
Assessment of Islamic Work Ethics of teaching faculty: Insights and comparisons from public and private sector universities

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Abstract

Islamic work ethics is the principle of wrong and right at work place and it designates what people/ employees ought to do in the light of Quran and practical examples from the life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Islamic work ethic has been viewed as a way to promote psychological, social and primarily economic self-interest in order to maintain social prestige, increase societal welfare and reaffirm religious faith. Major dimensions of Islamic work included for this research study were effort, justice, honesty, team work, accountability and trustworthiness. Research objectives included exploring and comparing dimensions of Islamic work ethics among respondents of both sectors. Descriptive comparative research design was adopted to explore the variables of this study. 300 faculty members from public and private sector universities in Islamabad were randomly selected as sample of the study. Data was collected through a self-constructed questionnaire having 24 statements on 5 point likert scale. This questionnaire was based on extensive literature review in the specified field and yielded a reliability of .89. Results revealed that respondents agreed that effort, honesty, team work and trustworthiness are foundations of Islamic work ethic, however they opined differently about justice and accountability at work place. Findings of this study may be helpful for administrators in improving work place practices and for employees in doing self-evaluations for self-improvement that is going to be rewarded here and life hereafter.

Key words: *Islamic work ethics, accountability, justice, assessment, teaching faculty*

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Introduction

Work ethics play a vital role in employee performance and organizational effectiveness. Work ethics serve as an important facet of organizational culture and have a deep impact of work place behaviours of employees. To understand the concept of work ethics, it is imperative to synthesize the term ‘ethics’ first. The term ‘ethics’ is derived from a Greek word ‘ethikos’ meaning custom, habit and moral character. Sometimes, this term is also used in lieu of or as short form for ethical theory, moral theory, moral philosophy or philosophical ethics which serve as a separate branch of philosophy dealing with good and bad human conduct (Athar, Shahzad, Ahmad, & Ijaz 2016).

In recent time, work attitude in organizations are assessed as the panacea for organizational success. Work ethics form an integral factor of organizational set up and influences employee attitude towards work and the organization itself. Both employees and employers have equal role in bringing up the organizational work ethics that have to be practiced. Miller *et al.* (2001) ascribed work ethic as an attribute to the value given to work, the means to an end. Work ethics has been defined as a commitment and value given towards hard work by employees. Work ethics is also considered as a full belief in moral benefit of doing work and ultimately its ability to enhance employees’ character. Addis, 2010 viewed work ethic as the organizational activity to apply moral percept to concrete problems at work place. Furthermore, moral percept and codes become complicated to define objectively as every individual employee evaluate values as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ in an abstract manner according to his/her own perceptions and experiences. Therefore, work ethic in western connotation and context is dependent on an individual’s perspective about good or bad and wrong or right. (Ahmad & Owoyemi, 2012).

Porter, 2010 has argued that every culture has unique set of conditions which influence the meanings given to work ethics and mannerism. Religious background along with culture has a deep impact on ethical behaviour and thought of people. Religious beliefs and back ground affect ethical understanding of people which goes a long way in ethical practices in their daily and business life as well. Islamic work ethic originates from Quran and the teachings/ sayings of Prophet Muhammad صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم. Islamic work ethics include moral, social and economic dimensions in all parts of a Muslim man/ woman’s life including business life also. Basically in our religion, Islamic work ethics is an orientation which not only shapes but influences the participation, commitment and involvement of believers at their work place. Work ethics from Islamic perspective implies honesty, effort, justice, team work, accountability and trustworthiness among employees.

Many professional institutions and organizations have embarked to study and present Islamic work ethic in the corporate world. Islamic work ethics stresses that work is an obligatory activity and a virtue for human beings; it helps to build equilibrium in one’s personal and professional life. Work enables an employee to earn respect and independence, satisfaction, motivation and sense of fulfilment. Progress and success in job depends on commitment and hard work towards one’s own job. All these elements are supported through Islamic work ethic as Islam has focussed not only on needs and guidelines of our personal lives but professional aspects of human life as well.

Literature review

Multiple researches have acclaimed that Islamic work ethics is the principle of wrong and right at work place and it designates what people/ employees ought to do in the light of Quran and practical examples from the life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. IWE has been viewed as a way to promote psychological, social and primarily economic self-interest in order to maintain social prestige, increase societal welfare and reaffirm religious faith (Ali & Owaihan, 2008; Hashi, 2011). Ali & Al-Kazimi, 2006 have emphasized that our Prophet ﷺ listed four basic dimensions of work; firstly working honestly is a form of worshipping Allah, secondly work that is not performed to the best of one's ability is not sanctioned, thirdly work must not only for self-benefit but for the benefit of others also and lastly, social dimension and societal benefit of doing work/job must be kept in mind.

The intrinsic value of work is derived from the employee's intention of doing work rather than the result of work in Islamic work ethics. Most highlighted feature of work in intention of doing it properly and honestly as a religious duty. In Islam, underlying intentions of our actions must be in accordance with the guidelines provided by Allah SWT only. Hence, Allah's pleasure and mercy can be obtained only and if employees conduct their work sincerely for Him and according to His provided doctrine (Azaharsyah, & Nor, 2016). Our sincere intentions at work place ensure blessings of Allah and will lead a long way in obtaining worldly rewards as well as success in the world hereafter. The ethical values originating from teachings of Islam are universal in nature. Thus studying Islamic work ethics emanating from teachings of Islam are applicable at every kind of work place. These are generalized values and through their application, workers/ employees may get benefits and rewards of this world and hereafter (Khadijah, Kamaluddin, & Salin, 2015).

Saeed, 2016 has briefly presented a conceptual and historical review of Islamic work ethic construct and has suggested a multi-dimensional model for IWE based on multiple researches done in this field. He has further suggested that there is a strong evidence of work place ethics formulation depending on Islamic literature and it helps to provide a foundation to construct Islamic work values. Similarly, research done by Azaharsyah & Nor, 2016 acclaimed that employees of selected banks in Aceh manifested high commitment towards implementing Islamic work ethics in their daily work place routine. Another study conducted by Din & Farooq, 2016 investigated the effect of IWE on teachers' job stress, turnover intentions and well-being. Findings revealed that IWE is inevitably necessary for teaching institutions as teachers working in them are extremely loyal and highly motivated having low turnover intentions and less stress and work place.

Significance of Islamic Work Ethics

The concept of Islamic work ethic is gaining popularity among research areas in multiple disciplines these days. First research on IWE by Ali, 1988 paved a way towards IWE and scholars diverted from work ethics towards exploring multiple variables of IWE among organizational members. Similarly Abeng, 1997 proposed that interdependence between faith and work is the epitome of beauty in IWE. He further argued that work without faith has a totally negative implication towards life. It was further suggested that IWE promotes organizational commitment, job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviour among teachers.

Islam views economic activity of an individual as religious obligation. A teacher/worker/employee has been entrusted a moral obligation to provide their services to the fullest with honesty, justice and equity. Similarly, teachers/ faculty are required to deliver the knowledge which has been bestowed upon them with personal integrity through utmost effort and self-accountability. A teacher appears as a role model for students so he/she is required to manifest higher morals and values at work place. Teachers' exemplary behaviour at work place enriched with Islamic work ethics not only sets a good practice for colleagues but students also absorb this and benefit from it in their practical life (Haroon, Fakhar, & Rehman, 2012).

Dimensions of Islamic Work Ethics

Divine sources of Qur'an and Sunnah urge the best work ethics in our socio-economic life. Qur'an, (3:110) states *"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah"*. We have to manifest best of our behaviour and morals, enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, not only in personal but professional life as well. The above mentioned verse from Surah 'Āli 'Imrān has a very broad and in-depth meaning. It gives a proper direction for our socio-economic life. Islamic work ethics becomes based on it as the employees following these, do right and avoid wrong. Major dimensions of Islamic work include effort, justice honesty, team work, accountability and trustworthiness. These dimensions of IWE provide guidance about doing work as worship. Dimensions of IWE with reference to Quranic verses and Hadith of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ are discussed as conceptual framework of this research.

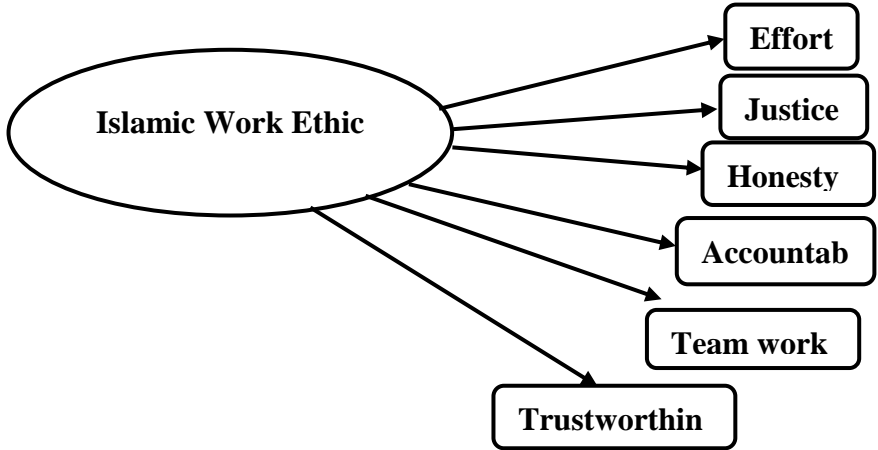
Dimensions of IWE	Verses from Qur'an	Saying of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī)
Effort	<i>"Man will not get anything unless he works hard"</i> (Surah al-Najm, 53:39)	<i>"One who works is the friend of Allah, and one who does not work is considered by Allah, to be His enemy"</i>
Justice	<i>"Among those We have created there is a community who guide by the Truth and act justly according to it"</i> (Surat al-A'raf, 7:181)	<i>"One who exercise his authority and power unjust way will not enter Paradise"</i>
Honesty	<i>"O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true."</i> (Surah At-Tawbah ,9:119)	<i>"Truthfulness/honesty leads to righteousness and righteousness leads to Paradise"</i>
Teamwork	<i>"Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taḡwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and</i>	<i>"Faithful believers are to each other as the bricks of a wall, supporting and reinforcing each other".</i>

Accountability	<p><i>transgression. And fear Allāh. Verily, Allāh is Severe in punishment” (Surat Al-Ma’idah, 5:2)</i></p> <p><i>Do the people think that they will be left to say, “We believe” and they will not be tried? (Surah Al-'Ankabut 29:2)</i></p>	<p><i>“O Abu Dharr! Hold yourself accountable before they hold you accountable, and in order for your accounting to be easy tomorrow.”</i></p>
Trustworthiness	<p><i>“Those who are faithfully true to their amanah (all the duties which God has ordained, honesty, moral responsibility and trusts, etc.) and to their covenants...these indeed are the inheritors. Who shall inherit Paradise. And dwell therein forever” (Surah Al-Mu'minin 23:8)</i></p>	<p><i>“There is no belief for him who is not trustworthy.”</i></p>

Conceptual framework, Research design and Methodology

Effort can be defined as the vigorous attempt to get some work done in the allowed time and provided resources. The amount of effort affects the quality and quantity of work. An individual gets what he strives for. Islam teaches us to strive to our fullest. Teachers working in universities need to put their best effort in teaching and at work place as its rewards are promised by Allah. In general justice can be defined as an environment that offers fair, just, equity based treatment. Justice can also be about the behaviour that more objective in nature, and not related to prejudice and favouritism towards some people rather subjective and partisanship towards some other individuals. Honesty plays a central part in IWE literature. It provides a base for all other values. Islam stresses upon honesty at work place, honesty in imparting knowledge and operating in a transparent way towards others. Team work, cooperation and commitment towards the organizational objectives is an important aspect of Islamic work ethics. As professional cannot work in isolation for achievement of organisational goals it is very important to work in groups. A lot of good work can be produced while working as a team (Darwish, 2011). Accountability and teaching standards are very prominent in the teaching profession scenario. IWE stresses upon self-accountability also. If we move towards the process of self-accountability, it will pay us rewards here and hereafter as promised by Allah. Teachers need to keep reflecting upon their actions and words so that they portray themselves as role models for students. Trustworthiness in the professional setting means the ability of the employee when they are considered as truthful, and honest

and can be trusted by the organization or employers. Islamic work ethics cover economic and social dimensions of work ethics comprehensively. If the employees follow Islamic work ethics during work, it enables the employees with a sense of faithfulness and worthiness along with the strengthening the achievement of organizational goals. Diagrammatically this frame work can be displayed as follows:



Descriptive comparative research design was adopted to explore the variables of this study. Population included all the regular teaching faculty working in public and private sector universities of Islamabad region only. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select sample of the study. 300 faculty members from both sectors were randomly selected for data collection. Researcher used a self-constructed questionnaire having 24 statements on 5 point likert scale (Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree). This questionnaire was based on extensive literature review in the specified field and work done previously by Ali, 1988; Ali 2001; Ali & Al-Kazimi, 2006; Ali & Owaihan, 2008; Chanzanagh & Akbernejad 2011 and Saeed 2016. Pilot testing of the questionnaire on a sample size of 40 helped to determine its reliability and face validity. Validity of the questionnaire was taken from two experts of the field and they opined that this scale is valid to test the research hypotheses.

Research objectives

- i. To assess Islamic work ethics of teaching faculty serving in public sector universities.
- ii. To explore Islamic work ethics of teaching faculty serving in private sector universities.
- iii. To compare Islamic work ethics of teaching faculty serving in public and private sector universities.
- iv. To develop a viable model for practising Islamic work ethics by faculty serving in public and private sector universities.

Research hypotheses:

H₀₁ There is no significant differences in responses related to effort with reference to Islamic work ethics among teaching faculty of public and private sector universities.

H₀₂ There is no significant differences in responses related to justice with reference to Islamic work ethics among teaching faculty of public and private sector universities.

H₀₃ There is no significant differences in responses related to honesty with reference to Islamic work ethics among teaching faculty of public and private sector universities.

H₀₄ There is no significant differences in responses related to team work with reference to Islamic work ethics among teaching faculty of public and private sector universities.

H₀₅ There is no significant differences in responses related to accountability with reference to Islamic work ethics among teaching faculty of public and private sector universities.

H₀₆ There is no significant differences in responses related to trustworthiness with reference to Islamic work ethics among teaching faculty of public and private sector universities.

Results and findings

Results of this research study was based on quantitative analysis using descriptive statistics, mean, standard deviation, Cronbach’s alpha and t-test.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and subscale reliability (n=40)

Subscale	Mean	SD	Cronbach’s Alpha
Effort	5.67	1.66	0.84*
Justice	6.05	1.79	0.85*
Honesty	7.48	1.89	0.89*
Teamwork	6.15	1.80	0.86*
Accountability	6.55	1.86	0.86*
Trustworthiness	6.98	1.88	0.87*
Overall Reliability			0.89*

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table 1 shows the reliability of subscales and overall the whole scale. Highest reliability was found for subscale of honesty ($r = 0.89$), whereas overall reliability coefficient of the scale is $r = 0.89$ at $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

Table 2: Split half reliability analysis (n=40)

Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1	Value	.86*
		N of Items	12
	Part 2	Value	.87*
		N of Items	12
Total N of Items			24

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Table 2 portrays that reliability coefficient of Part I of the scale is $r = 0.86$ and of Part II is $r = 0.87$. It means that both the parts of the whole scale have high reliability for data collection according to objectives of this study.

Table 3: Cross tabulation of Effort in IWE (n=300)

	Stro	Ag	Unde	Disa	Stro	To
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Effort	Public	Count	75	25	10	20	20	150
		% of Total	50%	17%	7%	13%	13%	10%
	Private	Count	45	15	15	55	20	150
		% of Total	30%	10%	10%	37%	13%	10%
	Total	Count	120	40	25	75	40	300
		% of Total	40%	13%	09%	25%	13%	10%

Above mentioned table shows that most of the teaching faculty in public sector (50%) strongly agreed that effort towards work is virtue and one of the most important aspect of Islamic work ethics. Teaching faculty of private sector, however showed less percentage towards strong agreement (30%) and more towards disagreement (37%).

Table 4: Cross tabulation of Justice in IWE (n=300)

			Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Justice	Public	Count	70	30	10	20	20	150
		% of Total	47%	20%	7%	13%	13%	10%
	Private	Count	75	50	15	05	05	150
		% of Total	50%	34%	10%	03%	03%	10%
	Total	Count	145	80	25	30	20	300

t							
%	48%	27	08%	11%	06%	10	
of		%				0	
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Table 4 shows that 47% public sector teachers strongly agreed whereas 20% agreed that justice at work place is a vital factor and necessary condition for inculcation of IWE at work place. 50% private sector employees also strongly agreed to this factor of IWE.

Table 5: Cross tabulation of Honesty in IWE (n=300)

			Stro ngly Agr ee	A gr ee	Unde cided	Disa gree	Stro ngly disa gree	T ot al
Hon esty	Pu bli c	C ou nt	90	30	10	10	10	150
		% of To tal	61 %	21 %	06%	06%	06 %	10 %
	Pri vat e	C ou nt	10	15	15	35	75	150
		% of To tal	06 %	10 %	10%	23%	50 %	10 %
	Tot al	C ou nt	100	45	25	45	85	300
		% of To tal	33 %	15 %	08%	15%	28 %	10 %

Table 5 reflects that 61% public sector teachers strongly agreed whereas 21% agreed honesty leads towards self-reliance and respect at work place whereas 50% private sector teaching faculty strongly disagreed towards this viewpoint.

Table6: Cross tabulation of Teamwork in IWE (n=300)

			Stro ngl y Agr ee	A gr ee	Unde cided	Dis agre e	Stro ngl y disa gre e	T ot al
Team	Pu	C	75	25	10	20	20	15

work	Public	Count	50	17	7%	13	13	10
		% of Total	%	%		%	%	0%
	Private	Count	45	15	15	55	20	15
		% of Total	30	10	10%	37	13	10
		% of Total	%	%		%	%	0%
	Total	Count	120	40	25	75	40	30
		% of Total	40	13	09%	25	13	10
		% of Total	%	%		%	%	0%

Above mentioned table shows that most of the teaching faculty in public sector (50%) strongly agreed towards working as team to promote Islamic work ethics at work place. Teaching faculty of private sector, however showed less percentage towards strong agreement (30%) and more towards disagreement (37%).

Table 7: Cross tabulation of Accountability in IWE (n=300)

			Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Accountability	Public	Count	100	20	10	10	10	150
		% of Total	67%	13%	7%	7%	7%	100%
	Private	Count	95	15	15	10	10	150
		% of Total	63%	10%	10%	7%	7%	100%

	% of Total	63%	10%	10%	07%	10%
Total	Count	195	25	25	20	30
	% of Total	65%	08%	08%	07%	10%

Table 7 displays that 67% public sector teachers strongly agreed whereas 13% agreed that accountability is a kind of deposit for the time being utilized at university place and it leads towards self-accountability which becomes highest virtue of IWE. 63% private sector employees also strongly agreed to this subscale of IWE.

Table 8: Cross tabulation of Trustworthiness in IWE (n=300)

Trustworthiness	Public	Count	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
			25	75	05	10	35	150
		% of Total	16%	50%	03%	06%	24%	10%
	Private	Count	15	05	10	25	95	150
		% of Total	10%	03%	06%	16%	64%	10%
	Total	Count	40	80	15	35	130	300
		% of Total	13%	26%	05%	12%	43%	10%

		T ot al				%			
Subscale	M	Public		Private		<i>t</i> - <i>t</i> <i>e</i> <i>s</i> <i>t</i>	<i>P</i> <i>val</i> <i>ue</i>	Cohen <i>'s d</i>	D e c i s i o n
		S D	M	S D	M				
Effort	4	2	1	1	5	0.0 1*	0.75	R e j e c t e d	
				
	2	0	9	0	6				
Justice	3	1	3	1	1	0.0 7	0.39	A c c e p t e d	
				
	3	4	9	9	3				
Honesty	4	1	1	0	4	0.0 2*	0.81	R e j e c t e d	
				
	0	9	8	9	4				
Teamwork	3	1	2	1	5	0.0 1*	0.92	R e j e c t e d	
				
	9	9	0	0	0				
Accountability	4	1	3	1	1	0.0 9	0.58	A c c e p t e d	
				
	0	9	9	9	2				
Trustworthiness	4	1	2	1	4	0.0 0*	0.87	R e j e c t e d	
				
	0	9	2	0	9				

4	9	5	7	8	<i>te</i>
					<i>d</i>

Table 8 reflects that 50% public sector teaching faculty agrees to it that trustworthiness lead to organizational commitment at stands at a high rank in IWE whereas 64% private sector teachers strongly disagreed to it.

Table 9: t-test results comparing responses on IWE subscales by teaching faculty of public and private sector universities (n=300)

* $p < 0.05$

Table 9 shows the results of Independent samples t-test conducted on the responses of public and private sector teaching faculty on IWE. Null hypotheses related to effort (*t-value* = 5.61 at $p = 0.01 < 0.05$), honesty (*t-value* = 4.48 at $p = 0.02 < 0.05$), team work (*t-value* = 5.01 at $p = 0.01 < 0.05$) and trustworthiness (*t-value* = 4.98 at $p = 0.01 < 0.05$) got rejected whereas null hypotheses about justice (*t-value* = 1.34 at $p = 0.07 > 0.05$) and accountability (*t-value* = 1.29 at $p = 0.09 > 0.05$) were accepted. It means that there was no significant difference between the responses of public and private sector teachers about justice and accountability whereas the responses of public and private sector university teachers differed on the sub scales of effort, honesty, team work and trustworthiness.

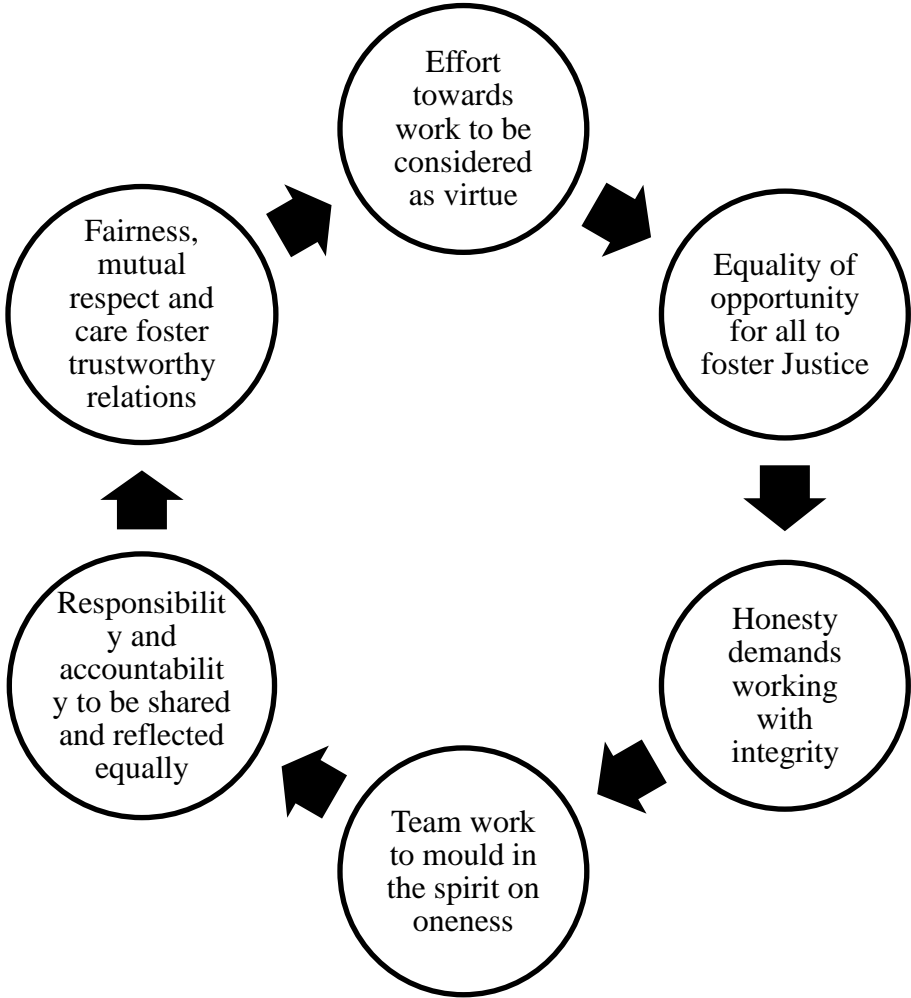
Discussion

The results of this research study show that employees of both sectors are highly sensitive towards the dimensions of Islamic work ethics. Teaching faculty of public and private sector agreed that effort, honesty, team work and trustworthiness play a vital role at work place. Teaching faculty opined that work is virtue and becomes worship, if honest effort is put into it. This finding is in line with the work of Aldulaimi, 2016. Earning one’s livelihood through effort and decent labour is not only our moral duty but is of great value is Islam as well. Our Prophet reported: “Never has anyone eaten a better thing than when he eats of his own hands”. Honesty was another sub scale of the study on which IWE of faculty was explored. It was found that there was no difference significantly in the responses of teachers about honesty at work place. Honesty contains many domains and one of its foremost implications is to impart knowledge to students to the best of one’s ability and capacity. Honesty also implies telling truth, fulfilling promises, taking objective decisions and making objective judgements in teaching (Khalil & Saad, 2009). Cooperation and collaboration is one of the most important principles at work place. Human relations and team work must be encouraged in teaching at higher level. Al-Quran also encourages believers to work collaborately as team, saying that: “*The believers, men and women, are helpers, supporters, friends and protectors of one another*” (09:71). Trustworthiness is another major dimension on which teachers of both sectors strongly agreed that they try to fulfil their commitments at work place and with colleagues. As Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: “*There is no belief for him who is not trustworthy*”. However, respondents of both the sectors differed in their opinions about justice and accountability. Public sector teachers strongly agreed that justice and accountability are important aspects of IWE, whereas private sector teachers’ responses were slightly towards negative side. This may be due to difference in work environments of both sectors. As private sector employees have less job security and they face discriminations and disparities at job (Waseem, 2016). Findings of this study also reflect a difference of opinion among public and

private sector teachers about accountability at work place. Public sector teachers strongly agreed that official responsibilities of teachers are a kind of deposit and wasting of office time is a kind of treason whereas, private sector teachers were not very positive about it. Major reason of this may be lack of motivation and job satisfaction in private sector (Rashid & Rashid, 2012). Quran, 13:11 clearly states: "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of people until they change what is in themselves". So, it is duty of every believer to try to change him/her and improve work ethic behaviour in order to achieve Allah's blessings here and hereafter.

Conclusion and recommendations

This research study filled the gap of exploring Islamic work ethics in Pakistani context in educational institutions. The findings might be helpful for faculty members of public and private sector universities to strengthen work place behaviour according to teachings of Quran and examples set by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. In general, dimensions of Islamic work ethics focus on the relationship among us with our Creator, Allah. The dimensions of IWE delimited in this study gave a microscopic view of Islamic ethical behaviour expected from teachers at their work place. Exploring these dimensions may provide a guideline to universities to improve their administrative practices also. In reality, this study provides an insight to Islamic perspective of work culture. The difference on opinion related to justice and accountability among teachers of both sectors has also highlighted the areas of improvement at work place. Similarly insights and comparisons on the dimensions of effort, justice, honesty, team work, accountability and trustworthiness has served as a microscopic analysis of Islamic work ethics. The study may be significant as it may be replicated to other sectors of economy also including other levels of educational institutions as well. This study may have two dimensional implications for institutions and employees as well. Institutions may use the results to improve work environment and employees may use them for self- evaluation and personal improvement. Furthermore, this study could contribute to the existing literature on Islamic work ethics. Last but not the least, it may be interesting to explore the dimensions of Islamic work ethics on wider samples in different settings including demographic profile such as gender, experience, qualification level and ethnicity. A viable model for implementing and enhancing Islamic work ethics may be as follows:



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