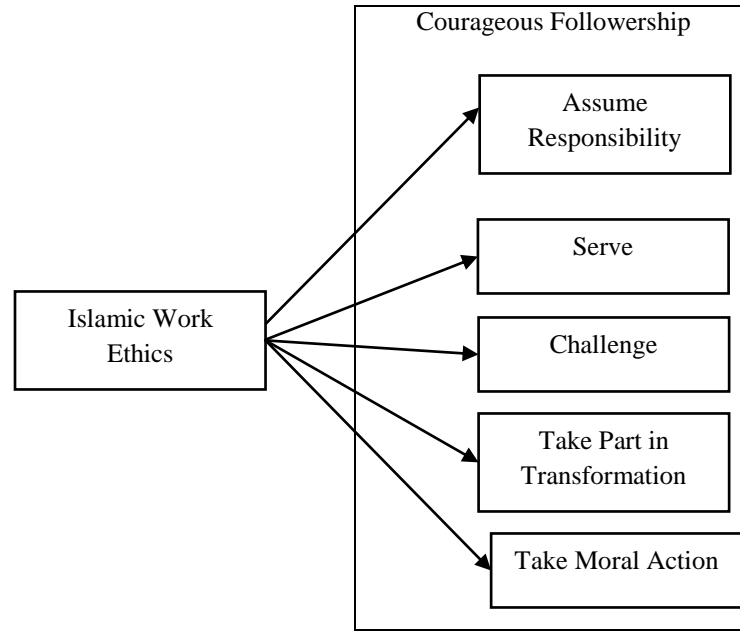
In a Quran verse (Al Imran 3:104) it is mentioned that *“Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity.”*. Courage to take moral action happens due to some wrongdoings of leaders which results in refusal to follow unethical order, complaining up-ward towards next organizational level, or leaving the organization. (Challef, 1995) .

The literature review on Islamic work ethics and courageous followership reveals that the both variables of study can be related to each other. It means that the individuals who practice more Islamic work Ethic are likely to be more courageous followers. Therefore, keeping in view literature support for relationship between IWE and courageous followership this research study proposes and test a model (Fig 1) of Islamic work ethics and its impact on courageous followership behavioral dimensions of assume responsibility, serve the organization, challenge, take part in transformation and take moral action. It means that the individuals who practice more Islamic work ethic are likely to be more courageous followers.

The Hypotheses of Study are as;

- H1a: Islamic work ethics are positively related with courageous followership dimension of assume responsibility
- H1b: Islamic work ethics are positively related with courageous followership dimension to serve.
- H1c: Islamic work ethics are positively related with courageous followership dimension to challenge.
- H1d: Islamic work ethics are positively related with courageous followership dimension to take part in transformation.
- H1e: Islamic work ethics are positively related with courageous followership dimension to take moral action.

Figure 1: Framework of Research



III. Data and Methodology

The study research design is based on positivist approach. The descriptive research design was employed. Primary data for this research is collected through structured questionnaire from program and project team members working in non-profit faith based organizations in Pakistan. Since the research is based on ethical and moral values in Islamic perspective, therefore non-profit organizations working on Islamic ideology were considered suitable for primary data.

A. Measures

The Islamic work ethics was measured by 17 items scale developed by Ali (1992) with Cronbach Alpha reliability of 0.83. The five dimensions of the scale developed by Dixon (2003); assume responsibility (5 items, $\alpha = .80$), Serve (5 items, $\alpha = .69$), Challenge (3 items, $\alpha = .75$), participate in transformation (3 items, $\alpha = .87$) and Moral action (3 items, $\alpha = .88$). The overall courageous followership behavior dimensions scale showed good reliability (19 items, $\alpha = .89$) which is consistent with research finding of Ghias, Hassan and Masood (2018). Therefore all scales are above the acceptable values of .60 (Peters, 2014).

B. Sample

The sample of the study was comprised of program and project team members working in non-profit faith based organizations in Pakistan. The study was delimited to non-profit faith based organization working in Islamabad and Rawalpindi due to the mission and vision of faith based organizations reflect upon Islamic values. The total number of 300 questionnaire were distributed among program and project team members working in non-profit faith based organizations. Out of these, 270 were returned by

concerned respondents. Consequently, 90 % response rate received which is considered highly satisfactory for social sciences research (Groves, 2006). After further scrutiny of received response from 270 questionnaire, 14 questionnaire were not filled properly by respondents; whereas 11 questionnaire could not be included as outliers were present in results. Therefore 245 respondents were included which resulted in response rate of 81.66 % acceptable by Sekaran and Bougie (2010). The results are provided in table 1.

Table 1: Demographics of Sample (N=245)

Variable		Result
Gender	Male	78%
	Female	22%
Qualification	MS./M.P.hil	12%
	Masters	65%
	Graduate	23%
Experience	10 years and above	15%
	6 to 9 years	30%
	Less than five years	55%
Management Level	Program Level	15%
	Project Level	85%

C. Descriptive Analysis

The result of descriptive analysis are provided on table 2. The results reflects that data is normally distributed and suitable for further analysis. The results of correlation reflects high correlation of Islamic work ethic with ability of subordinate to challenge $r = .43$ and moral action $r = .46$ with significance $p \leq 0.01$

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and correlation coefficient (N= 245)

Mean	SD	Statistics		Correlations					
		Skewness	Kurtosis	IWE	AR	SR	CH	TPT	MA
3.1	.84	-.49	-.59	1					
2.9	.80	-.30	-.54	.27**	1				
3.0	.72	-.33	-.50	.37**	.30**	1			
2.8	.79	-.44	-.53	.43**	.39**	.36**	1		
3.4	.74	-.32	-.49	.25**	.35**	.23**	.18**	1	
3.3	.70	-.23	-.32	.46**	.17**	.28**	.17**	.26**	1

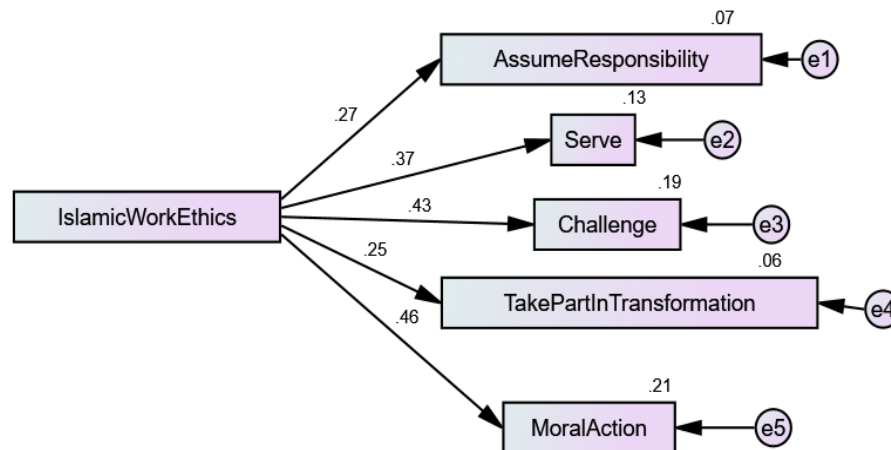
**Significance Level 0.01(2-tailed), (IWE: Islamic Work Ethics, AR: Assume responsibility, SR: Serve, CH: Challenge, TT: Take part in Transformation, MA: Moral Action)

D. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) are presented in Table 3. The findings illustrate that value of chi-square ($\chi^2=14.25$) with degree of freedom (df =10, $p=.16 > 0.05$) and RMSEA = 0.04, $p = .56$, confirms good model fit. The values of Fit indices were found NFI=0.91, GFI=0.98, IFI= 0.97, TLI=0.96, AGFI=0.93, CFI=0.97 and RMR=0.03. The results of CFA demonstrate good model fit and values are in acceptable range (Kline, 2015).

Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis N = 245

Model	CMIN/DF	CFI	GFI	AGFI	NFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA
Threshold Value	< 3	>.95	>.95	>.80	>.90	>.90	>.90	<.1
Model Results	1.4	.97	.98	.93	.91	.97	.96	.04

Figure 2: The results estimated through AMOS

IV. Results and Discussion

The results in table 4 reports that relationship between independent variable and dependent variables are positively related to each other. The Islamic work ethics and courageous followership dimension of assume responsibility are positively related as $\beta = .27$ which is statistically significant $p < .001$ which supports Hypothesis 1a. The individuals who practices Islamic work ethics are like build capacity to assume responsibility themselves. The Islamic work Ethics and courageous followership dimension to Serve ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$) are significantly related with each other supporting Hypothesis 1b. It also verifies that Islamic work ethics strength the quality to serve the organization. The followers don't wait for leader to instruct them rather they themselves ready to serve for greater purpose. The Islamic work Ethics and courageous followership dimension of challenge is also positively related to ($\beta = .43$, $p < .001$) supporting Hypothesis 1c. Challenging the poor decisions of leaders is difficult practice but individuals who practice Islamic work ethics of honesty and dedication have enhanced capacity to challenge the wrong doing.

Table 4: Regression Analysis (N=245)

		Beta Estimates				
		UnStd.	Std.	S.E	C.R.	p-value
IWE	→ Assume Responsibility	.31	.27	.083	3.67	.000
IWE	→ Serve	.51	.37	.099	4.84	.000
IWE	→ Challenge	.69	.43	.092	7.47	.000
IWE	→ Take Part in Transformation	.38	.25	.084	3.98	.000
IWE	→ Moral Action	.63	.46	.078	8.02	.000

Furthermore, Islamic work ethics impact courageous followership dimension to take part in transformation with $\beta = .25$ which is statistically significant $p < .001$ thus

supporting Hypothesis 1d .Hence, practicing Islamic work ethics individuals enhances capability of taking part in organization transformation and bring harmony and success in the organization .Finally, the results of regression analysis confirms that Islamic Work Ethics impact courageous followership dimension to take moral action with $\beta = .46$ which is statically significant $p < .001$) supporting Hypothesis 1e of the research study. The origin of Islamic work Ethics are from principles of accountability and honesty that is why the individual who practice them will have ethics to raise voice against unethical practice in organization. Ethical act is about answering the higher standards based on honesty. Thus the overall findings of study verify that Islamic work Ethics enhances behavior of individual towards courageous followership. The individuals practicing Islamic Work Ethics will have more capability to practice courageous followership behavior.

V. Conclusions and Practical Implications

This research study has shown important relationship among IWE and courageous followership behavioral dimensions. From the results of research it is pertinent to note that out of five dimensions of courageous followership , Islamic Work Ethics has stronger effect on behavior of a follower to take moral action ($\beta = .46$) which is one of the core principles of Islam “*enjoining good and forbidding evil*” (Aal-e-Imran, 3:110, *Tauba*, 9:71; *Tauba*, 9:67; Aal-e-Imran, 3:104). The main aim of courageous followership and Islamic Work Ethics, is building human character in such a way that he/she can play an effective role in organization as well as in the society. Therefore, further exploration of both variables are need of time. The research finding will facilitate in introducing courageous followership concept in Islamic societies like Pakistan as it relates to its own religious values. The future research can further explore IWE and courageous followership with employee’s attitude towards work. The research can also study the impact of both variable in presence of leadership. The research study was limited to non-profit organization, future research can study impact in different public /private organization.

Pakistan need individual who are honest, dedicated, accountable so that it can add value to economic and social growth. Islamic work ethics teach us that there is a relation between human, their habitat and the Creator (Ibrahim, 2017). Kumar and Rose (2010) found that by applying Islamic work ethics there is possibilities of gaining positive attitudes and behaviors in cooperation. Moreover in organizations the culture of fairness, honesty, hardworking attitudes, cleanliness and regularity can be inculcated. Being honest with oneself and with others creates positive attitudes for learning and it’s the only thing which leads to success. Likewise courageous followership is also all about working as partner to leader and show dedication and loyalty to organization. The courageous followership shape an individual who is not only honest to himself as well as to the organization. In order to become a progressive society we need to teach our future generations, how to follow and awareness of Islamic work ethics and courageous followership is desirable.

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¹ All translations are from A. Y. Ali unless otherwise noted