AN ASSESSMENT OF ISLAMIC WORK ETHICS OF EMPLOYEES IN ORGANIZATIONS: INSIGHTS FROM THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Shagufta Sarwar
Swansea University, Wales, UK
E-mail: s.sarwar.alain@gmail.com

James Baba Abugre
University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana.
E-mail: jbabugre@ug.edu.gh

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to present a critical assessment of Islamic work ethics (IWE) of employees in public and private organizations in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The work uses a quantitative survey method to gather the opinions of employees in both public and private organizations in the UAE on IWE. The findings of the study revealed that the ability of a worker to balance his or her personal and organizational needs in the workplace meant success in his religious and organizational life. Also, findings showed that being productive in work organizations should not be tied to the amount of money one gets, and that illicit behavior like stockpiling grains and other essential commodities for the purpose of profit - making in times of need is unethical and un-islamic. This study clearly indicates the need for employees and managers to uphold the Muslim teachings which can be manifested in their daily work attitudes (best practices) in various organizations. The study highlights the various ethical variables that employees believe are essential to work organizations while keeping faith to the Islamic religion.
Key words: *commitment, employee work practices, HRM in UAE, Islamic work ethics, organization.*

Introduction

In recent years, attitudes toward work in organizations are being assessed as the panacea to organizational success. In fact, empirical results provide strong evidence that commitment to work ethics and 'Professional integrity' as a moral quality or virtue has become increasingly topical (Banks, 2010). Work ethics and employee commitment to ethical work patterns are important subjects in organizational studies, and work ethics in particular form an integral part of an organizational set up (Peters & Waterman, 1982; Singhapakdi, Kraft, Vitell, & Rallapalli, 1995). Both employers and employees have equal roles in bringing up the work ethics which should be practiced in organizations. The relationship between organizational dedication and work ethics has been presented quite well in the commitment literature (Elizur, Borg, Hunt, & Magyaribeck, 1991; Jones, 1997; Yousuf, 2001). Work ethics influence employees' attitude toward their job as well as the organization they work for (Glazer, Daniel, & Short, 2004). The dawn of the industrialization era in the 18th and 19th centuries is widely attributed to the emergence of work ethics in the Western world. This was mainly due to the economic changes and increases in religious awareness (Zuboff, 1983; Weber, 1992). However, researchers have suggested that the industrial capitalism of 18th century drove the trend towards increased productivity and profit making, forcing employers to look for some new approach in relating employees

to work demands (Zuboff, 1983; Welsh, 2005). Thus, the conceptualization of work ethics was necessary for the management of the newly established organizations to fuel the industrial growth while engaging the employees both physically and spiritually (Diddams & Whittington, 2003).

Similarly, the religious and economic conditions of the 19th century have also been attributed to the increasing interest in ethical work practices in the West and the Europe region (Porter, 2004; Ali & Al Owaihan, 2008). Prior to the industrial revolution, work was not held in high esteem and was associated with negativity. However, after research proved that work ethics is associated with the need for achievement (McClelland, 1961); several researchers have since shown an increasing interest in examining the relationships between work ethics and organizational and social factors. This has been particularly manifested in Islamic work ethics as a source of employee commitment to good organizational practice. Consequently, various researchers in IWE have attempted to look at IWE vis-à-vis employees' attitude, commitment, satisfaction, and performance in organizational work. For example, Abeng (1997) looked at 'business ethics in Islamic context: perspectives of a Muslim business leader'; Ali and Al-Kazemi (2006) on 'Islamic work ethic in Kuwait'; Ali (2001) on 'the Islamic work ethics in Arabia'; Ali and Al-Owaihan (2008) on 'Islamic work ethic: a critical review'; Yousuf (2001) on 'Islamic Work Ethics : A moderator between organizational commitment and job satisfaction in a cross - cultural context'.Notwithstanding its wide-ranging importance to organizations, the above research works have been centered on the importance of Islamic work ethic (IWE) on organizational outcomes. However, little study has been devoted to assessing Islamic work ethic (IWE) within the scheme of employees' knowledge and practice. Thus, this work hopes to fill this part of the Islamic literature gap by assessing employees' IWE in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Consequently the main objective of this work is to provide an empirical assessment of employees' views on work ethics with relation to the Islamic faith.

Problem of Research

The Islamic work ethic

Literature on Islamic work ethics gives an expressive and a wide range of features underpinning the moral foundation of Muslims. The concept of Islamic work ethics (IWE) is a body of literature that deals with work related values, attitudes and job commitment. The IWE traces its origin to the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). For example, in chapter 6: 132 of the Quran, it is stated that ''for all have been ranked according to their deeds''. This means all true believers should engage and be committed to their work faithfully, and that ''God hath permitted trade and forbidden usury'' (Quran 2:275). Hence, the foundations of good deeds that men ought to abide by are rooted in the Quran.

According to Ahmad (1976), Islamic work ethics (IWE) does not stand for life denial but rather for life fulfillment that holds business motives in the highest regard. Similarly, Imam Ali (A.D. 598-661) advised that "persist in your action with a noble end in mind… failure to perfect your work while you are sure of the reward is injustice to yourself". Therefore, a decent engagement and commitment to work is the cornerstone of the IWE. Such engagement facilitates personal and societal goals (Ahmad, 1976). According to Ali (2005), the IWE is founded on four primary concepts: effort, competition, transparency, and morally responsible conduct. He thus suggests that, the four pillars collectively would inspire confidence in the business setting and reinforce social contract, ethical understanding, and motivates market actors to focus on meeting their primary business responsibilities. Hence, employees ought to have faith and commitment in each others' good intentions and adequately perform their responsibility at the workplace. Therefore, it can be observed that IWE is a means to further one's self-interest economically, socially and psychologically, and also; to sustain social prestige and to advance societal welfare while keeping and reaffirming one's faith in Allah. For this reason, Islam attaches

62

utmost importance to all sort of productive work. Not only has the Quran elevated *al- 'Amal* (productive work) to the level of a religious duty but it has also consistently stated in more than 50 verses productive means of work in conjunction with *imaan* (faith).

In view of the importance of IWE as a core human process to successful work in organizations, an assessment of employees' knowledge and practice of the IWE in some selected organizations in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is necessary.

Islamic religion and HRM

Despite the fact that there is a potential association between religious beliefs, management practices and organisational outcomes, most organizational theorists have failed to report that religion constitute an important aspect of management practices (Sedikides & Gebauer, 2010). Extant literature has been neutral in linking or delinking religion to management practices. However, Hofstede (1997, p. 16) argues that culture precedes religion and states that:

> "*Religious affiliation by itself is less culturally relevant than is often assumed if we trace the religious histories of countries, then the religion a population has embraced along with the version of that religion seem to have been a result of previously existing cultural value patterns as much as a cause of cultural differences*".

Thus, religion and religious belief have become a part of national cultures which intend seep into management practices of organizations. Thus, while Saturday and Sundays are recognized as universal resting days after a week's labor , in the UAE and in most Arab countries, Fridays are rather given as holidays in order to make ways for Muslim prayers. Similarly, there is an extensive body of research on the impact of rituals and ceremonies in Japanese organisations, and in many other countries. For example, in most Ghanaian organizations, prayers are offered before the start of work each morning. Hence in present times, there is a conscientization of what has been variously referred to as a religious (re)awakening, - the subject of religiosity and religion has come to the forefront of management and organisational research (Mellahi & Budhwar, 2010). This interest is reflected in the growing evidence affirming that religious beliefs and values have significant direct and indirect effects on a wide range of behaviors in the workplace including job satisfaction (King & Williamson, 2005), leadership styles and effectiveness (Reave, 2005), ethical behaviour (Weaver & Agle, 2002), as well as legal challenges to deal with religious diversity in the workplace (Morgan, 2005) and employment practices (Budhwar & Fadzil, 2000).

There has been some development on the impact which Islamic religion brings to HRM practices as evident by the recent works of Branine and Pollard (2010), on a range of Islamic behaviors in the workplace including HRM and Islamic management practices, Ali's(2010) research on Islamic challenges for the HR function in present day organizations, Islamic work ethics (Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008), work levels of motivation in Islam (Ali, 2009), Leadership and Islamic work motivation (Ahmad, 2009), Influence of ethical beliefs, national culture and institutions on preferences for HRM (Katou, Budhwar, Woldu, & Al-Hamadi, 2010) have all been documented in the HR literature. These studies confirm an expected understanding of the various aspects of cultural and religious values, and organizational and ethical beliefs which can help to distinguish HRM practices thereby predicting managerial behaviors in organizations.

HRM from the Islamic perspective is viewed as an extension of the organizational aspects which relate to employee and management behavior, such as their relationships with one another, management style, and more importantly, the culture of the organization itself (Tayeb, 1997). Thus, Mellahi and Budhwar (2010) assert that management from Islamic standpoint deals with decision making styles in Islam emphasizing the principle of consultation (Sharia), and Islamic core values including the principles of honesty (Al-Sidq), trust (Al-Amanah), justice and fairness in dealing with employees (Al-Adl), team work and cooperation (Al-Ta'waan), and excellence or perfection (Al-Ikhlas).

Shagufta SARWAR, James Baba ABUGRE. An Assessment of Islamic Work Ethics of Employees in Organizations: Insights from the United Arab Emirates

PROBLEMS
OF MANAGEMENT
IN THE 21ˢᵗ CENTURY
Volume 6, 2013

63

Hence, it is worth noting that HRM from the perspective of Islam is not only relevant for organisations operating in major Islamic countries, but also in the global world of management since Muslims are found working in all corners of this globe. Beside, Islamic work behaviors may not be largely at variance with mainstream work behaviors in orthodox organizations. Islam is a religion and culture of people like other sects. Islam is just an Arabic word which literally means submission to the will of God in all aspects of life. Hence, this current work assesses the employees work behavior in organizations in relation to the edicts of Islam in a bit to contribute to the overall HRM literature.

Research Focus

This study focuses on organizational behavior with respect to Islamic work ethics. The historical significance of IWE is that it represents the compromise made between the moral and the practical requirements of workers in contemporary organizations. Hence, the demand that Muslims strive to submit themselves for good behavior in respect of Islamic principles of work ethics. Consequently, this piece of work assesses both private and public organizations' employees on IWE in the UAE. The substantial need to examine IWE and organizational outcomes in a non-Western environment where about 90 percent of workers are expatriates is very important. Thus, this paper hopes to share the Islamic perspective on business ethics, and to provide some knowledge of Islamic philosophy in order to help managers conduct business in a predominantly Muslim culture. The findings of this study are expected to provide a theoretical and practical representation of Islamic work ethics of employees in both the formal and informal sector organizations.

Research Methodology

An empirical study was set up to assess Islamic work ethics on the practices of individual employees in a cross-sectional corporate sample in the UAE. To achieve the objective of the study, a quantitative survey of the opinions of a large number of workers in both private and public organizations was employed.

A non-probability sampling method was used in selecting the organizations for the study while a probability sampling was used to select the employees.

Sample Population

The sample for the organizations was conveniently drawn from the directory of organizations in the UAE. To be able to manage the sample size effectively, we selected four organizations from the directorate made up two public organizations and two private organizations. The preference for public and private organizations is to present a fairly representative and different viewpoints among members of diverse administrative communities. The two private organizations comprised of (1) Bottled water production and (2) Printing press, while the two public organizations are from (1) a hospital and (2) a University. Thus, 25 questionnaires were given equally to each organization in order to create a balance.

Sampled Participants

The sampled participants of the study were based on a random sample size of 100 full-time employees of the four organizations to whom the questionnaire was distributed. Our main objective was how accurate or uncertain the sample results will be in terms of representing the population (Yang, 2010). Thus, the choice of probability sampling of the participants. Similarly, "One of the real advantages of quantitative methods is their ability to use smaller groups of people to make inferences about larger groups that would be prohibitively expensive to study"

64

(Holton & Burnett, 1997, p. 71). Consequently, 100 constructed questionnaires were distributed among the randomly selected employees at the four companies equally (25 questionnaires each). However, only 76 questionnaires were returned. Out of these 4 questionnaires were filled incorrectly making them unusable thus representing an overall response rate of 72% which was used for the analysis. The response rate for male participants was 60%, while that of female was 40%. Participants with higher university degree represented 64%, those with college education represented 17%, participants with post graduate masters degree constituted 17%, while those with doctoral degree represented 0.3%. Therefore, without any shred of doubt, it could be said confidently that participants were not ignorant of their opinions on the issues discussed, because they constituted the people of high academic integrity.

Construct Measurement

The survey questionnaire was pre-tested with 10 people in order to get a feedback to refine the content and the structure of the survey questionnaire. In addition, the survey instrument was sent to all the four Human Resource managers of the selected organizations before distribution to employees. This was necessary to ensure that the content did not go against the ethics of the various organizations, especially as the UAE is an Islamic country. Likewise, this was to get a feedback to refine the content and the structure of the survey questionnaire, and also enhance the internal validity of the instrument. The survey itself included a cover page that informed participants about the study's purpose, confidentiality of results, research ethics and the survey format. All these were to help offset any common method bias and also to strengthen the reliability of the measures. Descriptive statistics were employed to explore the data.

Measurement of Variables

A questionnaire comprising of 16 questions relating to participants' biographical information, and work related conduct was developed. The first section comprised of six biographical questions (gender, age, religion, educational background, and professional experience) which were collected using a nominal scale with pre-coded options. The second part that looks at the overall Islamic work conduct e.g. Assessing the value of work in life and gauging legal and illegal work comprised of 10 constructs using a five point scale for the purpose of measurement (1=Strongly Disagree;   2=Disagree ; 3= Neither ; 4= Agree ; 5=Strongly Agree). The items constituting the value of work were adapted from Ali and Al Owaihan (2008), and Ali and Al-Kazemi (2006)'s instruments and modified to fit into the present study.

Table 1. Measures on Islamic Work Ethics.

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following questions
1 (Strongly Disagree)   2 (Disagree)   3 (Neither)   4 (Agree)   5 (Strongly Agree)

Q1	Feeling a sense of obligation and dedication towards work is vital for success
Q2	Balancing personal and organizational needs means success in the work place.
Q3	Being productive in work is not important if the salary package is good enough
Q4	Delaying/ Missing prayers is acceptable for work related reasons.
Q5	The position at work must be based on one's qualifications, skills and knowledge rather than connections and networking.
Q6	Sharing all the information / training subordinates are vital for successful business operations.
Q7	Using job resources (telephone, fax, printer, internet, time and personnel) for personal purposes is occasionally acceptable.
Q8	Doing indirect trade or business with alcohol or related products is fine its means more money.
Q9	Stocking up food products such as rice, wheat or other necessities is fine since it means more profit.
Q10	Making the laborers to work extra hours for a project in hot weather is acceptable since they are paid well for their overtime

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics including simple frequencies were employed as analysis of the data collected for the study. Descriptive statistics are essentially concerned with summarizing, presenting and describing the data set. They focus on establishing facts and are used particularly when, "...the researcher is more concerned with describing the extent of occurrence of a phenomenon than by studying its correlations" (Punch 2005, p. 14-15). Hence, the descriptive statistics in this study contain percentage frequencies of all items which highlight the descriptive analysis of the variables based on the assessment of the Islamic work ethics of the participants in the various organizations studied.

Results of Study

The results of this research were divided into two major parts which constitute Islamic work ethics that the study elicited from the participants. The first set of seven questions represents the value of organizational work life, and the second part assesses the constituents of what is legal and illegal work ethics with regard to Islamic principles.

Measuring the Value of Work Life in Organizations

The value of work in Islam is different from other religious and political doctrines. Therefore, we pose the above questions in Table 1 to respondents. From the results, 66% of

66

participants responded with 'strongly agree' that a 'sense of obligation and dedication towards work is vital for success' according to Islamic principles, while 26% responded 'agree'; 7% said 'neither', and only 1% said 'disagree'.

With regard to 'balancing personal and organizational needs as a means of success in the work place', 42% of the total number of respondents said they 'strongly agree', 38% of respondents said they 'agree', 13% of respondents stayed 'neutral', while 3% and 4% said 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' respectively. This is visually depicted in the figure below.
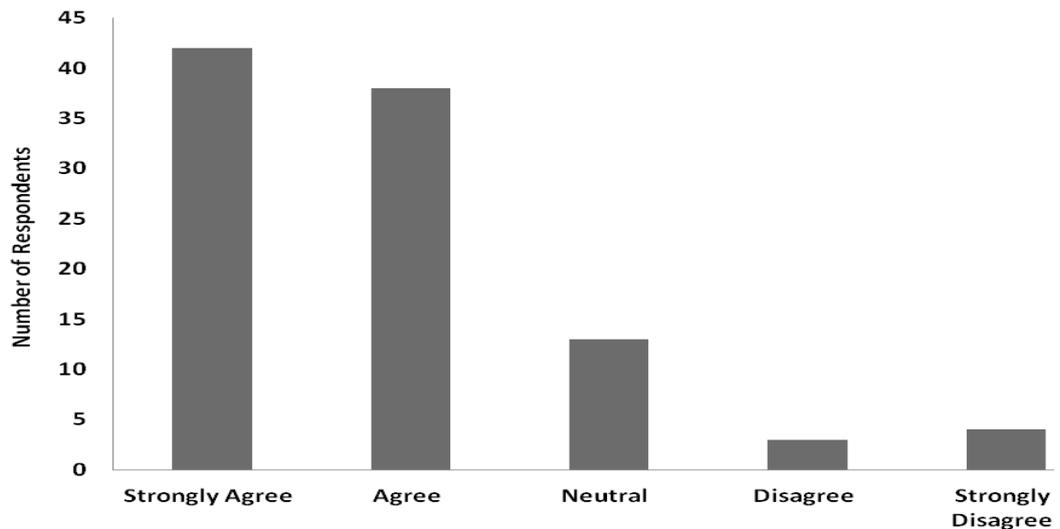

Figure 1: Balancing personal and organizational needs means success at work-place.

The study also sought to know from respondents if people worked hard only because of higher salaries. Thus, question three was posed to respondents and the following results were procured: 43% of the total respondents said 'strongly disagree', 33% said 'disagree', 7% said 'neither', 13% said 'agree' and 4% said 'strongly agree'.

With regard to linking prayers to public work, respondents were asked if it was essential to delay or overlook prayers for the sake of work related reasons. The majority of the respondents constituting 42% said they strongly disagree with taking prayers at the time of work, 26% said they also disagree, 7% said they neither agree or disagree, 21% said they agree, while 4% said they strongly agree to prayers at the time of work.

The study also sought to solicit workers' views on the relationship between one's skills and position at work. Hence, question five was posed to respondents. More than half of the total respondents representing 58% strongly agreed that an employee's position at work should be based on qualification and skills, 14% said 'agree', 19% said they neither agree or disagree, 4% said they 'disagree' and the remaining 5% 'strongly disagreed'. The response is illustrated in the figure.

67
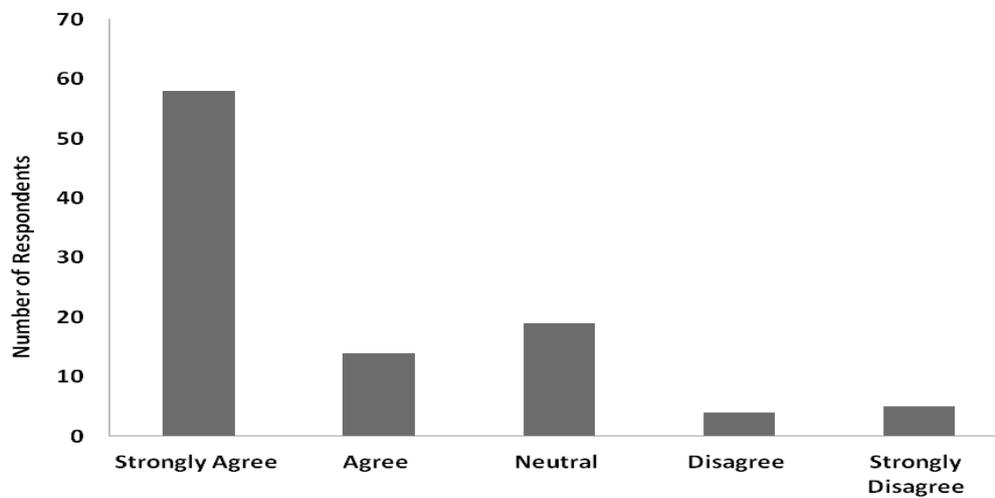
Figure 2: Position must be based on credentials or networks / connections.

On sharing of information and training subordinates to succeed in business, 43% of the total respondents said 'agree', and 38% of respondents said 'strongly agree' to the importance of information sharing and developing junior workers to succeed in their work. On the other hand, 2% and 11% of the respondents said 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' respectively, while 6% of respondents said 'neither'.

With regard to the use of office resources for personal purposes, 31% of the respondents agreed that it was good to use organizational resources for personal purpose from time to time, 22% said they neither agree or disagree, 21% said they disagree, 19% said the strongly agree, while 7% said they strongly disagree.

Gauging what is Legal and Illegal Work

Since Islam forbids all forms and practices which are based on alcohol, gambling, exploitation, fraud or monopoly either directly or indirectly, the study sought to elicit responses from employees as what constitute legal and illegal work ethics.

With regard to employees dealing directly or indirectly with businesses associated with alcohol and related products, 80% of the total respondents answered 'strongly disagree', while 10% of respondent said 'disagree' meaning that they vehemently oppose to business practices associated with alcohol and related practices. Six percent answered neither agree nor disagree, and 4% said 'agree'.

The study further sought to understand if stockpiling food products in the form of grains and other necessities to gain more profit in the future was ethical in the eyes of Islam. With this, 60% of the total respondents said 'strongly disagree', 17% said 'disagree', another 17% said they neither agree nor disagree, while 5% and 1% said 'agree' and 'strongly agree' respectively.

On aspects of over-using people who work under others, it was sought to find out if making labourers work extra in dire conditions simply because they are paid for it would constitute a bad or a good practise. The results are depicted in the figure below.
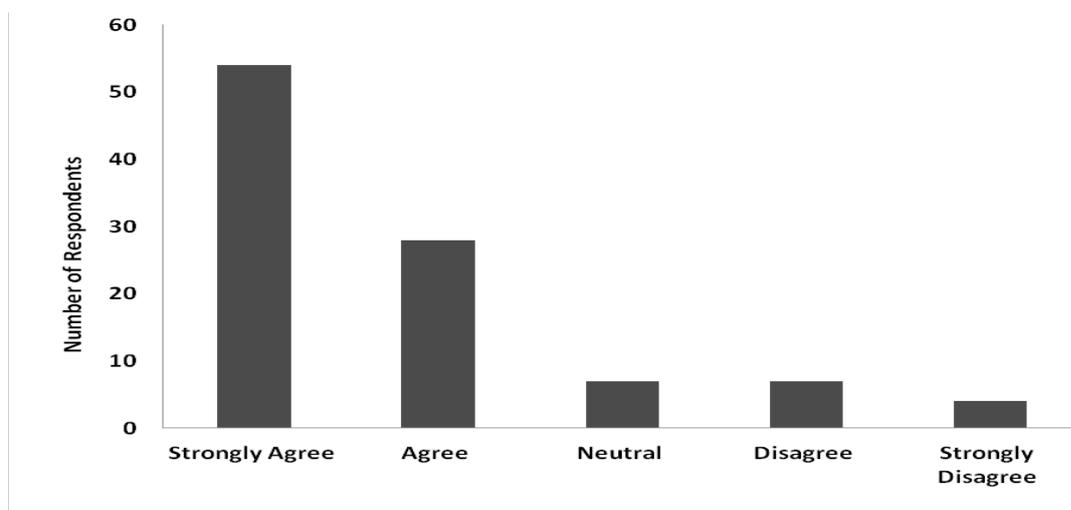
Figure 3 : Extra work in harsh condition is not acceptable even if the overtime is good.

So as evident from the figure above, out of the total number of respondents, 54% said 'strongly disagree', 28% said 'disagree', 7% said they neither agree nor disagree, another 7% said they agree, while 4% said 'strongly agree'. This shows that the majority of the respondents believed it was not correct to make employees work extra in dire conditions even if the pay is excellent.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate employees' attitudes towards Islamic work ethics in UAE which is predominantly a Muslim country. One major reason for this is that, Islamic work ethics are based on a very simple principle of distinguishing between right and wrong along with the reward and punishment concepts. These ethics originate from the most complete and authentic sources of the Holy Quran and Sunnah (the teachings of Prophet Muhammad). Hence, Abeng (1997) argued strongly in one of his works that "To function effectively and efficiently, every organization needs an ethical framework, not just laws and regulations"(Abeng, 1997: p. 47).

The current study findings revealed that most employees consider it an Islamic duty to have a positive sense of obligation and dedication towards work. Thus, more than 90% of the respondents agreed that obligation and dedication to work is vital for success because it constitute a positive work value. Similarly, respondents were of the opinion that the ability of a person to balance his or her personal and organizational needs in the work place meant success, and so; about 80% of the total respondents in the study agreed that harmonizing personal and organizational needs eventually tantamount to success in the work place. This finding is consistent with Al-Modaf (2005) who said 'In Islam, the activity of work is organized and regulated in a specific and systematic way'. Hence Muslim employees must be able to balance their personal desires and needs alongside organizational duties positively if they indeed wish to keep to Islamic work ethics. Likewise, findings of the current study showed that being productive in work organizations should not be tied to the amount of money one gets as compensation. Respondents felt that it is un-Islamic for Muslim workers to match reward with creativity or the amount of work needed to be done. Thus, 77% of respondents agreed that being productive at work should not necessarily be tied to the salary package that goes with it. This finding is also consistent with Abeng (1997: p. 50) who advised that Islam attaches utmost importance to all sorts of productive work. Not only has the Quran elevated *al- 'Amal* (productive work) to the

level of a religious duty but it mentioned such a work consistently, in more than 50 verses, in conjunction with *imaan* (faith).

The discussion about justice and care arising from employees work has been observed by Gilligan (1982) that men operate within an ethic of justice that emphasize rights and rules, while women function within an ethic of care based on relationships and responsibilities. Hence, three main questions which dealt with fair promotion, relationship with subordinates, and the use of organizational resources yielded the following results: first, 72% of respondents agreed that it is fair and just as a Muslim to seek promotion in a just and righteous manner. While 19% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, 9% of respondents disagreed that position at work should not be based on connections. Secondly, majority of employees (81%) were in agreement that care and sharing of information among employees in the same organization, and also; assisting junior workers in terms of training were vital for organizational success anchored in good ethical work behavior. Thirdly, while about half of respondents (40%) believed that the use of organizational resources e.g. (telephone, fax, internet, time, and workers) for personal gain is unethical as per Shariah laws, more than half of the number of respondents (58%) felt that enjoying the use of organizational resources for personal gains did not necessarily constitute a negative work ethic in Islam. Therefore, from an Islamic ethicist's perspective, justice, care and sharing of information are also the legacy of Universalist Kantian and Utilitarian ethics in which rights and justice are seen to belong to rational, autonomous individuals in control of their own destiny. Similarly, a personal commitment to good practice ought to be found within a set of political commitments (Ferguson, 2008) so that people are able to resist negative neo-liberal policies and practices and promote the social justice processes and outcomes that should be at the heart of all professions. Accordingly, Abeng (1997) advocates a general appreciation for the vocation of business, because the Quran often speaks about honesty and justice in trade. (See Quran 6:152; 17:35; 55:9). The Quran has repeatedly emphasized on good conduct, and therefore employees must keep to the Islamic ethics by emulating the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace by upon him) throughout their lives, including, of course, their conduct in their work places. The study findings also showed that respondents were candid to give their opinions on what constitute legal and illegal work with reference to Islamic work ethics. An overwhelming majority of the total respondents (91%) vehemently opposed practices like workers engaging directly or indirectly in businesses associated with alcohol and related products. It is a widely held belief that these practices instigate workers to behave irresponsibly towards their fellow beings (Hino, 2011).

Also, results showed that illicit behaviors like stockpiling grains and other essential commodities for the purpose of making profit in times of need is unethical, accordingly; 77% of respondents opposed this practice. In addition, making employees do extra work in a project under cruel conditions because they might have been paid well was strongly opposed as a good ethical work behavior. Hence, 82% of the respondents said making laborers work extra hours in hot conditions even if they are paid for it is bad. The contribution of this article should be an eye opener to human resource management practices particularly in the Arab world. For instance, there have been many accusations of the ill-treatment of foreign workers in work organizations of the Gulf regions (Khan, 1991). Muslims who are at the helm of affairs must realize that it is un-Islamic and unethical to treat people of other faith or foreign workers with disdain. Compensations must be determined in advance and wages must be given equally to all workers immediately once work is completed. The Holy Quran states that 'if one hires an employee, he must inform him of his wage' and 'the employee must get his wage promptly after the work is done'. No employer should 'withhold from the people the things that are their due' (Quran, 7:85). Along the same lines, Prophet Muhammed (Peace be upon him) has urged employers to ensure prompt payment of dues as quoted in Ibn Majah Collection of Hadiths, by saying that, "*Pay the worker for his work before his sweat dries*" (Ibn Majah, Hadith #: 2443).

Thus, management and leaders in organizations must rise above religious rhetoric, and rather embrace the practical realities of extending the teachings of the Quran to all workers irrespective of their origin.

70

Conclusion and Implications of the Study

This study has shown the important relationship between Islamic work ethics and employee attitude to work. The results of the study demonstrate that workers in the UAE are very aware of their limitations to what constitute bad ethical work behaviour that would not be tolerated in Islam. Even though most respondents believe that all workers have an obligation to work according to the dictates of the Quran, there are pockets of employees who still need to understand the significance of pursuing total work etiquettes espouse by the Islamic faith. The study thus call for a serious look at the operations of organizations in the UAE to focus on developing all levels of employees in the area of organizational work ethics with emphasis from an Islamic perspective. One area of organizational process to reinforce this is effective communication from the side of leadership in organizations. Effective leadership communication will encourage work behaviors in a positive manner and consequently affect organizational work output (Abugre, 2011).

From a social point of view, this study clearly indicates the need for employees to keep upholding the Muslim teachings which can be manifested in their daily work attitudes (Best practices) in the various organizations in the UAE. Theoretically, the study has contributed to the literature of Islamic work ethics in gulf regions, and a modest input into organizational behavior.

Nevertheless, like all other theoretical works the study is limited in the generalizability of a small sample of workers in a limited number of organizations in the UAE. However, the merits of quantitative methods is their ability to use smaller groups of people to make inferences about larger groups that would be impossible for researchers to access (Holton & Burnett, 1997). Hence the study contributes significantly to the HRM literature in the area of ethics and organizational commitment. Future research direction can extend this topic by engaging in a much larger sample sizes of both the respondents and the organizations.

References

Abeng, T. (1997). Business ethics in Islamic context: perspectives of a Muslim business leader. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *7* (3), 47-54.

Abugre, J. (2011). Appraising the Impact of Organizational Communication on Worker Satisfaction in Organizational Workplace. *Journal of Problems of Management in the 21ˢᵗ Century, 1* (1), 7-15.

Ahmad, K. (1976). *Islam: Its Meaning and Message*. Islamic Council of Europe, London.

Ahmad, K. (2009). Leadership and work motivation from the cross cultural perspective. *International Journal of Commerce and Management*, *19* (1), 72-84.

Ali, A. J. (2001). The Islamic work ethics in Arabia. *The Journal of Psychology*, *126* (5), 507-519.

Ali, A. (2005). *Islamic Perspectives on Management and Organization*. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.

Ali, A. (2009). Levels of existence and motivation in Islam. *Journal of Management History*, *15* (1), 50-65.

Ali, A. (2010). Islamic challenges to HR in modern organizations. *Personnel Review*, *39* (6), 692-711.

Ali, A., & Al Owaihan, A. (2008). Islamic work ethics: a critical review. *Cross Cultural   Management, An International Journal, 15* (1), 5-19.

Ali, A., Al-Kazemi, A. (2006). Islamic work ethic in Kuwait. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal, 14* (2), 93-104.

Al-Modaf, O. A (2005). Labor, Capital and State in a Globalized Economy: Power-Dependence Relationships. *Economics and Administration*, *19* (1), 81-106.

Banks, S. (2010), "Integrity in Professional Life: Issues of Conduct, Commitment and Capacity. *British Journal of Social Work*, *40* (7), 2168–2184.

Branine, M., & Pollard, D. (2010). Human resource management with Islamic management principles: A dialectic for a reverse diffusion in management. *Personnel Review*, 39 (6), 712-727.

Budhwar, P., & Fadzil, K. (2000). Globalisation, economic crisis and employment practices: Lessons from a large Malaysian Islamic institution. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, *7* (1), 171-98.

71

Diddams, M., & Whittington, J. (2003). Book review essay: revisiting the meaning of meaningful work. *Academy of Management Review, 28* (3), 508-17.

Elizur, D., Borg, I., Hunt, R., & Magyaribeck, I. (1991). The structure of work values: A cross - cultural comparison. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour, 12* (1), 21-38.

Ferguson, I. (2008). *Reclaiming Social Work: Challenging Neo-Liberalism and Promoting Social Justice*. London, Sage.

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Harvard University Press, Harvard, MA.

Glazer, S., Daniel, S. C., & Short, K. M. (2004). A study of the relationship between organizational commitment   and human values in four countries. *Human Relations*, *57* (3), 323-345.

Hino, H. (2011). *The impact of Islam on food shopping and consumption patterns of Muslim households*. Handbook of Islamic Marketing, p. 147.

Hofstede, G. (1997). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.

Holton, E. H., & Burnett, M. B. (1997). Qualitative research methods. In R. A. Swanson, & E. F. Holton (Eds.), *Human resource development research handbook: Linking research and   practice*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Ibn Majah. *Collection of Saheeh Hadiths.*

Jones, H. J. (1997). The Protestant ethics: Weber's Model and the empirical literature. *Human Relations, 50* (7), 757-78.

Katou, A. A., Budhwar, P. S., Woldu, H., & Al-Hamadi, A. (2010). Influence of ethical beliefs, national culture and institutions on preferences for HRM in Oman. *Personnel Review*, *39* (6), 728 – 745.

Khan, M. F. (1991). Migrant Workers to the Arab World: The experience of Pakistan. In G. Gunatilleke (Ed.) *Migration in the Arab World: Experience of Returning Migrants,* pp. (195-237). United Nations University Press, New York.

King, J. E., & Williamson, I. O. (2005). Workplace religious expression, religiosity, and job satisfaction: clarifying a relationship. *Journal of Management, Spirituality, and Religion*, *2* (2), 173-98.

McClelland, D. (1961). *The Achieving Society*. Free Press, New York, NY.

Mellahi, K., & Budhwar, P. S. (2010). Introduction: Islam and human resource management. *Personnel Review*, *39* (6), 685 – 691.

Morgan, J. F. (2005). Religion at work: a legal quagmire. *Managerial Law*, *47* (3/4), 247-59.

Peters, T. J., & Waterman, J. R. (1982). *In Search of Excellence.* New York: Harper and Row.

Porter, G. (2004). Work, Work ethics, Work excess. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 17* (5) 424- 440.

Punch, K. F. (2005). *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative approaches* (2nd Ed.). London: Sage.

Reave, L. (2005). Spiritual values and practices related to leadership effectiveness. *Leadership Quarterly*, *16* (5), 255-87.

Sedikides, C., & Gebauer, J. E. (2010). Religiosity as self-enhancement: A meta-analysis of the relation between socially desirable responding and religiosity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *14* (1), 17-36.

Singhapakdi, A., Kraft, K., Vitell, S., & Rallapalli, K. C. (1995). The Perceived Importance of Ethics and Social Responsibility on Organizational Effectiveness: A Survey of Marketers. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 23* (1), 49-56.

Tayeb, M. (1997). Islamic revival in Asia and human resource management. *Employee Relations*, *19* (4), 352-64.

Weaver, G. R., & Agle, B. R. (2002). Religiosity and ethical behaviour in organizations: a symbolic interactionist perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, *27* (1), 77-97.

Weber, M. (1992). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (T. Parsons, Trans.)* (Original Work Published 1920) Ed. London: Routledge.

Welsh, A. (2005). Business is busyness or the work ethics. *Social Research, 72* (20), 471-500.

Yang, K. (2010). *Making Sense of Statistical Methods in Social Research*. London: Sage.

Yousuf, D. (2001). Islamic Work Ethics: A moderator between organizational commitment and job satisfaction in a cross - cultural context". *Personnel Review*, *30* (2), 152-165.

Zuboff, S. (1983). The work ethic and work organization. In: J. Barbash, R. Lampman, S. Levitan & G. Tyler, (Ed.). *The Work Ethic - a Critical Analysis* (pp. 153-81). S.l.: Madison, WI .

Advised by Nikhil Chandra Shil, American International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Shagufta Sarwar	PhD., Haldane Building, College of Business, Economics, Law and Criminology, Swansea University, Singleton Park, Swansea, SA2 8PP, Wales, UK. E-mail: s.sarwar.alain@gmail.com
James Baba Abugre	Lecturer, University of Ghana Business School, Box LG 78, Legon, Accra, Ghana. Phone: +233 244 924 323. E-mail: jbabugre@ug.edu.gh Website: http://www.ugbs.edu.gh/site/