

## **Impact of Islamic Work Ethics on Teachers' Job Performance at Elementary School Level in Punjab**

**Rohi Mehnaz**

*PhD Scholar, Baha-ud-Din Zakariya University, Multan*  
[mehnazruhi@yahoo.com](mailto:mehnazruhi@yahoo.com)

**Muhammad Asadullah**

*Assistant Education Officer*  
*School Education Department Punjab*  
[asadmpa@gmail.com](mailto:asadmpa@gmail.com)

**Dr. Bashir Hussain**

*Associate Professor, Department of Education*  
*Baha-ud-Din Zakariya University, Multan*

**Dr. Shams ur Rehman**

*Assistant Professor, Northern University, Nowshera*  
[Shams.mashud@gmail.com](mailto:Shams.mashud@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*We used cross-sectional design to examine the impact of Islamic Work Ethic on teachers' job performance at elementary school. The study employed quantitative data technique to undertake the investigation. Data were collected from 308 male and female elementary school teachers of district Muzaffargarh employing simple random sampling technique. Islamic Work Ethic were measured through a 17 items scale while job performance was measured using a 23 items scale. The results of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between IWE and job performance. It further depicted that IWE is strong predictor of teachers' job performance. However, the study showed no significant gender based difference regarding the impact of IWE on job performance of elementary school teachers. The study offered recommendations and directions for further research.*

**Key Words:** *Islamic Work Ethics, Job Performance, Elementary School Teachers*

### **Introduction**

Employees' job performance has been extensively researched area in Management, Human Behavior and Organizational and Educational Psychology. Researchers have been investigating the means to enhance the performance of employees to increase the productivity of both profit and non-profit organizations. Huge sums are spent on capacity building of employees so that their performance might be enhanced. As

a result of research on this domain, different models of job performance emerged. Irrespective of such efforts to enhance performance, organizational managers started reporting unethical behaviors among the employees and their performance at work place started reducing. Meanwhile, fiascos like Enron, Satyam and WorldCom started emerging (Rokhman, 2010) which were surely result of ethical issues. The dilemma spread in almost all type of profit as well as non-profit organizations. Even in educational institutions, students and parents started reporting ethical issues such as sexual harassment at the end teachers (Bondestan & Lundqvist, 2020; Ahmad, Rahim, Chulan, Wahab, & Noor, 2019). To deal with such situations, a dire need was felt to incorporate ethical guidelines in the job descriptions of workforce that may direct their behaviors (Hayati & Caniago, 2012). Thus organizations started implementing ethical guidelines borrowed from the concept of Marx Weber i.e. Protestant Work Ethics (PWE). The results of the intervention were encouraging and work ethics were reported to have positive impact on the performance of employees at work place (Khan, Abbas, Gul, & Raja, 2013).

The predictive of ability of WE in job performance attracted the attention of the researchers. This also geared work on these two domains covering areas that include impact of ethical values on the performance of employees as well as overall performance of the organization (Osibanjo, Akinbode, Falola, & Oludayo, 2018; Bouckennooghe, Zafar, & Raja, 2015). Studies also covered developing theories of work ethic in organizational perspectives. As a result, three broader domains of work ethic emerged which include (i) Protestant Work Ethics (PWE), (ii) Islamic Work Ethic and (iii) Confucius Work Ethic. Protestant Work Ethic are ethical guides governed by the teachings of Christianity, Confucius Work Ethic have roots in Chinese Confucius Philosophy while Islamic Work Ethic involves ethical guides governed by Islamic principles (Farid, Iqbal, Jianhing, Mushtaq, & Mehmood, 2018; Sarwar & Abugre, 2013).

Among all the work ethics, the IWE gained popularity during the last two decade and became the separate domain of work ethics (Khan et al., 2013). IWE has roots in Quran and Sunnah (sayings and acts of Prophet PBUH) and mainly focus on treating work as honorable task (Sulastri, 2019). In Islamic perspective, teaching is also noble task which must be carried out as guided by Shariah (Laws governed by Islamic teachings) rules (Izzati, 2017; Yousef, 2001). In view of the need and importance of IWE in teaching, studies pressed the need of Islamic Work Ethic in teaching profession. These studies further assert that IWE may prove instrumental to the performance of teachers in educational institutions (Fatmah, Hasani, Rahmah, & Purnama, 2020; Izzati, 2017). In view of this, it can be assumed that Islamic Work Ethic is highly desirable in teaching profession and may prove instrumental to the performance of the teachers.

Although Work Ethic gained substantial attention of the researchers during the last two decades, major focus of research remained Protestant Work Ethic while Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) that is universal in nature, remained unattended (Rokhman, 2010; Sarwar & Abugre, 2013). Further, scholarly work on ethic in general and especially

Protestant Work Ethics has been conducted in American and European countries, while non-western countries lacked attention of the researchers in this domain (Abbasi, Mir, & Hussain, 2012). Moreover, studies (Akob, 2016; Idris, 2016; Khan, Abbas, Gul, & Raja, 2013; Rokhman, 2010) suggest that Islamic Work Ethics are instrumental to job performance. However, studies suggest that this assumption need empirical evidences from diverse organizational contexts (Hayati & Caniogo, 2012).

As far as teaching is concerned, studies reported ethical issues such as lack of commitment of teachers to their profession (Izzati, 2017). Further, harassment of students by their teachers at private sector elite school in Lahore and a public sector schools in Sind in Pakistan aggrieved the situation and pressed the need of ethic in schools as well (Ahmad, Ahmad, & Masood, 2020). Students at schools reported unwanted touches, slang words, steering by their teachers and supervisors (Bondestan & Lundqvist, 2020; Oni, Tshitangano, & Akinsola, 2019). Experts pressed the need of effective normative mechanism to redress these ethical issues at schools. They also assert that impact of work ethic may vary from gender perspectives. For this, ethical professional standards have been developed by nations. However, the outcomes of these ethical professional standards are yet to be explored especially in Pakistan. Moreover, we found weaker evidences of studies reporting the impact of ethic in general and especially impact of IWE on teachers' performance. We also found weaker evidences of studies comparing the impact of IWE on job performance of male and female teachers. It is yet to be explored that whether IWE is more instrumental to the performance of male teachers or female teachers (Ryan & Tipu, 2016). Thus, there exists a research deficit in this relationship which needs to be bridged by conducting studies in Non-Western countries and especially in teaching sector. Hence we intend to examine the impact of IWE on Job Performance of elementary school teachers in Punjab province. The study mainly examines the impact IWE on teachers' job performance. It also makes a gender based comparison of impact of Islamic Work Ethics on teachers' job performance at elementary school level.

## **Literature Review**

### **Theory and Hypotheses**

Ethic refers to the moral guidelines that distinguish right from the wrong (Idris, 2016). This domain of administration and management gained popularity among academia, industry and general public (Khan et al., 2013). Studies suggest that work ethics are instrumental to the overall performance and productivity of an individual as well the firm at large (Akbarnejad & Chanzanagh, 2012; Lim & Lay, 2003). The initial scholarships on work ethic mainly relate Protestant Work Ethic (PWE) to enhance the performance at work place. However, the concept of Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) emerged as a dominant work ethic domain that is more practical than any other domain of work ethic (Khan et al., 2013). The concept of IWE originates from the teaching of Quran and Sunnah which are applicable to every aspect of social business (Ali & Al-Owaihian,

2008). Thus, IWE governs all the spheres of life such as society, business and education. This clearly suggests that following Islamic Ethical principles in true spirit may result in endeavors of individual to give his/her best out to the organization he/she serves (Nasr, 1984). This sense of productive work among Muslim workforce is developed due to their religious belief system.

Many Quranic references clearly relate IWE and Job performance by reflecting the need and importance of productive work as a part of religious duty (Khan et al., 2013). In an example, Quran says, “and he who does righteous deeds and he is a believer, he will neither have fear of injustice nor deprivation” (20:112). Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that the best food which a person eats is that which he eats out of his work (Ahmad & Owoyemi, 2012). This clearly shows the need and significance of productive work in Islamic belief system. Further, it also discourages unfair and malpractices at workplace (Yousef, 2001). The theory of IWE suggests that work is meaningful activity which positively affects the overall well being of the society. It further suggests that all the activities that are instrumental to the social well being are productive works (Izzati, 2017; Rokhman, 2010). Expanding this theory to the education is justified as it is also instrumental for the health of society. Thus, we can arguably assert that teaching can be productive if it involves adherence to the Islamic ethical values.

Previous studies on work ethic in general and especially IWE and job performance suggest that IWE may prove instrumental in job performance (Osibanjo et al., 2018 & Khan et al., 2013). Khan et al. (2013) argue that employees with higher levels of IWE would exhibit higher levels of job performance. Further, studies of Fatmah et al. (2020), Sulastri (2019), Izzati (2017), Idris (2016), and Akob (2016) may improve performance of teachers. These studies further argue that practising IWE by teachers may further develop the understanding of Islamic ethical values among students. However, these studies are based on assumptions lacking empirical evidences. In view of this, it is assumed that IWE may positively affect job performance of teachers. To test this assumption, we developed one hypothesis (H2) that states;

H1: Islamic Work Ethic has positive impact on teachers’ job performance at elementary school level in District Muzaffargarh.

There remained widespread debate over the impact of work ethic on job performance of male and female employees. Studies like Ryan & Tipu (2016), Akbarnejad & Chanzanagh (2012) reported dichotomous results. Results of the study of Ryan & Tipu (2016) suggest that gender is vital factor in the relationship between IWE and job performance. Contrary to it, Akbarnejad & Chanzanagh (2012) no significant gender based difference regarding the impact of IWE on job performance. However, we found weaker evidences of gender based differences regarding the relationship of both the variables in education sector. In view of this, it is assumed that there is no significant gender based difference regarding the impact IWE on teachers’ job performance. To test this assumption, we developed one hypothesis (H2) that states;

H2: IWE has more positive impact on job performance of male elementary school teachers as compared to the job performance of female elementary school teachers in District Muzaffargarh.

## Methods

### Sample and Data Collection

Participants of the study included a simple random sample of 380 elementary school teachers employed at 223 public sector elementary schools in Muzaffargarh district of Punjab. Data were collected by using a combined 40 items questionnaire that measured Islamic Work Ethic (17 items) and Job Performance (23 items). We attached a cover letter with each questionnaire explaining the purpose of study and to assure the respondents about confidentiality of their data. The sample consisted of 192 male and 116 female elementary school teachers. Gender was used as the control variables because of its effect on teachers' performance.

### Measures

Self-report measures were used to collect data from the respondents. Responses were measured at 5 point Likert type scale that ranged from 1=Strongly Agree to 5=Strongly Disagree.

#### *Islamic Work Ethic (IWE)*

Islamic Work Ethic was measured using 17 items self-report measures used by Ali (1992). Reliability of the IWE scale was 0.89 which was closer to reliability calculated by Ali (2009) as 0.91.

#### *Teachers' Job Performance*

Teachers' job performance was measured using 23 items scale developed by Goodman & Svyantek (1999). Reliability of the IWE scale was 0.75 which was closer to reliability calculated by Goodman & Svyantek (1999) as 0.71.

## Results

### Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was made to find out the relationship between the Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) and Job Performance (JP).

**Table1: Correlation of IWE and Job Performance**

|     | Mean | SD   | IWE    | JP |
|-----|------|------|--------|----|
| IWE | 3.91 | 0.15 | 1      |    |
| JP  | 3.84 | 0.24 | .655** | 1  |

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

IWE= Islamic Work Ethic, JP= Job Performance

Table 1 above shows a significant positive relationship between Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) and Job Performance (JP). To test the predictability of IWE for job performance, linear regression analysis was run.

### Linear Regression Analysis

We used simple linear regression to test the 1<sup>st</sup> hypothesis that “Islamic Work Ethic has positive impact on teachers’ job performance at elementary school level in District Muzaffargarh”. Reason for applying simple linear regression analysis in this case is that both IWE and JP are single continuous independent and dependent variables respectively.

**Table 2: Regression Analysis for Islamic Work Ethic and Job Performance**

| Teachers’ Job Performance |        |                |                 |
|---------------------------|--------|----------------|-----------------|
|                           | B      | R <sup>2</sup> | ΔR <sup>2</sup> |
| Step 1                    |        |                |                 |
| Gender                    | 0.03   | 0.00           | 0.00            |
| Step 2                    |        |                |                 |
| Islamic Work Ethic        | .844** | .274           | .274            |

To predict job performance on the basis of IWE, we entered gender in the first step while IWE was entered in the second step. Results indicated that IWE significantly predicted teachers’ job performance ( $\beta = 0.844^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This further suggests that 27.4 % of the variance in teachers’ job performance is accounted by Islamic work ethic. This supports our hypothesis “Islamic Work Ethic has positive impact on teachers’ job performance at elementary school level in District Muzaffargarh” is accepted.

### Gender Based Comparison regarding Impact of IWE on Job Performance

Independent sample t-test was applied to compare the impact of Islamic Work Ethic on job performance of male and female teachers.

**Table 4.7: T-Test on Mean Scores of Male and Female Teachers**

| Respondent      | N   | Mean | SD   | T-Test Value | P-Value |
|-----------------|-----|------|------|--------------|---------|
| Male Teachers   | 192 | 4.12 | .981 | 1.23         | .07     |
| Female Teachers | 116 | 3.97 | .873 |              |         |

$P = .07 > .05$  at table 4.7 above shows no significant gender based difference regarding the impact of Islamic Work Ethic on job performance of male and female

teachers. This rejects our second hypothesis (H2) stating, “IWE has more positive impact on job performance of male elementary school teachers as compared to the job performance of female elementary school teachers in District Muzaffargarh”.

## **Discussion on Results**

### **IWE and Job Performance**

The results of Pearson’s Correlation and linear regression analysis revealed that there exists a strong positive relationship between Islamic Work Ethic and job performance of teachers at elementary school level in district Muzaffargarh. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of the studies conducted by Osibanjo et al. (2018) and Bouckennooghe, Zafar, & Raja (2015). They found that IWE is strong predictor of employees’ job performance. Their research revealed that incorporating work ethics in job descriptions of employees positively affect their job performance.

### **Gender Based Comparison of Impact of IWE on Job Performance**

The results of t-test revealed no significant difference between the impact of IWE on job performance of male and female teachers. The results of the study are consistent with findings of the studies of Farid et al. (2018) and Akbarnejad & Chanzanagh (2012). These studies also found no gender based difference regarding the relationship both these variables.

## **Conclusions**

On the basis of descriptive and inferential analysis of the study it can be argued that Islamic Work Ethics are positively related to employees’ job performance in general and especially teachers’ job performance. The study further revealed that Islamic Work Ethic is strong predictor of teachers’ job performance. Incorporating IWE in job description of teachers and making these ethics part of teachers’ training program may produce better results. However, the study failed to prove any difference of the impact of IWE on job performance of male and female teachers.

## **Recommendations and Further Research**

As the study revealed that IWE is strong predictor of job performance, educational organizations may incorporate ethical guides in the job descriptions of their teachers to produce better results. Ethics in general and especially Islamic Work Ethics are vital components of an organization’s core value; it is therefore recommended that government sector educational managers may conduct teachers’ trainings involving work ethics.

As the current study involved Islamic Work Ethic as one dimensional concept, future studies may study the relationship of all the dimensions of IWE with job performance. The current study investigated the impact of IWE on broader domain of job performance, future studies may investigate more specific relationship of IWE with Organizational Citizenship Behavior which is more closely related to IWE.

## References

- Abbasi, A. S., Mir, G. M., & Hussain, M. (2012). Islamic Work Ethics: How It Affects Organizational Learning, Innovation And Performance. *Actual Problems Of Economics* , 471-480.
- Ahmad, N. M., Ahmad, M., & Masood, R. (2020). Socio-Psychological Implications of Public Harassment for Women in the Capital City of Islamabad. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* .
- Ahmad, S., & Owoyemi, M. Y. (2012). The Concept of Islamic Work Ethic: An Analysis of Some Salient Points in the Prophetic Tradition. *International Journal of Business and Social Science* , 116-123.
- Ahmad, Z., Rahim, N. A., Chulan, M., Wahab, S. A., & Noor, A. N. (2019). Islamic Work Ethic and Organizational Citizenship Behavior among Muslim Employeers in Education Institutions. *Second International Conference on the Future of ASEAN (CoFA)-2017*, (pp. 455-464).
- Akbarnejad, M., & Chanzanagh, H. (2012). Protestant Work Ethic, Gender Role Attitudes, Ethnicity and Class: Case of Iran. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 2 (3), 270-275.
- Akob, M. (2016). Influence of Work Load, Work Ethic and Job Satisfaction towards Teacher's Performance (Study of Islamic-Based School in Makasar-Indonesia). *Global Advanced Research Journal of Management and Business Studies* , 172-177.
- Ali, A. J., & Al-Owaihan, A. (2008). Islamic work ethic: a critical review. Cross cultural management. *Cross cultural management: An international Journal* , 5-19.
- Ali, A. (1988). Scaling an Islamic work ethic. *The Journal of Social Psychology* , 575-583.
- Bondestan, F., & Lundqvist, M. (2020). Sexual Harassment in Higher Education - A Systematic Review. *European Journal of Higher Education* .
- Bouckenooghe, D., Zafar, A., & Raja, U. (2015). How Ethical Leadership Shapes Employees' Job Performance: The Medicating Role of Goal Congruence and Psychological Capital. *Journal of Business Ethics* , 251-264.
- Farid, T., Iqbal, S., Jianhing, M., Mushtaq, T., & Mehmood, Q. (2018). Effect of Islamic Work Ethics on Employees Work Engagement and Organizational Citizenship Behavior. *Psychologia* .
- Fatmah, D., Hasani, S., Rahmah, M., & Purnama, C. (2020). Leadership Style as Moderating Varibale Influence between Islamic Work Ethic with Performance (Study of Sabillilah Sampang Islamic Boarding School (SSIBS) Teachers). *Ist International Conference on Morality (InCoMora)*, (pp. 257-271).

- Goodman, S. A., & Svyantek, D. J. (1999). Person–Organization Fit and Contextual Performance: Do Shared Values Matter. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* , 254-275.
- Hayati, K., & Caniago, I. (2012). Islamic Work Ethic: The Role of Intrinsic Motivation, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment and Job Performance. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* , 272 – 277.
- Idris, M. (2016). The Impact of Supervision, Motivation and Work Ethics on Teachers' Professional Competence: A Case Study of Private Islamic High School Teachers. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies* , 147-158.
- Izzati, U. A. (2017). The Effect of Islamic Work Ethics on Affective Commitment of Vocational High School Teachers. *1st Yogyakarta International Conference on Educational Management/Administration and Pedagogy*.
- Khan, K., Abbas, M., Gul, A., & Raja, U. (2013). Organizational Justice and Job Outcomes: Moderating Role of Islamic Work Ethic. *Journal of Business Ethics* , 1-13.
- Lim, C., & Lay, C. S. (2003). Confucianism and the Protestant Work Ethic. *Asia Europe Journal*, 1 (3), 321-322.
- Nasr, S. (1984). Islamic work ethics. *Hamdard Islamicus*, 7 (4), 25-35.
- Oni, H. T., Tshitangano, T. G., & Akinsola, H. A. (2019). Sexual Harassment and Victimization of Students: A Case Study of a Higher Education Institution in South Africa. *African Health Sciences* , 1478-1485.
- Osibanjo, A. O., Akinbode, J., Falola, H. O., & Oludayo, O. O. (2018). Work Ethics and Employees' Job Performance. *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics* , 107-117.
- Rokhman, W. (2010). The Effect of Islamic Work Ethics on Work Outcomes. *Electronic Journal of Business Ethics and Organization Studies* , 21-26.
- Ryan, J. C., & Tipu, S. A. (2016). An Empirical Alternative to Sidani and Thornberry's (2009) Current Arab Work Ethic: Examining the Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile in and Arabian Context. *Journal of Business Ethics* , 177-198.
- Sarwar, S., & Abugre, J. B. (2013). An Assessment of Islamic work Ethics of employees in organizations: Insights from the United Arab Emirates. *Problems of Management in the 21st century* , 60-72.
- Sulastri, L. (2019). Islamic Work Ethic in Islamic College in Indonesia: The Role of Intrinsic Motivation, Organizational Culture and Performance. *Business and Management Conference*.
- Yousef, D. A. (2001). Islamic work ethic – A moderator between organizational commitment and job satisfaction in a cross-cultural context. *Personnel Review* , 152-169.