

# THE IMPACT OF ISLAMIC WORK ETHICS ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: TESTING TWO MODELS OF PERSONALITY X AND PERSONALITY Y.

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study discusses the relationship of Islamic work ethics on employee performance and tests two different models of working personality X and personality Y. Survey was completed by PhD faculty members. Study followed ex-post facto design and meditational analysis with randomized design. Model testing was done by using structural equation modeling which was statistically good fit and resulted in proving the proposition that Islamic work ethics can significantly effect employee performance. Moreover, Islamic work ethics also effect the personality X and personality Y type employees which significantly effect employee performance. The study adds theoretical and contextual value to the literature of ethics as the mainstream research is on Western organizations and values, the study suggests that the Islamic perspective can add to the understanding of employee performance, with two different models of personality X and personality Y, along with employee characteristics.*

**Keywords:** Islamic work ethics, Performance, Personality X, Personality Y.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The study examined the relationship between Islamic work ethics (IWE), mediating role of personality X, personality Y traits, and employee characteristics on employee performance. Performance is the demand of an organization and to achieve higher performance, management and employees are responsible [1]. Above expectation performance is an important input to an organization because all the demands cannot be specified in to employee contract. To achieve targets or exceed performance level, employees sometimes adopt illegal activities, which also depict their performance, but society and organizations want employees to achieve performance within the ethical limits. This is the very reason, that every organization has code of conduct or employee handbook. Work ethic has been studied in generally by many scholars [2, 3] where as it's link with various variables have been studied like job satisfaction [4-6], sex differences [4], cross cultural comparison [7], organizational commitment [5, 8, 9], and protestant work ethics [10-12].

Various studies have also found the relationship between the protestant work ethic (PWE) and employee performance, as repetitive work performance [13], negative performance [14], work effort and performance [15]. However, the relation of Islamic work ethic (IWE) with employee performance either indirectly or directly has not been adequately addressed in the literature as various studies have been made about IWE with control and role conflict & ambiguity [16], attitude towards change [17], organizational commitment and job satisfaction [18] and innovation [19], but hardly any of them addressed employees performance, which is the focus of every organization.

Situational theories assume that the individual characteristics influence employee performance [20]. As employee performance is the focus of any organization that is the reason an individual is evaluated before commencement of employment [21]. Hence, employee individual characteristics also effect employee performance. In the same manner [22] suggested that management perspective (Theory X/Y,

negative/positive) of how it thinks of employees also effects the employee performance; the theory also discusses the orientation of employees with reference to personality X/Y.

As majority of the studies have been done on Western values and organizations, therefore studying the Islamic perspective would add to the understanding of variables under study. Last but not the least, after joining the WTO many American/Western companies have setup businesses in Pakistan and facing cultural and ethical challenges of performance as companies try to pursue Western values. The study aims to assess how Islamic work ethics, personality X/Y from Theory X/Y, and employee characteristics impacts employee performance

## 2. RESEARCH QUESTION

How Islamic work ethics, Personality X/Y, and employee characteristics impacts employee performance?

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Employee performance

According to Porter and Lawler [23], there are three ways to measure performance. One is the amount of sales and production rate. The second type is managers rating of an employee. The third type is self rating or self appraisal. This approach helps employees to set their own goals. Since, measures of performance are rarely common, objective, or quantifiable therefore this limitation leads to use measure of perceived employee performance. Assessing performance from perceptual data has been well recognized [24-26]

There are many definitions of employee performance, but in general it is associated with "creating a shared vision of the purpose and aims of the organization, helping each employees to understand and recognize their part in contributing to them and in so doing to manage and enhance the employee performance of both individuals and the organizations" [27]. Where as, Hersey and Blanchard [28] defines it as "level of achievement of business and social objectives and responsibilities".

### Islamic Work Ethic (IWE)

IWE considers 'dedication to work' as a virtue. It is an obligation of a capable person to exert a sufficient effort in work. To avoid mistakes and overcome obstacles, cooperation and consultation is encouraged. To manage individual and social life, social relations at work are encouraged. Work itself means of establishing an independent self identity, self respect, personal growth, and satisfaction, where as creative work is seen as a noble source of accomplishment and happiness. Most importantly, IWE considers 'hard work' as a virtue, to succeed one needs to work hard and not working hard is seen as a cause of failure [29]. IWE is derived from the intentions of the work rather than results of work. To have a welfare society, it is necessary to have justice and generosity at the work place. Competition in work is also seen as improvement in work quality. Concisely, IWE argues that there is no meaning of life without work and it is an obligation to engage in economic activities to earn bread and butter [30]. According to IWE, work is a 'noble deed'; it fulfills the necessity of survival and maintains equilibrium in individual and social life. Work gives man sense of independence, self respect, satisfaction, pleasure and fulfillment. IWE encourages commitment, as it can reduce the problems of society if each person is committed to his job and avoid unethical methods of wealth accumulation.

### Employee Characteristics

As discussed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml [31] they are many characteristics of an employee according to societies, culture, and religion but three employee characteristics were found to be the most reliable and valid: (1) empathy, (2) reliability, (3) expertise. Empathy is defined "as the ability to understand another person's perspective and to react emotionally to the other person" [32]. Empathy can be bifurcated into two broad responses: (1) an intellectual reaction towards other person's feelings and thoughts (2) emotional reaction to others. [33] Expertise is defined "as the presence of knowledge and the ability to fulfill a task" [31]. Expertise comprises knowledge of products/ services and procedural knowledge of organizational mechanism [34, 35]. An employee said to be competent if he has high level of expertise in product knowledge, problem solving, and operating in complex situations. Reliability is defined "as a sense of duty toward meeting goals or the extent to which an employee makes sure that promised deadlines are met" [31].

### Personality X/Y from Theory X/Y

Employers and employees communicate Theory X and Y not only from the words but through behaviors and actions as well. These behaviors and actions can range from considering: work as bad, laziness, proactive attitude, self initiative, promise, incentives, rewards or threats and other coercive mechanics [22]. Theory X managers see their employees as "lazy, indifferent, unwilling to take responsibility, intransigent, uncreative, and uncooperative" (p. 48). Hence, employees act accordingly as they perceive those attitudes and behaviors as the management's view of their work and abilities, i.e. instinctively employees does not want to work and see it as a burden, therefore their output and direction can only be determined by reward or coercion. Hence such characteristics represent personality X.

On the contrary, McGregor [22] predicted that Theory Y orientation managers assume that employees have instinctive motivation to do work, self directed, and self controlled. Hence, self motivation helps them to achieve higher order needs by accomplishing meaningful work and involving in decision making which eventually transforms into valuable input to achieve organizational effectiveness, i.e such characteristics represent personality Y.

### Development of Model and Hypotheses

The literature has already highlighted the significance of IWE [18] where as employee individual characteristics influence employee performance [20] and Theory X/Y [22], that translates into employee personality type which also effects employee performance. Hence, two models were developed to check the relationship of IWE with employee performance, personality X and personality Y served as a mediator, and employee characteristics has an association with IWE. Further, meditational analysis with randomized design is ideal for testing theories because it improves causal inferences therefore, the study tries to build and refine theory of Islamic work ethics and employee performance via Personality X/Y. The importance of this study relates to the significance of IWE as the world is debating and questioning the ethical standards of corporate world because of scandal of Pfizer in late 2009 and IMF Managing Director scandal in 2011[36]. Hence, the studying Islamic work ethics can improve employee performance and organizational ethical standards..

### 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

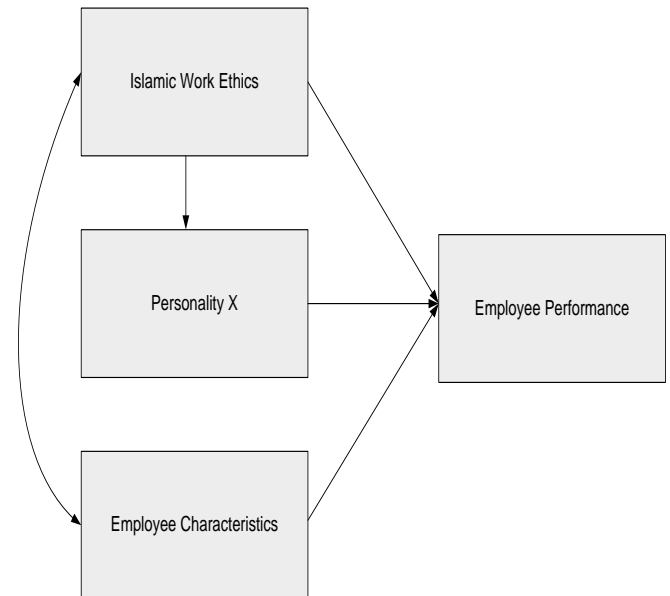


Figure 1. Model 1 for Personality X

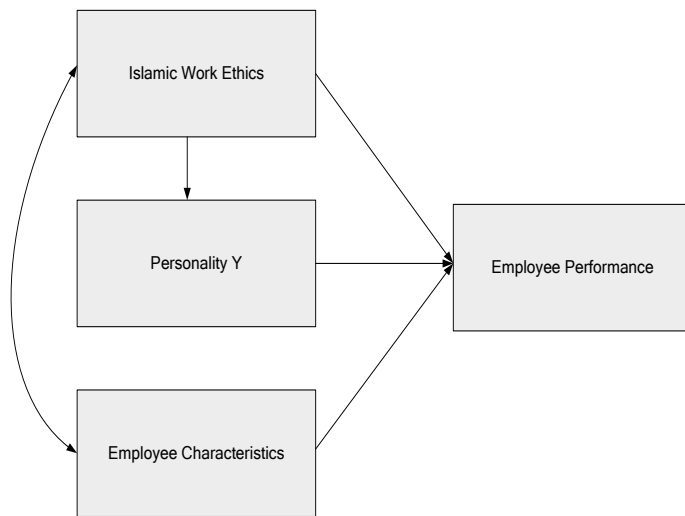


Figure 2. Model 2 for Personality Y

**5. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

H1: Islamic work ethics has a positive effect on employee performance in both of the models of personality X and personality Y.

H2: Personality X has significant mediating role between the relationship of Islamic work ethics and employee performance.

H3: Personality Y has significant mediating role between the relationship of Islamic work ethics and employee performance.

H4: Islamic work ethics and employee characteristics have a positive effect on employee performance of personality X and personality Y.

**6. METHODOLOGY**

**Instruments of the Study**

The study utilized the 74 item questionnaire and four instruments were used. Islamic work ethics was measure by 17 items scale [29]. Employee characteristics were measure by 11 items scale [37]. Theory X/Y was measured by 30 items scale[38], whereas employee performance was measured by 16 items scale [39]. All instruments were measured on a five point Likert type scale. The instruments have also demonstrated acceptable validity and reliability in previous studies i.e. Islamic work ethic [40], employee characteristics [37], employee performance by the same author and Theory X/Y was used by Chapman [38] and reliability was tested in current study.

**Participants**

Data was collected with the help of structured questionnaire. Simple random sampling technique was used. Respondents of this study were PhD faculty members of universities of Pakistan. A complete list was prepared from Higher Education Commission website and individual universities website, whereas the list prepared by the Mir and Abbasi [41] has also contributed in the completion of sampling frame. Overall 400 questionnaires were distributed by email and 175 questionnaires were retrieved with the response rate of 43.75%; out of received questionnaires, 150 questionnaires were selected for final analyses, rest were incomplete. Hence the sample size of 150 was considered for SEM analysis as recommended by Monte carlo study that for SEM analysis

there should be minimum 100 cases [42]. In terms of asymptotic theory and covariance stability, simulations studies suggest that 100 to 125 or larger sample sizes often produces adequate results, provided that reliable measures are used; reliabilities greater than 0.65 [43, 44]. The study also exceeds the standard of both sample size and reliability.

The rationale for selecting faculty members as respondents of the study was that the universities provide intellectual and professional output to a society, and faculty plays a key role to transform an individual in to a better person. They have a significant role in inducing ethical norms and behavior in the society. Therefore, faculty members are the official position holders who can effect and sometimes set the direction of rules, regulations, and policies [45]. This opinion is further strengthened by IORGA [46] that they are not merely subject specialists but they are moral agents and their interactions and personality also create and build culture that set the standards for a society. Hence, it is very pertinent to study those who have a contribution in building the ethical values of the society.

**Validity and Reliability**

CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) was used to ensure the validity of the scales. As rule of thumb cut off value item factor loading less than .4 is followed. No items were dropped from the scale. Cronbach Alpha of each scale was measured to establish the reliability (Islamic Work Ethics, .819; Employee Characteristics, .786; Personality X, .855; Personality Y, .857; Employee Performance, .795). Alpha values of all scales were greater than the general acceptable level of .5 [47]. Hence, all scales confirmed the reliability standards.

**7. RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was performed using SPSS 19 and AMOS 19. A correlation table with means and standard deviations is shown in Table 1. In initial data screening the assumptions of multivariate normality and linearity have been evaluated. The data proved linear and normally distributed with no missing values. Further there was no issue of multicollinearity as none of the correlation coefficient was greater than .9 [48].

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations & Correlations

Sr. #	Variable	X	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1	Islamic Work Ethics	4.06	.45					
2	Employee Performance	3.91	.388	.770**				
3	Employee Characteristics	3.95	.408	.663**	.632**			
4	Personality X	3.2	.642	.157*	.298**	.201*		
5	Personality Y	4.03	.514	.381**	.472**	.383**	.369**	

\*\*\*.  $p < 0.01$  \*\*.  $p < 0.05$  \*.  $p < 0.10$

All variables of the study were significant and positively. Further, the highest correlation was between Islamic work ethics and employee performance.

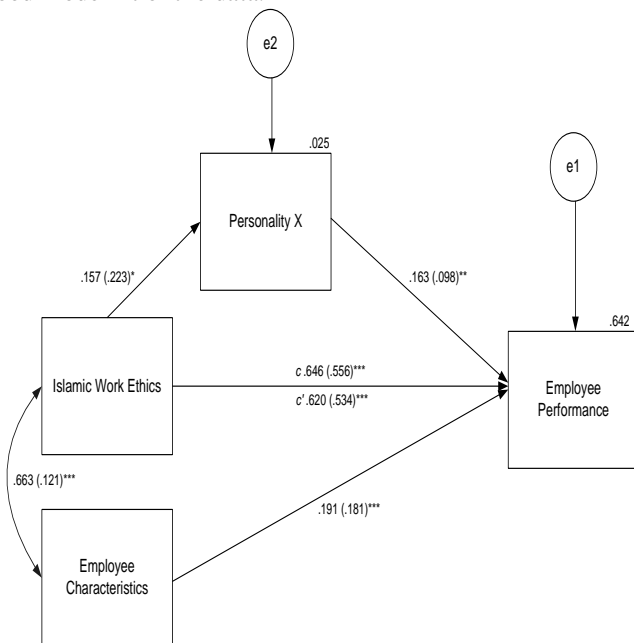
**Model 1 of Personality X**

On AMOS, model 1 was calculated to test the hypothesis regarding Personality X. In model 1, complete hypothesized model regarding personality X was tested. Model 1  $\chi^2$  was insignificant,  $\chi^2 (1, N=150) = 2.575, p=0.109$ , which suggested that the model was consistent with the observed data.

**Model 2 of Personality Y**

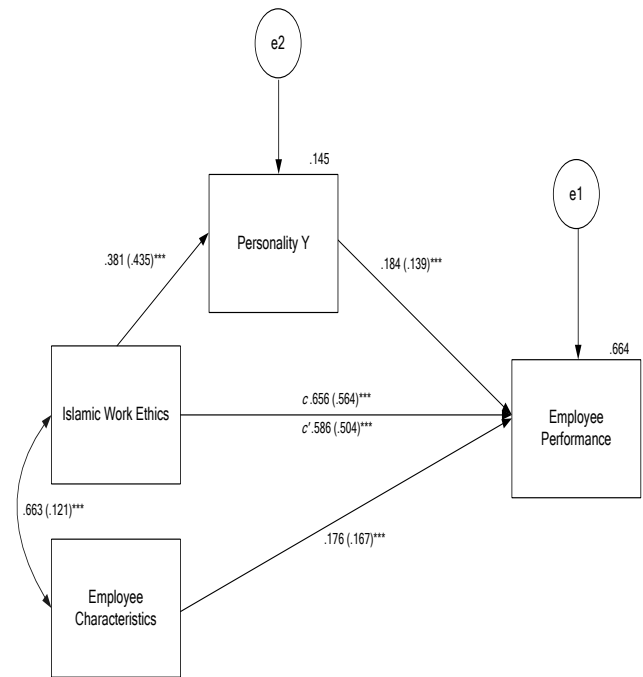
In model 2, hypothesis and complete hypothesized model in the study were measured. The  $\chi^2$  of Model 2 was insignificant,  $\chi^2 (1, N=150) = 6.159, p=0.116$ , which suggested that the model was consistent with the observed data.

The model 1 and 2 found to be good fit as it yielded a good fit for model 1  $CMIN = 2.575, DF = 1, CMIN/DF = 2.575$  and model 2  $CMIN = 3.084, DF = 1, CMIN/DF = 3.084$ .  $CMIN/DF$  was considered to be a good fit of model as recommended by many statisticians. For example, Wheaton, Muthen [49] suggested that for a good model fit the  $CMIN/DF$  value should be less than or equal to 5. Whereas Carmines and McIver [50], proposed strict criteria which is between 1 and 3. Marsh and Hocevar [51] have also suggested that the value should be between 5 and 2. From the arguments presented for  $CMIN/DF$ , model 1 and model 2 was reasonably fit. In Table 2 other model fit indices have been presented, which also establishes that model is good fit for examination. For model 1 of personality X,  $GFI=.992, NFI =.990, CFI=.993$  and  $RMSEA=.093$ . For model 2 of personality Y,  $GFI=.984, NFI =.979, CFI=.986$  and  $RMSEA=.085$ . For a good fit model, the values of  $GFI, NFI, CFI$  should be close to 1 [48]. Where as the value of  $RMSEA$  should be less than .1 [52]. Hence, all the values provided good models and they can be used for data analysis. Post-hoc-modifications were not used because of the good model fit of the data.



**Figure 3.** Structure Equation Model 1  
Standardized path coefficients are shown, with corresponding unstandardized coefficients in parentheses.

With the help of AMOS 19 structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to verify the hypothesized relationships between causal, outcome and mediating variables. Indirect effect was obtained by applying bootstrapping procedure. As recommended by Baron and Kenny [53] the Sobel [54] test should be used for the significance of indirect effect but MacKinnon, Lockwood [55] and MacKinnon, Lockwood [56] recommended to use bootstrapping over the Sobel test, on the grounds that bootstrapping have higher power while maintaining reasonable control over the Type I error rate. Where as Briggs [57] suggested that bootstrapping generally is superior strategy in small to moderate samples in terms of both power and Type I error rates.



**Figure 4.** Structure Equation Model 2  
Standardized path coefficients are shown, with corresponding unstandardized coefficients in parentheses.

**Table 2:** Fitness Ratios of Models

	CMIN	DF	CMIN/DF	GFI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
<b>Model 1</b>	2.575	1	2.575	.992	.990	.993	.093
<b>Model 2</b>	3.084	1	3.084	.984	.979	.986	.085

At first Islamic work ethics (IWE) and employee performance via personality X was tested i.e. results of model 1. Table 3 shows that the total effect of Islamic work ethics on employee performance was significant,  $c = .556, p < .01$ . Islamic work ethics was significantly predictive of the hypothesized mediating variable, personality X;  $a_x = .223, p < .10$  and personality X was significantly predictive of employee performance,  $b_x =$

.098,  $p < .05$ . The estimated direct effect of Islamic work ethics on employee performance, controlling for personality X, was  $c' = .534, p < .05$ . To obtain the indirect effect  $= .022$ , bootstrapping was performed; 2,000 samples were requested; bias-corrected confidence interval (CI) was created for  $ab$ . For 95% CI, the lower limit was .004 and the upper limit was .054. Since CI did not include zero, which concluded that there was mediation (i.e., the indirect effect was not zero). Since, the direct effect from Islamic work ethics to employee performance ( $c'$ ) was significant and indirect effect of Islamic work ethics on employee performance was also statistically significant, therefore, the effects of Islamic work ethics on employee performance were partially mediated by personality X.

Table 3: Mediation Effect of Proposed Hypothesis

	Path/effect	Regression result		Bootstrap with bias correction
		B	SE	95% CI
Model 1	$c$ (IWE → Per)	.556***	.062	.427, .672
	$a_x$ (IWE → Px)	.223*	.115	.029, .436
	$b_x$ (Px → Per)	.098**	.030	.037, .159
	$c'$	.534***	.057	.406, .650
	$a * b$	.022**	.013	.004, .054
Model 2	$c$ (IWE → Per)	.564***	.065	.427, .683
	$a_y$ (IWE → Py)	.435***	.086	.288, .575
	$b_y$ (Py → Per)	.139***	.040	.042, .221
	$c'$	.504***	.059	.361, .622
	$a * b$	.060***	.021	.024, .109

Note:  $n = 150$ .  $a_x$  and  $b_x$  are the direct paths of personality X mediator.  $a_y$  and  $b_y$  are the direct paths of personality Y mediator. Per = Employee Performance, Px = Personality X, Py = Personality Y.

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$  \*\* $p < 0.05$  \* $p < 0.10$

Islamic work ethics (IWE) and employee performance via personality Y was tested i.e. results of model 2. Table 3 shows that the total effect of Islamic work ethics on employee performance was significant,  $c = .564, p < .01$ . Islamic work ethics was significantly predictive of the hypothesized mediating variable, personality Y;  $a_y = .435, p < .01$  and personality Y was significantly predictive of employee performance,  $b_y = .139, p < .01$ . The estimated direct effect of Islamic work ethics on employee performance, controlling for personality Y, was  $c' = .504, p < .01$ . To obtain the indirect effect  $= .060$ , bootstrapping was performed; 2,000 samples were requested; bias-corrected confidence interval (CI) was created for  $ab$ . For 95% CI, the lower limit was .024 and the upper limit was .109. CI did not include zero, which concluded that there was mediation (i.e., the indirect effect was not zero). Since, the direct effect from Islamic work ethics to employee performance ( $c'$ ) was significant and indirect effect of Islamic work ethics on employee performance was also statistically significant, therefore, the effects of Islamic work ethics on employee performance were partially mediated by personality Y.

Hence from the results of Table 3 and Table 4, the unstandardized regression coefficient ( $B = .556, .564$ ) associated with the Islamic work ethics on employee performance was significant ( $p < .01$ ). Hence, H1 was accepted which deduced that Islamic work ethics has a positive effect on employee performance in both of the models. For H2,

direct and indirect path coefficients ( $B = .534, B = .022$ ) were significant at ( $p < .01$ ), hence it was also accepted. Therefore, we can infer that Personality X has significant partial mediating role between the relationship of Islamic work ethics and employee performance. Significant direct and indirect path coefficients ( $B = .504, B = .060$ ) of H3 were significant at ( $p < .01$ ), hence H3 was also accepted. Therefore, we can conclude that Personality Y has significant partial mediating role between the relationship of Islamic work ethics and employee performance. Last hypothesis was also accepted with regression coefficients of Model 1- personality X ( $B = .556, B = .181$ ) were significant at ( $p < .01$ ) and regression coefficients of Model 2- personality Y ( $B = .564, B = .167$ ) were also significant at ( $p < .01$ ) and hence H4 was also accepted so we can conclude that Islamic work ethics and employee characteristics have a positive effect on employee performance.

Table 4: Decision of Hypotheses

Independent Variable (IV)	Mediating Variable (MV)	Dependent Variable (DV)	Path Coefficient	Decision
Islamic Work Ethics	-	Employee Performance	.556*** <sup>a</sup> , .564*** <sup>b</sup>	Accepted
Islamic Work Ethics	Personality X	Employee Performance	.534*** <sup>c</sup> , .022*** <sup>d</sup>	Accepted
Islamic Work Ethics	Personality Y	Employee Performance	.504*** <sup>c</sup> , .060*** <sup>d</sup>	Accepted
Islamic Work Ethics, Employee Characteristics	-	Employee Performance	.556*** <sup>a</sup> , .181*** <sup>a</sup> , .564*** <sup>b</sup> , .167*** <sup>b</sup>	Accepted

<sup>a</sup>model 1- personality X, <sup>b</sup> Model 2- personality Y, <sup>c</sup> direct effect, <sup>d</sup> indirect effect  
\*\*\* $p < 0.01$  \*\* $p < 0.05$  \* $p < 0.10$

### 8. CONCLUSION

All of the hypotheses were significant and accepted. Model 1 and Model 2 proved to be good fit according to the chi-square and other indices. Islamic work ethics proved to be a good predictor of employee performance and also personality X and personality Y also proved to be a significant mediator between the relationship of Islamic work ethics and employee performance. Hence, multiple paths from Islamic work ethics to employee performance were significant and it can be concluded that Islamic work ethics can improve the performance of employees by various ways, i.e. either by personality X, personality Y or with employee characteristics, or combined as a whole model.

### 9. Implications

Results of the study have significant implications for managers and organizations. Code of conduct, is indeed a yardstick to evaluate the behavior of organizational members which eventually translated into performance of employees. Since, top organizations of the world are Western base; therefore majority of organizations benchmark them, which results in adaptation of western norms, values and behaviors. The results of the study imply the need to focus on Islamic work ethics, which can

significantly contribute towards employee performance and even it produces significant results on personality. Most importantly, the model suits to our contextual norms and values. It is important to signify that with the help of Islamic work ethics, we can influence the perspective of personality X employees who think that work is a burden, considered lazy, and reactive. Significant performance can be improved if Islamic work ethics applies on personality X employees. Moreover, considering and including the Islamic work ethics in code of conduct can enrich the diversity standards of an organization. Since faculty members are the moral agents of the society, therefore the study can be extended to measure the effect on society and reciprocal effect of society on personality X, personality Y and employee characteristics. In current study, faculty was not segregated on the basis of designation due to the requirement of simple random sampling; therefore further study can be made to measure the individual effect of designation.

It is important to mention that even this model is significant and provides empirically and theoretically consistent findings, there may exist equivalent models. Alternatively non equivalent models may also fit the data. Hence, where possible researchers should try to rule out and test alternative models. Researchers also need to realize that the external environment (economic, political, social and technological) also affects the performance of an organization and employees. Therefore, one needs to take external environment as control variable. Though, the model provides good fit of data, however to further validate the model, a longitudinal research study is required.

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