The Effect of Religiosity and Personality on Work Ethics: A Case of Muslim Managers

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Abstract: The study of the Muslim managers’ religiosity, personality and behavior has been underdeveloped. In this study, we examined the impact of religiosity, personality and behavior on Islamic work ethics. We posited that Islamic religiosity impacts on Islamic work ethics, personality and behavior positively. We also hypothesized that personality and behavior impacts on work ethics positively. Data were collected from 253 Muslim managers in FMCG industry in UAE. Data were quantitatively analyzed using structural equation modelling (SEM). Results were in keeping with the model. The level of religiosity however was not found to affect Islamic work ethics directly but through the behavior and personality of Muslim managers. Theoretical implications and managerial ramifications were also discussed.

Keywords: Religiosity, Islamic Personality, Islamic Behaviors, Work Ethics, Islamic Religiosity, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

1. Introduction

Islam has evolved into one of the most powerful forces in today’s political and business arenas. In fact the Muslim communities have been rising steadily up the business agenda of many Western countries. There are about 2.04 billion Muslims world-wide which makes up about 23 percent of the world population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). Due to the economic prosperity of much of this group, the issue of Islam and the Muslim way of doing business has caught the attention of many scholars from both the Muslim and Western spheres (Abuznaid, 2006; Williams & Sharma, 2005). However the majority of the research in Muslim studies falls under the domain of Islamic financial concepts (Choudhury, 2007; Lewis, 2007; Smith, 2002), and Islamic managerial approaches at the macro-level (Ali, 2005; Tayeb, 1997). To date, studies on Muslim managers’ personality and characteristics and the factors that impact on work ethics have been underdeveloped. Specifically we make three contributions. First, as argued by Johnstone et al. (2012), there appears to be limited research that empirically validates the effect of religiosity on managers’ behavior and personality. We responded to this by empirically testing the religiosity of Muslim managers and its effect on their behavior and personality. Second, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first known empirically tested Islamic personality and behavior on Islamic work ethics. We provide insights into understanding the effect of Muslim religiosity, personality and behaviors on work ethics, which could provide better understanding for the non-Muslim and the West to do business with this group.

2. Framework

Religious values and one’s behavior and personality.

Values have been defined by Rokeach (1973, p. 5) as “an enduring belief that a specific mode of construct or end-state of existence is personally or sociably preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end state of existence”. Hofstede (1999) argues that values are culture-specific, never universal; they generally represent what is
desirable and generally are a preference of specific states of affairs over others (Hofstede, 1999). Values have long been considered an important antecedent of individual behaviour (Glew, 2009). Value systems are not permanent, but they, nonetheless are relatively stable over time (Rokeach, 1973). The literature has documented the effects of values system on personality, social systems, individual behavior and work performance, and team behavior and performance (Allport, 1968; Bell, 2007; Schwartz, 1994). There seems to be a general consensus among personal values theorists that one of these sets of values is religious values, or salvation (Rokeach, 1973). Religion is defined as a “set of beliefs, feelings, dogmas and practices that provides an ethical and moral framework for understanding, motivation, and behavior” (King, 2007, p. 104). A given religion is defined by the material and practices of its community of adherents: dogmas, sacred books, rites, worship, sacrament, moral prescription, interdicts and organizations (Johnson et al., 2001).

The relationship between religious values and individual behavior is well established. Weber (1954) argued that religion influences the personality, attitudes, behaviour and productivity of individuals. The effects of religious values on behaviour stem from two main sources. First there are taboos and obligations which people honour (Mokhlis, 2006). For example, Islamic teaching forbids Muslims charging or paying interest (riba); therefore no Islamic firms are permitted to be involved in such a business. This practice illustrates how religion contributes to the formation of culture and norms, attitudes, and value of a society (Al-Habshi & Syed Agil, 1994). Religion is a fundamental element in most cultures. It is inevitably linked to many aspects of human life, including personality and behaviour (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2007; Roccas, et al., 2002; Saroglou, 2002). The impact of religious values on behaviour and personality is not in doubt (Roccas et al., 2002). For example, Saroglou (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of the relationship between religion and the Big Five personality factors and found that religious values were related to conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience. Others have established religious values correlate positively with positive traits such as kindness, compassion and forgiveness (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2007). In contrast, in an empirical study, Wisker (2012) does not find any differences when examining the personality of Muslim and non-Muslim managers. Nonetheless Wisker (2012) acknowledges the limitation of her study; for not measuring the level of religiosity among the managers understood. In another stream, marketing researchers have found that the religious values affect the use of cosmetics, clothing styles, communication approaches, and financial products (Diamond, 2002; Fauziah, Ramayah & Dzuljastr, 2008). Others have also found that religious values affect social and political views, and recruitment and staffing (Abdullah, 1992; Poulsen et al., 1998; Witkowski, 1999). Summarising the argument thus far and drawing on Weber’s (1954) rationalisation theory, we argue that religious values influence the personality and behaviour which in turn affect the work ethics of managers understood.

2.1. Islamic Work Ethics

In Islam, work is considered as ibadah (a religious duty) and jihad (cause of Allah). Work in Islam is also argued as the ‘dedicative effort striving to further self-interest economically, socially and psychologically, to sustain social prestige, to advance society welfare and reaffirm faith’ (Kamaluddin and Ab. Manan, 2010, p. 62). It is a means to safeguard the faith, human self, intellect, posternity and wealth. In this study we borrow the concept of Islamic work ethics (IWE) from Ali (2005) and Ali and Al Owaihan (2008) that defines Islamic work ethics as the orientation toward work – “which is an obligatory activity and virtue in the light of the needs of man and the necessity to establish equilibrium in one’s individual and social life” (Ali, 2005, p. 577). They further conceptualize Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) as having four primary domains; effort, teamwork, transparency-honesty and moral responsible conduct.

Rice’s reflection on Islamic ethics may be useful. She noted that “Islamic ethical system contains specific guidelines ….. derive from the interrelated concept of unity, justice and trusteeship” (1999, p. 347). She elaborated that unity in Islam implies that God is the sole creator of the universe whereas people are equal partners or that each person is a brother or sister to the other. Consequently, translated this into business means; cooperation, equality of effort and opportunity are the root of Islamic work ethics. In the acquisition of wealth and business dealings, Muslims must uphold promises and fulfil contracts (Rice, 1999).

Islam also encourages consistency and passion for excellence in pursuing work effort. Being creative is also encouraged in Islam and is considered as part of Islamic work ethics. The second domain in Islamic Work Ethics is a teamwork. Islam promotes teamwork and cooperation to excel to achieve the organizational goal (Ali and Al-Owaihan, 2008). Although teamwork is promoted, it is worth to note that Islam also inspires its followers to be self-reliance. A manager should be rewarded according to his achievement that is aligned to the organizational objectives and goals. Being transparent and honest in all dealings in trade and business is the third domain demanded by Islamic work ethics (Ali, 2005). Finally Ali (2005) suggested that morally responsible conduct or trustworthy as the fourth domain of Islamic work ethics.

2.2. Islamic Values and Their Impact on Personality and Work Ethics

The crux of Islamic belief is that there is only one God, Allah and that Muhammad is his messenger (prophet). The followers of Islam are accountable to Allah and believe that their behavior and deeds in this life will affect their treatment in the afterlife (Tsaliks & Lassar, 2009). The holy book, the Quran, and the Sunnah (the recorded sayings and deeds of Muhammad) provide the guidelines and teachings of Islamic law (Rice, 1999). Islam is not presented merely as a religion but as a way of life (Ali, 2005; Chapra, 1992; Simbar, 2008).

The Quran and Sunnah provide ethical guidelines on the
concepts of unity, justice and trusteeship. The concept leads to cooperation and equal partnership in business transactions, while the concept of trusteeship emphasizes sustainable development and the discouragement of conspicuous consumption (Tsalkis & Lassar, 2009). Islamic law also provides comprehensive guidelines on business management and trading (Ali, 2005). For example, Islam supplies practical socio-economic guidelines for participation in business, which includes detailed coverage of specific economic variables such as interest, zakat (taxation), circulation of wealth, fair trade, and consumption (Rice, 1999). In addition, a goal of Islam is to practice moderation, and lead a good life that stresses brotherhood and socio-economic justice as well, requiring a balance of both material and spiritual needs (Farooqi, 2006). Moreover, Islam demands that its followers take care of the basic needs of the poor. For example, it is unlawful to undercut another’s price (whether that person be Muslim or non-Muslim) during a stipulated option to cancel period” (Rice, 1999, p.349). However Islamic teachings reject absolute equality because that concept disregards need, merit and contributions.

In a study of the leadership styles of Muslim managers in Middle East, Ali (2009) found that although the majority of the managers preferred a consultative style, a significant number mixed this style with an autocratic style that the non-Muslim Western managers tended to avoid. He argues, these leadership styles might have been influenced by Islam’s historical domination of politics. Several other studies uncovered positive relationships between Islamic values and managerial behaviour and decision making (Abdullah, 1992; Manshor, Jusoh & Simun, 2003). For example, Manshor et al. (2003) found Muslim managers’ behaviour and decision-making processes were influenced by Islamic values. They showed a strong preference for Muslim candidates in recruiting new staff, which the authors interpreted as attributable to the managers being influenced by the concept of brotherhood in Islamic teachings. Based on the preceding discussion, we conclude that Islamic values play an influential role in societies where Muslims develop their own distinctive orientation towards all aspects of life, and that these orientations, in turn, profoundly influence the daily behavior of Muslims. Therefore we posit the following;

H1: The level of Islamic religiosity affects Muslim managers’ behavior and personality positively.

H2: The level of Islamic religiosity affects Muslim managers’ work ethics positively

2.3. Personality and Behavior

Islamic literature maintains that “human personality and behaviour is shaped by upbringing, social and economic constraints, knowledge, and perceived opportunities” (Ali, 2005, p. 26). Although the Holy Quran does not include the word personality literally (Al-Ammar et al., 2012), based on a thorough analyses of al Quran, Al-Ghazali (1995) identifies that human personality is composed of four spiritual domains; (1) Qalb (heart), roh (spirit), nafs (psyche) and a’ql (intellect). These domains are dynamically interrelated and determines of a spiritual well-being of an individual. Similarly Ali (2005) argues that Islam identifies four levels of personality: ‘Sawala’ (a passion for temptations), ‘Ammara’ (a prone-to-evil psyche), ‘Lawama’ (self-reproaching) and ‘Mutamainna’ (the righteous). These levels are in a state of flux and dynamism.

Abu Raiya (2012) summarises the concept of personality as having eight domains; (1) Nafs which stands for the whole person personality and encloses other structures, (2) Nafs ammara which is the devilish nature and the strongest force within nafs, (3) Al-Nafs al-lawamah which is the moralistic entity, (4) Roh - serves as the source of revelation, creation and inspiration, (5) A’ql – the angelic nature and mere conscious component of system, (6) Qalb – heart of nafs or the totality of nafs, (7) Al-Nafs al-mutamainnah – desired outcome of the dynamic interplay between the different constituents of nafs and, (8) Al-Nafs al-madrid’s – a pathological states resulted from a terribly conflicted and sealed qalb. Abu Raiya’s (2012) conceptualisation of personality is quite similar with that of Ali (2005). Others view personality of a Muslim as representing the manifestation of one’s religious worldview in amalan saleh, the righteous works (Annalakshmi & Abeer, 2011). These researchers, Annalakshmi and Abeer (2011) stresses further that the aspect of a Muslim personality is influenced by his/her akhlaq Islamiyyah which is the manifestation of tawhidic worldview in one everyday action. Another researchers, Al-Ammar, Ahmed and Nordin (2012) through their empirical study, examining the Muslim moral character and personality of 312 Muslim Yemeni conclude that a moral character and a personality of Muslim is practiced through the cooperation or teamwork, striving with wealth and self, reconciliation, providing voluntary charity, being truthfulness, fulfilling promises, forgiveness and steadfastness.

To conclude, there are five work-related values that are deemed important to Muslims personality: (1) equality under God, (2) individual responsibility within a framework of cooperation with others, (3) a view that people in position of power should treat subordinates kindly, as if their
subordinates are their brothers and sisters, (4) a certain fatalism, but also a recognition of personal choice, and (5) encouragement of consultation and of acquiring knowledge [intelligence] for the decision-making process (Ali, 2005; Tayeb, 1997). If a Muslim personality is influenced by his/her akhlaq Islamiyyah which is the manifestation of tawhidic worldview in one everyday action, perhaps the effects of personality and behaviour of Muslim managers who has high degree of Islamic religiosity would differ from those who has lower degree of Islamic religiosity. Therefore it is fair to argue that Muslim personality and behaviour impacts on his/her work ethics positively. Hence the following hypothesis:

H3: Muslim managers’ personality and behavior affects work ethics positively

3. Methodology

Data were collected from middle Muslim managers in the marketing industry in UAE. The survey was distributed to 1320 account managers through email in December 2012, drawn randomly from the national trade directories. Subsequently 253 usable replies were received, yielding a 19.2% response rate. Twenty randomly selected non-responding managers were contacted by telephone to directly ascertain reasons for non-response. This revealed that the main reasons were (1) ineligibility, such as being a non-Muslim, or (2) time constraints which prevented participation in the survey. The survey measures used established scales. The scale included a total of 50 items; 28 items addressing Islamic personality, 17 items addressing Islamic work ethics and 5 items addressing Islamic religiosity. The possibility of non-response bias was examined by using Armstrong and Overton’s (1974) guidelines. A number of t-tests were performed which indicated that there was no significant differences (.05 level) between early and late respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor Loadings</th>
<th>Communalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IR 1 – I use the lessons from the Quran and Hadith in my daily life.</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR 2 – I pray five compulsory prayers everyday</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR 3 – I do not pay zakat regularly (item is reversed)</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR 4 – I fast a month during the month of Ramadhan</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR 5 – I started saving money for hajj since my early days</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determinant</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy</td>
<td>.794</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To measure Islamic personality, we used the self-rating Muslim personality scale; MCMP (Moral Character of Muslim Personality) developed by Al Ammar et al. (2012).
The scale has eight subscales; “cooperation”, “striving with wealth and self”, “reconciliation”, “voluntary charity”, “truth”, “fulfilling promises”, “forgiveness”, and “steadfastness”. These were measured on a 5-point Likert. There are 28 items in total. Table 2 presents the scale reliabilities for the MCMP (Muslim personality) sub-constructs.

Islamic work ethics was measured via seventeen items from IWE revised scale developed by Ali (2001; 2005). This was measured on a 5-point Likert scale. However we deleted two items “IWE 5 Producing more than enough to meet one personal needs contribute to the prosperity of society as a whole” and “IWE 12 – Creative work is a source of happiness and accomplishment” because they had low factor loadings 0.41 and.39 respectively. The scale also proved to be adequately reliable by its coefficient alpha of.83. Since the study is not interested in examining the impact of work ethics items separately, we have parcelled 15 items into five items. We adopted the ‘item-to-construct balance’ parceling technique proposed by Little et al. (2002) where items were parcelled according to their factor loadings. The rationale behind this approach is ‘to derive parcels that are equally balanced in term of their difficulty and, intercept and slope’ (Little et al., 2002, p. 166). Table 4 presents factor loadings for IWE items for the sample. The results are all substantial and statistically significant.

We used SEM (structural equation modelling) to analyze the regression statistical model. The baseline model consists of the following variables: the independent variables (Islamic Religiosity); the mediating variable (Islamic Personality); and dependent variables of Islamic work ethics. We first examined the measurement model by conducting CFA on 3 latent variables and 17 indicators (comprised of 5 indicators for Islamic Religiosity, 8 indicators for Islamic Personality (We have parcelled the items according to sub-constructs), 17 indicators which I have parcelled into 5 for Islamic Work Ethics). A summary of the baseline measurement model is depicted in Table 3 and Figure 2 shows the final Measurement Model.

4. Result

We conducted several preliminary analyses to determine the possible differences in demographic variables (e.g. gender, age, experience, and educational background). It is worth noted that the majority of respondents are male and most of them held a bachelor degree. The majority of them fall between the age group of 31 to 45 years old. Detailed information about the demographic profiles of the respondents is summarized in Table 5. Table 6 presents the means, standard deviations and correlations between variables for the sample. Several interesting characteristics of the descriptive data are noteworthy. Interestingly, the mean value for all domains were more than 3 with standard deviation between.37 to.77 indicating that Muslim managers under studied regarded Islamic religion as an important element and their behavior and personality are correlated by the values that they believe in. Islamic religiosity is correlated strongly with three personality subscales; voluntary charity ($r =.47, p < 0.01$), truthfulness ($r = 0.44, p < 0.01$) and forgiveness ($r =.42, < 0.01$). It is worth noting this observation is consistent with previous empirical studies such as Manshor et al. (2003) and Abdullah (1992) who found Muslim managers’ behavior and decision-making processes were influenced by Islamic values. The findings of the descriptive analyses for this study is also consistent with Ali’s study - the last level of Islamic personality; mutamainna where the person in this level is completely in tune with all the values outlined by Islamic teachings and does not show any doubt in knowing the zone of righteousness and wrongfulness (Ali, 2005). Figure 3 shows the results of the regression effects between variables.

**Table 5. Demographic Profile.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>253</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master Degree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>253</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Group</td>
<td>19-25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51 +</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>253</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Table 6. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations between Variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Islamic Religiosity</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Work Ethics</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cooperation</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Wealth and Self</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Reconciliation</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Voluntary Charity</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Truthfulness</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Fulfilling Promises</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Forgiveness</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.27*</td>
<td>.38*</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Steadfastness</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.01, *p < 0.05.

5. Discussion

The Islamic religiosity – Islamic personality and behaviors relationship is relatively easy to interpret. Consistent with Hypothesis One, \( H_1 \) – The level of Islamic religiosity affects Muslim managers’ behavior and personality positively), the Islamic religiosity has a positive impact on Muslim managers’ personality. This finding aligns with several meta-analyses such as Ali (1992), Johnstone et al. (2012) and King (1990). Since personality have been conceptualized as a construct composed of a relatively stable temperament that structures how individuals perceive stimuli, which in turn influences how they consistently respond to their environment, it is fair to state spiritually and more religious individuals are more stable physically and mentally (King, 1990) and the personality is thus arguably able to cope with organizational demand and changes. This phenomenon clarifies the rationale behind the current study’s findings. This study has seen that the level of Islamic religiosity impacts on a teamwork, their truthfulness in workplace, and how they could easily move on and forgive. Perhaps this is not a surprising finding due to the endorsement of the Islamic principles and values. The study has reiterated that strong commitment and hard work should be the tenet for work value of a Muslim. These findings are also aligned with Ali’s (1992) who claims that “Islamic teaching places emphasis on human dignity, loyalty and hard work” (p, 516). Another rationale behind the study finding that is worth mentioning is that Quranic model of personality is dynamic (Abu-Raiya, 2012). If personality is a dynamic domain, an individual with high level of Islamic religiosity could then easily influence his/her personality and character. This study also found that Islamic religiosity impacts strongly on voluntary charity positively through the indirect effect \( r = .68, p < 0.05 \), cooperation or teamwork \( r = .53, p < 0.05 \), truthfulness \( r = .52, p < 0.05 \), forgiveness \( r = .58, p < 0.05 \) and fulfilling promises at \( r = .44, p < 0.05 \). This result affirms Brammer, William and Zinkin’s (2007) study about religion and attitudes toward social responsibility. They found that the
work ethics. Therefore academics and practitioner have to be cautious in generalising the personality, character and work ethics of a so called Muslim as it differs from one individual to others.

5.1. Managerial Implication

The prominence of the Islamic values and the influence of Quran and Hadith in the lives of Muslims especially the more spiritual ones cannot be misjudged. It definitely stimulates partially at least the way they think, speak and conceive life (as in personality and character) which in turn influences their dealings in trade and business (as in business work ethics) as seen in this research findings. This has several managerial implications. Assessing cultural and sub-cultural issues in Muslim countries could prove a challenge for the multi-national firms. Firms, and especially international based firms, should be aware of the cultural background of the Muslims and thus tailor their business cultures to meet those needs. Our research has provided some insights into Islamic perspectives on business ethics which is little known in the West. The research findings also provide some knowledge of Islamic philosophy in order to help foreign firms to do business in Muslim cultures. Trust and friendship need to be established prior to developing any business trade and often this is developed slowly. Therefore international based firms need to be extremely patient. Additionally foreign firms could employ local agent and partner in the process of establishing this relationship.

Foreign executives also need to observe other Islamic teachings. For example Muslims celebrate Eid fitr. It is the end of marking the holy month Ramadhan. During the month of Ramadhan all Muslims are required to fast from dawn to dusk for the duration of a month. The restaurants and cafes that cater for Muslims are closed during the day. Additionally, Muslims will not tolerate with activities such as gambling, alcohol, or pork-based industries and they cannot indulge in speculation (Mastor et al., 2000), and therefore these sorts of possessions and activities should be avoided when dealing with Muslims worldwide. To the extreme, countries like Saudi, Kuwait and Iran ban the import of these products. In responding to such cultural needs, firms should supply eating places that sell only halal food. The halal and non-halal food should completely be separated; from the process of preparation to presentation at the table. This also applies to any function that involves Muslim employees. Additionally, firms should also provide a praying room for the Muslim employees to perform their prayers. It is advisable that the lunch break coincides with afternoon praying time to allow them perform their prayers. Despite the hot weather in most part of Middle East, Africa and South
East Asia where the majority of Muslims are, all Muslim employees worldwide, would appreciate non-revealing attire. With regards to recruitment and training, it is essential for firms to acknowledge these needs while also meeting the diverse cultural needs of the market. Several researchers had indicated that Muslim respondents better to productivity increases if they saw benefits accruing not only to the organization but also to their family, community and nation. They value hard work, diligence, pragmatism, wealth or prosperity, harmony and risk taking.

5.2. Limitation

This study has several limitations. First, the study does not differentiate between the sunni and shia Muslim. Others might argue the values, lifestyle and social attitudes between the two groups differ. Nonetheless the results of the study are likely robust to the population of more spatially integrated Muslims in UAE. Second, the study does not regress the effect of Muslim personality subscales separately and the effect of religiosity on them separately and directly. It will be interesting to see the effect of the Muslim personality sub-constructs on Islamic work ethics and also the effect of religiosity on them separately and directly. However, this can be the work for future research. On the methodological front, the study has parcelled the fifteen items of Islamic work ethics (IWE) construct into five items. Since this study is not interested at looking at the effect of IWE item separately, this process may only establish a minor imitation. Finally, this study measures religiosity, personality, and work ethics through self-reported. Managers’ perception self-reported measures can be endangered to various distortions, including the faking of answers and elements of bias. This measure however seemed particularly appropriate as indicators of religiosity, personality and work ethics is this context is from the managers’ perception. In addition past studies have reported that self-reported measures do not demonstrate any particular upward bias. Hence, the use of self-reported measures in this study may constitute only a minor limitation.

References


**Biography**

Dr. Zazli Lily Wisker is an Assistant Professor currently serving at American University of the Middle East (AUM) since September 2012. She received her PhD in Marketing Management from the University of Waikato, New Zealand in 2011. Her research interests and publications center on sales management, emotional intelligence, personality, cross cultural marketing and branding. She has also given numerous invited talks; as key note speakers and in tutorials.

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