

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Impact of Perceived Organizational Politics on Employee Work Engagement: The Moderating Role of Islamic Work Ethics

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**Abstract:** Organizational politics is an inescapable and unavoidable portion of any organization. Literature suggested expanding the understanding of Perceived Organizational Politics (POP), and further, individual factors like Work engagement, to explore the moderating role of Islamic Work ethics (IWE). This study focuses on the impact of perceived organizational Politics (POP) on employee work engagement (EWE), and the moderating role of Islamic Work Ethics between Perceived Organizational Politics and Employee Work Engagement. Preliminary data were attained from personnel working in public sector organizations in Pakistan. The Purposive sampling technique was applied and data were recorded with a time-lagged approach (one month apart). A field study of 239 employees nested in 9 different organizations was conducted. Linear regression was used to test the proposed hypotheses. The results revealed a negative relation between POP and EWE. Furthermore, when IWE was introduced as a moderator, the relation between POP and EWE was found moderated for higher IWE. This study brings important contributions to the organizations. Assimilating IWE as resources in the job place, management will observe the utilization of resources and the level of engagement. By adopting IWE, employees will mitigate the negative behavior.

**Keywords:** Perceived organizational politics, work engagement, IWE

**JEL Classification Codes:** M12, M54

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## 1 Introduction

Irrespective of the fact that organizations have transformed into less official and more open entities (Friedman, 2006), organizational politics is an inescapable and unavoidable portion of any organization (Pfeffer, 2013). Organizational politics is considered a prevalent phenomenon and almost 88% of the top managers have reported its existence (Buchanan, 2008). Organizational Politics (OP) can be defined as “the organization values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing” (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986, p. 501) and is a communal inspiration that forms the behavior in a shape to exploit one’s interest on the expenses of the other (Miller, Rutherford, & Kolodinsky, 2008). The way individuals in organizations, observe organizational politics and its inference has been specified by the perception of Organizational Politics (POP) and has been stated as the idiosyncratic appraisals by individuals about the degree to which the colleagues or supervisors validate self-interest in the workplace (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992).

Although research in this area has been extended promptly, gaps persist. Ample studies had focus on job outcomes like job satisfaction, job performance, turnover, organizational commitment and decreased productivity (Treadway et al., 2004; Miller, Rutherford, & Kolodinsky, 2008; Kroon, Van Selm, Hoeven, & Vliegthart, 2018). Such outcomes are relevant to overall organizational success, and the necessity to cover more outcomes allied with POP is required, for example, work engagement and creative behavior through which competitive advantage can be gained (Coyle-Shapiro and Parzefall, 2008; Parzefall and Hakonen, 2010). Organizations can respond quickly to the dynamic changes by engaged and creative employees (Choi, 2007; Marinova, Moon, & Van Dyne, 2010) and the understanding of such factors, that hamper such urgent behavior, is vital (Agarwal & Bhargava, 2014; Marinova, Peng, Lorinkova, Van Dyne & Chiaburu, 2015). Fastened with the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 2001), this study examines the effect of POP on work engagement. It is suggested that acquired resources will be utilized to gain more resources, but when there is the perception of politics, the employees will lose the resources and thus, would not be able to invest and gain more resources. Early loss of resources is considered a future loss.

Islam is the second-largest Religion (Minhat & Dzolkainaini, 2016). Furthermore, 23.5% of the world population is consisted of Muslims (Johnson & Grim, 2013) and is growing at a rate 1.5 times quicker than the overall population of the world. Similarly, due to the diversity in organizations, there is pressure on researchers to discover religious factors that contribute to business performance (Eastman & Santoro, 2009).

Islamic Work Ethics is a system of philosophies based on the Qur’an and hadith regarding work and effort (Ahmad & Owoyemi, 2012). IWE is based on the teaching of Islam, Quraan, and the Sunnah of our Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) (Ali & Al-Owaihah, 2008). Quraan Makes it clear that “Muhammad is the last messenger of Allah, and Allah knows everything” (33:40). The life of Muhammad (SAWW) is a complete guide for human beings. The ideologies and practices are collective and are pertinent everywhere (Minhat & Dzolkarnaini, 2016). Thus, those who embrace Islam, and Islamic teachings are seen as being lawful (Beekun & Badawi, 2005). Research scholars have discerned IWE from other religious work ethics (Ali & Al-Owaihah, 2008).

Though, individuals with an IWE are anticipated to discontinue unlawful activities via their ideology that Allah watches them all the time. Thus, employees’ behavior is obligated by Islamic law (Khan, Abbas, Gul, & Raja, 2015). The rough and tough routine does

not matter but the Islamic beliefs and standards as compared to man-made ethics while working (Javed, Bashir, Rawwas, & Arjoon, 2017). The main focus is on the compulsion to be engaged in economic activity (Yousef, 2000a), similarly, purposeless doings are firmly proscribed (Yousef, 2000b). Undeniably, IWE pressurizes employees to exercise positive behavior and cooperation with colleagues. Quraan states (Cited in Wahab, 2014) that Individuals have nothing except what they endure for, therefore Muslims are encouraged to endure toward objectives and sustain involvement. Muslims are constantly emphasized to treat others as you would like to be treated. Several verses from Quraan mention that coping mechanisms are advised by religious beliefs, so employees can handle stressful situations (Neubert, Dougherty, Park, & Griebel, 2014; Ten Kate, de Koster, & van der Waal, 2017). Khan Kaewsaeng-on, Zia, Ahmed, and Khan (2020) recommended POP as stressor in the workplace that triggers negative behavior. In this regard, Quraan elaborates; "Oh believer, look for assistance with persistent determination and prayer, for Allah is with the people who constantly endure" (Qur'an, 2:153); and "And your Lord says: 'Call on Me; I will answer your (prayer)'" (Qur'an, 40:60).

Studies, exploring the moderating role which explains the said mechanism are few and specifically to POP and work outcomes (Meisler & Vigoda-Gadot, 2014). Abbas, Raja, Darr, and Bouckenoghe, (2012) explored indecisive results between POP and job outcomes, and the relationship may be moderated by other factors (Miller, Rutherford, & Kolodinsky, 2008). In this regard, Colquitt et al., (2006) suggested exploring the moderating role of personal factors. Similarly, Chang, Rosen, & Levy (2009) projected individual factors that may moderate this relationship. Furthermore, Khan et al., (2015) and Javed et al., (2017) recommended further studies regarding the moderating role of IWE between stressors (e.g., POP) and job outcomes (e.g., work engagement). Recently, Khan et al., (2020) suggested that individual factors (e.g., IWE) should be measured as a moderator between POP and other job outcomes. Similarly, Nwachukwu et al., (2021) recommended exploring the moderating role of religious aspects and work engagement. Further, the researchers have called for generalizability of the studies in the Asian context (Tusi, Nifadkar, & Ou, 2007; Rawwas, Javed, & Iqbal, 2018) and thus, this study will fill the gap regarding the research studies in non-western countries like Pakistan. Pakistan has 97% the Muslims (Khalid, Bashir, Khan, Abbas, 2018) and is highly suitable for the research study in IWE context. Following these recommendations, it was pursued to expand the literature on POP, work engagement, and further, individual factors like IWE to explore the moderating role of IWE.

The results of the study would contribute to the literature on POP, work engagement, and IWE. This study expends a buffering role of IWE to condense the unfavorable effects of POP and their involvement in negative behavior. It infers that employees will use IWE as a positive aspect and would avoid undesired behavior. Thus, IWE may be used for reassuring commitment, devotion, and engagement in their workplaces. Consequently, employees experiencing POP will ignore the negative behavior and will more be inclined toward work engagement in the presence of IWE. In case of a lower score on IWE, the managers may remind the virtues of ethics. When the employees find concern regarding their jobs, they will be engaged in healthy tendencies. The arguments offer a sound logic to undertake that IWE would heighten or alleviate the link between POP and work Engagement. The current study would contribute to the COR theory by enlightening credible evidence of the IWE construct in terms of employee motivation. IWE as assimilation of a resource in the workplace will result in positive work behavior (e.g. work engagement) and mitigate the adverse effects of POP.

## 2 Literature review

### 2.1 POP and Work Engagement

Engagement is flexible, realized by participating corporal, intellectual and responsive robustness in the workplace (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003), and can be defined as the “an optimistic, gratifying, work-related state of mind categorized by robustness, devotion, and absorption (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). COR theory is being used to judge engagement (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008). The advantageous job place inspires feelings of energy and eagerness (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Similarly, motivating workers to participate and perform their duties properly (Hobfoll, 2001). Performance gauges and rewards in any organization associations apparent saw to be dogmatic are unsure and ambiguous (Rosen, Furst, & Blackburn, 2006). Acts of preferences, discriminating rewards, and promotions result in anxiety, due to which employees are disposed to lose resources than attainment and employees preserve resources by extraction from normal roles removal in such situations (Kahn, 1990).

Similarly, when employees observe that the environment they are working in is highly political and the powerful workers get the maximum benefits, they experience psychological and physiological withdrawal from their normal duties (Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, & Toth, 1997). POP is a voluntary behavior, which is executed to gain personal goals rather than organizational (Johnson, Rogers, Stewart, David, & Witt, 2017; Ullah, Hasnain, Khalid, & Aslam, 2019). POP causes the process of energy reduction and employees try to provide the assigned demands, raising the psychological process, and thus the exhaustion of resources is caused (Crawford et al., 2010). Considering the effects of POP on employees’ behavioral reactions, it is crucial to understand the permeating effects (Crawford et al., 2019). The level of satisfaction will be lower when employees perceive that the organization does not follow the fair process in awarding rewards. Such perception damage work outcomes caused by POP (Munyon, Summers, Thompson, & Ferris 2015; Wiltshire, Bourdage, & Lee 2014). In organizations with higher POP, employees feel helpless and they are easily targeted by their colleagues, resulting in the deviation from actual job duties (Rosen, Harris & Kacmar, 2019). Similarly, POP triggers job anxiety and lower satisfaction (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2010). In nutshell, it has resulted that POP correlates negatively with work engagement (Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010; Karatepe, 2013). Thus:

*H1: POP negatively affects work Engagement.*

### 2.2 Islamic Work Ethics and Employee Engagement

In Islam, work-related duties and responsibilities are considered a virtue (Rurkkhum 2010). The reward regarding good and punishment for wrongdoings will be given by Allah in the hereafter (Rizk, 2008). IWE is a direction that encourages and forms the contribution and involvement at work (Ali & Al Owaihan 2008). Since 2000, IWE has gained momentum as a separate research variable and its association with work attitude and behavior in Islamic societies (Ali 1988, 1992; Yousef 2000a). IWE as a criterion variable has been studied with different job outcomes and was found directly related, for example, organizational effectiveness and prosperity (Ali and Al-Owaihan 2008), OCB and

Knowledge sharing behavior (Murtaza et al., 2016), job satisfaction (Tufail, Shahzad, Gul & Khan, 2017), organizational commitment (Batool, Gul & Shahzad, 2013), Job Performance (Khan et al., 2015), and work engagement (Salemabad et al., 2015). Additionally, for a better understanding of this phenomenon more empirical evidences are required to be added to IWE literature (Mohammad, Quoquab, & Salam, 2015). Thus,

*H2: Islamic Work Ethics is positively associated with engagement at work.*

### 2.3 The moderating role of IWE

Exploring latent moderating variables help in describing the circumstances of different relationships (Chen & Jin 2014; Park, Song, & Lim, 2016). IWE combined with POP may affect the relationship. Researchers have emphasized the way individuals behave explicitly. Ethics in the Islamic context is a "set of ethical standards associated with work and that discriminates right from wrong" (Beekun, 1997). IWE has its roots in Quraan (Kumar & Che Rose, 2012) and for Muslims, is measured as a religious compulsion (Kamaluddin & Manan 2010). Islam dampens employees from deviant behavior and reassures hard work and has been stated in Quraan: "Man will not get anything unless he works hard" (Qur'an, 53:39). The concept of consistency is also covered by hard work; it clears that employees who accept IWE will work hard to attain goals. This notion has been stated by Muhamad (SAWW): "perform pure deeds, earnestly and tolerably and know that terrible deeds will not allow you to enter paradise which foremost deed to Allah is persistence even if is little (Bukhari, 472). In the Islamic view, everyone is responsible for what he/she performs. Hence, IWE inspires workers to illustrate the anticipated affirmative behavior (Abu-Saad, 2003). Work is taken as a cause of happiness (Yousef, 2001a) and the best person is a person who performs well in accomplishing targets (Ali, 1988). Muslims consider work as a virtue (Ali & Al-Owaihah, 2008). Such ideologies prohibit employees from negative behavior.

According to the literature based on Islamic teaching, it has been observed that IWE shields the deleterious impact of POP on employees' behavior. Regarding POP within the context of an organization, negative feelings are evolved and thus the negative behavior. Though, such behavior may fluctuate for employees concerning IWE. Overall, Islam defines boundaries for individuals to work properly and describes the consequences of good and bad deeds. Furthermore, Good deeds have been promised to reward and bad are confirmed to have punishment in this world and the life hereafter. In this regard, Qur'an says: "Whoever craving honor, and afterward all distinctions have a place with Allah. Toward Him rise pure words, and the honest work He intensifies. And the serious torture is for those who plan evils. And the plotting of these will decrease" (Qur'an 35:10). Thus, considering the reward and punishment for good and bad deeds, the employees with IWE disclosed positive behavior towards their jobs. IWE proscribed employees from indulging in unproductive work outcomes (Yousef, 2001; Ali and Al-Owaihah, 2008).

Despite the dysfunctional political practices in an organization, an employee who follows IWE has been observed to set on working hard and generating positive outcomes (Khan et al., 2015). It has also been found that religious beliefs influence the work values of individuals (Parboteeah, Paik, & Cullen, 2009). Consequently, employees with stronger IWE will hold positive emotions, and thus their level of engagement will be enhanced while in the case of lower IWE, employees will experience stress, lesser hard work, and work engagement will be affected. Employees experiencing POP will be slightly

persuaded to the job. In such a case, employees with higher IWE will not be affected by POP and would be motivated. In contrast, workers having low IWE will be more affected by POP, and thus work engagement will be mitigated. So, it is presumed that IWE will moderate POP and work engagement relationship. Thus:

*H3: IWE will moderate the negative relationship between POP and work engagement such that the relationships will be stronger for higher IWE.*

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Sample and Data Collection Procedure

Quantitative data aimed to study the impact of POP on work engagement and the moderating role of IWE were collected in Public sector organizations in Pakistan. Before circulating the survey, prior permission was granted from the concerned Head. Moreover, permission from employees was also approved to provide the data and fill out the questionnaires. Data were obtained from the gazetted officials in different government departments. These departments included Law Department (16.8%), Finance (23.11%), Transport (9.14%), Environment (11.2%), Establishment and Administration (12.15%), Health (11.19%), Human Rights (8.87%), Education (5.12%) and Home Department (2.42%). The Purposive sampling technique was adopted. The Purposive sampling technique identifies the population parameters (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and allows researchers to identify and contact the potential respondents (Tongco, 2007; Tufail, Sultan & Anum, 2019).

To cope with the single-source data collection bias, data were obtained in time lags. Data regarding POP and IWE were collected at time 1 and regarding work engagement was at time 2 (one month apart). Questionnaires were distributed containing cover letters specifying the aim of the study and ensuring confidentiality. In the first part of the survey, each respondent provided the demographic information and in the second part responses related to study variables were recorded.

Among the disseminated 500 questionnaires, 261 were returned. Data were cross-checked for outliers and to clean the collected data, incomplete questionnaires were excluded. With a response rate of 62.81%, 239 questionnaires were believed fit for further analysis. Demographic information yielded that 84% of the employees were male. Recording the age groups, 64.2% of the employees were in the age group 30-40 years. In terms of qualification, 62% were holding Master Degree, and 27.6% were having 18 years of education. Concerning job experience, most of the respondents (69.6%) were in their mid carrier.

#### 3.2 Research Instrument

Instruments for data collection were adopted from previous studies. Responses regarding POP were recorded on 6 items scale developed by Kacmar and Carlson (1994). Work engagement was assessed by 9 items UWES (Utretch Work Engagement Scale) developed by Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-roma, and Bakker (2002), lastly, for IWE, a 17 items scale developed by Ali (1992) was utilized. All the items were on 5 points Likert scale.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 One way ANOVA

Qualification was taken as a control variable, as it was found significant.

**Table 1: One way ANOVA**

S. No		F	Sig
1	Age	0.123	0.87
2	Qualification	4.22	0.02
3	Job Experience	0.69	0.76

### 4.2 Common Method Bias

To check out the common method variance, the data were tested by the Harman test. The single factor was found to be accountable for 41.23% variance, less than the threshold value of 50%, confirming no issue. Further, the average variance extracted (AVE) and mean shared variance (MSV) were calculated for the discriminant validity. The AVE values were found higher than 0.5, and composite reliability (CR) for constructs was above 0.7. These values confirmed convergent validity.

**Table 2: Convergent and Discriminant Validity**

S.No	Variable	CR	AVE	MSV
1	POP	0.89	0.71	0.46
2	Work Engagement	0.91	0.7	0.47
3	IWE	0.93	0.68	0.43

Table 3 specifies the preliminary results. The coefficient between POP and work engagement was found -0.43 at  $p < 0.05$ . Similarly, the coefficient between IWE and work engagement was reported positive i.e. 0.37 at  $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 3: Means, Standard Deviation, Correlation and reliabilities**

		Mean	SD	1	2	3
1	POP	2.82	0.89	-0.85		
2	Work engagement	3.12	0.78	-0.43**	-0.84	
3	IWE	3.28	1.08	-0.14**	0.37**	-0.91

N = 239; Cronbach's alpha presented in parenthesis.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Direct and moderation analyses have been displayed in Table 4. It is clear that the POP has inverse relation with work engagement ( $\beta = -0.41$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ). H2 of the study proposed the direct relation between IWE and work engagement ( $\beta = 0.27$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ) both hypotheses

were supported. H3 was to explore the moderating role of IWE between POP and work engagement. Before conducting the moderating analysis, the tolerance statistics were analyzed and were found 0.94, above the threshold value of 0.10 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). The VIF calculated value was 1.09 and was not above the maximum value of 5 (Chatterjee & Price, 1991). These values negated the multicollinearity issue. Moderating analysis was carried out by following Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003). The control variable, i.e. qualification was entered in step 1. In the following step POP and IWE were entered. And in the last step, the interactive term (POP X IWE) was entered. It was found that IWE moderates the proposed relationship. Change in  $R^2$  confirmed the moderating impact. The change in  $R^2$  was found 0.15 and was significant.

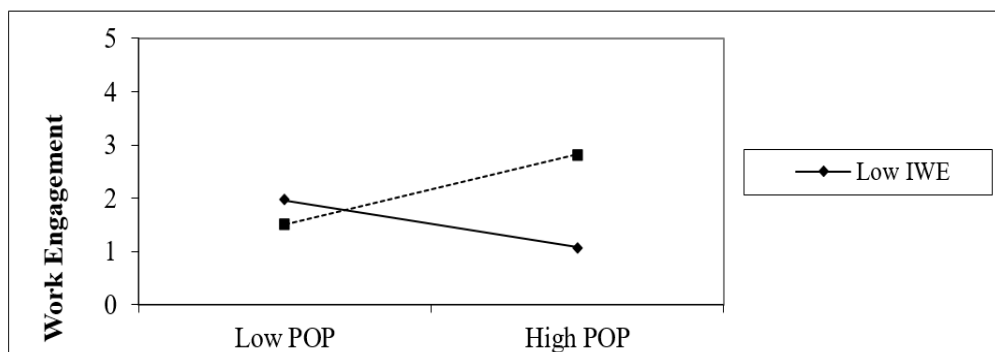
**Table 4: Moderation Analysis**

	Work Engagement		
	B	R2	R2
<i>Step 1</i>			
Qualification		0.001**	
<i>Step 2</i>			
POP	-0.41**		
IWE	0.37**	0.64**	
<i>Step 3</i>			
POP x IWE	0.19**	0.49**	0.15**

N = 239,

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)



**Figure 1: Plot for the interaction**

Figure 1 shows a plot for the interaction. The slope plots that the relation between POP and work engagement was significantly moderated when IWE was higher.



## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature on POP, work engagement, and IWE. Adopting COR theory, the results indicated that POP has an inverse and IWE has a direct impact on work engagement. Further, the moderating role of IWE between POP and work engagement has also been confirmed. It can be concluded that IWE buffers the adverse effect when combined with POP. The findings would provide new avenues for further studies.

### 5.2 Discussion

Work engagement is reflected in a prevailing attribution to accomplish organizational goals and success. Considering success, organizations have invested more to enhance the level of employees to achieve sustainability and prosperity. Similarly, at the same time, the fact cannot be ignored that POP affects every employee in an organization (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991) and has become an unavoidable part of any organization. POP originates negative behavior, for example, indirect relation with an organizational competitive advantage (Macey & Schneider, 2008), job performance (Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010), and employee well-being (Barrick, Thurgood, Smith, & Courtright, 2015) and other work-related outcomes (Hochwarter et al., 2020). POP leads to continuously lesser engagement. The employees feel that they are victims of the POP and thus, negative emotions are caused, and eventually, negative behavior towards the organization affects their productivity (Karatepe, 2013). This examination found the inverse relationship between POP and work engagement, supported by previous studies (Vigoda, 2000; Karatepe, 2013). The study concluded that the POP exists in the organizations, I drew a sample from, and affect the overall behavior of the employees negatively. Due to POP, employees maintain different levels of work engagement (Saks, 2006), for example, the higher the POP, the lesser the work engagement (Guo, Kang, Shao & Halvorsen, 2019).

The results discovered that IWE has a significant positive influence on work engagement. At work, the willingness to involve in a positive psychological attitude is dependent on a worker's moral character (Putti, Aryee, & Liang, 1989). It can be argued that in Islam, every Muslim must exercise positive behavior at work. Also, Islam supports a positive attitude at work (Tufail, Ahmad, Ramayah, Jan & Shah, 2016). Preceding studies have also supported the direct relationship between IWE and work engagement (Mohamed, Karim, & Hussein, 2010; Khadijah, Kamaluddin, & Salin, 2015). Islam emphasizes motivation and guides followers to demonstrate moral actions to earn the honor in the afterlife. This promotes humanity and facilitates humans to act ethically. It is related to one's inner self. Such intrinsic motivators result in positive behavior and involvement in one's duty.

The significant moderating role of IWE is such that the relationship between POP and work engagement was enhanced when IWE was high. IWE has a foundation in Quraan. This study was conducted in an Islamic country and all the participants were Muslims. So, it was not surprising that the proposed link would not be enhanced. Following IWE, an employee will not think of POP which is man mad but will be answerable to Allah in the life hereafter. Thus, the POP will be ignored and the engagement at work will be observed. IWE has been found to enhance work outcomes when paired with the negative aspect of working variables (Khan et al., 2015; Abideen, Rashid & Tufail, 2021). Thus, it is

concluded that the negative impact, when paired with IWE, would be mitigated in most cases because Tufail et al., (2017) found a non-significant moderating effect of hindrance stressors and IWE on job satisfaction. The previous study (e.g. Farid, Iqbal, Jawahar, Ma, & Khan, 2019) also supported the moderating impact of IWE. Similar to the current study, it has been found that IWE plays moderating role with work engagement (Tufail, Khan, & Rashid, 2021).

### 5.3 Implications

For a long, it has been noted why people act in an explicit way (Khan et al., 2015). Based on this notion the current study was carried out by focusing on IWE, and Islamic belief which is based on the teaching of Quraan (Kumar & Che Rose, 2012). In Islamic societies, religiosity and Islamic beliefs have inspiration for a normal life. Islam emphasizes helping behavior (Pomeranz, 2004; Ali & Al-Kazemi, 2005), so it was not unexpected that IWE will not be related to work engagement. For the interactive impact of IWE on work engagement, both the variables have a focus on dedication and helping behavior. Therefore, IWE reduced its negative impact. Moreover, managers need to consider the practices of IWE in organizations. Globalization is increasing at a rapid rate and Islam is the second-largest religion, therefore, the fact cannot be ignored in Islamic countries (Khan et al., 2015). Workforce diversity is increasing and people from different religions have entered multinational companies (Ho, 2010; Paul et al., 2010). Thus, commonly shared values are essential for organizational survival. Following IWE, managers must understand and implement the acceptable norms.

This study comes out with some practical and theoretical contributions. It is recommended for the managers to create a politics-free working environment so that the employees feel free from the POP and concentrate on their work as not all the employees hold a similar strong belief in IWE. Such a situation will evolve a negative feeling and employees will try to quit the organization. To overcome this issue, the managers should follow a fair policy and organizational justice should be followed. Organizational justice and POP cannot be observed at the same time in any organization. So, the top management has to overcome such negativity and build a relationship on trust and mutual understanding. Further, ethics can be taught to managers (Lau 2010), so they may further communicate them to the employees. When the practices in organizations are found free of politics the employees are likely to be more engaged and focused. This would improve the goodwill of organizations and would ultimately benefit society.

### 5.4 Limitations and future direction

Our sample size was not identically composed gender-wise and most of the employees were in their mid career . The POP may be different for gender positions in an organization. Therefore, future studies should be carried out balancing gender and the same tenure.

Another possible avenue could be to collect samples from employees at later stages of their career, as they are least vulnerable to POP. Similarly, other moderating variables could be applied like personality and supervisor support. Other work dimensions like deviant work behavior and knowledge-sharing behavior need to be studied concerning the moderating role of IWE. Challenge stressors promote personal achievement (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000) therefore, employees who want to achieve a higher position in

an organization will work hard, and further when paired with IWE will enhance engagement. Thus, it is recommended to investigate the interplay of challenge stressors, work engagement, and IWE (Amir, Tufail & Bangash, 2020). Future studies may be conducted to investigate the relationship between organizational politics and knowledge hiding behavior. The leadership concepts are equally important in achieving organizations' goals therefore, it is suggested that future studies should be carried out between leadership concepts and knowledge hiding behavior with the moderating role of IWE (Khalid et al., 2018; Farid et al., 2019).

Further, the researchers to conduct the study by applying the other work ethics like Hinduism work ethic (HWE) and Buddhism work ethic (BWE) in the South Asian context to get a clear picture of the work-related ethics in different cultures and religions.

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