

## **Relationship between Job-Related Stressors and Work Outcomes with the Moderating Role of Islamic Work Ethic in Healthcare Sector of Punjab, Pakistan**

**Muhammad Asad Ullah<sup>1</sup>, Khalid Rehman<sup>1</sup>, Farhat Ullah<sup>2</sup>, Adnan Khan<sup>3</sup>, Fawad Khan<sup>4</sup>, Mehboob Alam<sup>5</sup>**

- 1. PhD Scholar, IBA, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, KP, Pakistan  
asadmpa@gmail.com**
- 2. Lecturer, IBA, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, KP, Pakistan  
Khalidrehman08@gmail.com**
- 3. Assistant Professor, IBA, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, KP, Pakistan  
farhatullahpk@gmail.com**
- 4. Lecturer, IBA, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, KP, Pakistan  
adnanmwt@gmail.com**
- 5. Fawad Khan, DPA, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, KP, Pakistan  
Fawadkhan2500@gmail.com**
- 6. Mehboob Alam, MPhil Scholar, IBA, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, KP, Pakistan  
Mehboobalam660@gmail.com**

### **Abstract**

The study examined the main effect of Islamic Work Ethic on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) of employees. Further, it also examined moderating role of Islamic work ethic (IWE) in job-related stressors (job insecurity and work family conflict) and OCB relationship in healthcare sector. A total of 384 healthcare professionals working at a tertiary healthcare centre in district Muzaffargarh in province of Punjab completed questionnaires. Results of the study revealed that job insecurity and work family conflict adversely affect employees' OCB. Moreover, IWE has positive impact on employees' OCB. In addition, IWE buffered the negative impact of job insecurity and work family conflict on employees' OCB suggesting that individual high on IWE were better able to manage negative effect of job insecurity and work family conflict on employees' OCB as compared to the employees low on IWE.

**Key Words:** Islamic Work Ethic, Job Insecurity, Work Family Conflict, Organizational Citizenship Behavior

### **1. Introduction**

Rapid commercialization and global competitiveness have resulted in commercial crimes, collapse of leading corporations and reports of widespread unethical behavior at workplace. It also increased job related stress among the work force (Abdi, Dato, Nor, & Radzi, 2014). To deal with such situations, organizations have started incorporating work related ethics in their HRD programs as guiding principles for organizational members regarding their ethical obligations to the organization (Stansbury & Barry, 2007) as well as shaping pro-social behavior at workplace (Qasim, Irshad, Majeed, & Rizvi, 2021). Efforts have been made to develop the passion among the employees to exhibit beyond the defined role behaviors i.e. organizational citizenship behavior (Murtaza, Abbas, Raja, Roques, Khalid, & Mushtaq, 2016). This also has triggered the research on work ethics in general and especially Islamic Work Ethic (Rokhman, 2010). IWE has proven effect on overall performance of employees (Metwally, Ruiz-Palomino, Metwally, & Gartzia, 2019; Abdi, Dato, Nor, & Radzi, 2014) and especially in developing OCB among the employees (Alhyasat, 2012). Extant literature suggests that work ethic is a strong predictor of employees' job performance (Mehnaz, Asadullah, Hussain, & Rehman, 2020; Yousef, 2001) and adding ethical contents in HRD programs of an organization will help in reducing the adverse effects of job related stressors (Leka, 2003) which in turn will result in better individual and organizational outcomes.

Although Job Stress and Job Outcomes are extensively researched domains of Management and Industrial Psychology, little is known about the role of work ethics in this relation (Hayati & Caniogo, 2012). Moreover, most of the work on this subject focused Protestant Work Ethics (PWE) neglecting Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) that may have vital significance in Islamic countries (Rokhman, 2010; Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008). Khan, Abbas, Gul, & Raja (2013) posit that knowledge of Islamic Work Ethic may help employees effectively manage job stressors especially

work-family conflict (Dirk, Rahman, & Haq, 2019) and fear of job insecurity (Tufail, Hussain, Shahzad, & Anum, 2018) thus enhancing work outcomes. They believe that Islamic Work Ethics help in successfully facing and protecting one's self from the adverse outcomes of organizational stressors. Khan et al. (2013) further suggest that these assumptions need empirical evidences by conducting more studies especially examining the buffering effect of Islamic Work Ethics in job stressors and work outcomes' relationship.

In view of the recommendations of Clercq et al., (2019), Tufail et al., (2018) and Khan et al., (2013), the present study investigates Islamic Work Ethic's moderating role in relationship of job stressors and work outcomes (employees' OCB in this case). It briefly describes how IWE works as buffer against negative effect of job stressors (i.e. job insecurity and work-family conflict in this case) on employees' OCB.

## **2. Theory and Literature Review**

Based on the assumptions of conservation of resource (COR) and job-demand model, we explain the interactive effect of job stressors (e.g. insecurity, work-to-family conflict) and Islamic work ethics on helping behavior of employees i.e. OCB. COR posits that stress is generated due to loss of resources or even threat to resources motivating individuals to avoid prospected loss of resource (Beham, 2011; Hobfoll, 2001). As a result of interference of family responsibilities in work job insecurity, resources are lost during the course of managing work and family conflict or dealing fear of job loss (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999, p. 352). This situation of job insecurity or work to family conflict motivates the employees to withhold their discretionary behaviors i.e. OCB with a view to avoid further loss of resources (Witt & Carlson, 2006). Previous studies also advocate the appropriateness of COR theory for the examination of behavioral outcomes of work to family conflicts as well as job insecurity (Witt & Carlson, 2006; Beham, 2011; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). Further, certain buffering mechanisms such as Islamic ethical values may potentially protect oneself from organizational stressors (Khan et al., 2013). Moreover, based on the argument of COR that useful personal resources may help in countering depletion/diminution of energy resources due to stressful conditions, the researchers propose that IWE buffers the harmful effect of job insecurity as well as work family conflict on OCB of employees

### **2.1 Job-Related Stressors**

The term stress was first coined to define a biological phenomenon of an individual's unwanted response towards undesirable pressure placed on him/her. It has detrimental effects not only on the health of employees but also on their performance and effectiveness of the organization (Leka, 2003). Job stress has been subject of debate among the researchers as it is considered a dysfunction for organizational effectiveness and reduces the employee performance (Bashir & Ramay, 2010). Gilboa, Shirom, Fried & Cooper (2008) identified seven stressors which include role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload, job insecurity, work-family conflict, environmental uncertainty and situational constraints. Similarly, Bashir & Ramay (2010) identified 11 stressors adding lack of feedback, concern for people, technological advancement and organizational culture in the existing array of these stressors. However, these stressors are overlapping to each other and are situation and organization specific. As Gilboa et al., (2008) believe that job insecurity and work-family conflict are detrimental to the desired job outcomes; we studied the role of these stressors in relationship with organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) by taking IWE as moderator. We examined how IWE works as buffer against negative effects of job insecurity and WFC on OCB of the employees.

### **2.2 Job Insecurity and OCB**

Job insecurity refers to the state of concern of an employee about the future of his/her job status (Astarlioglu, Kazozcu, & Varnali, 2011). Researchers like Lu et al. (2021) and Staufenbiel & König (2009) believe that job insecurity is detrimental to the employee and organizational performance as it exerts undesirable stress on the employee. Kinnunen & Natti (1994) consider job insecurity as a hindrance stressor; an undesirable work demand which adversely affects the performance of an employee. They identified three dimensions of job insecurity which include (i) demographics (ii) positional characteristics and (iii) organizational characteristics. Staufenbiel & König (2009) found that whenever an employee feel insecure about his/her job, his/her performance will be adversely affected and it will also affect his/her loyalty to the organization and work itself. Thus in such situation, an employee can hardly exhibit beyond the defined role behavior i.e. OCB at work place if he/she is not sure about the future continuity of his/her job (Judeh, 2012). Thus it can be assumed that job insecurity is a determinant of an employee organizational citizenship behavior.

***H1: Job Insecurity negatively affects employees' Organizational Citizenship Behavior.***

### **2.3 Work Family Conflict and OCB**

Work to family conflict (WFC) is the state of imbalance between employee's work and family life (Carmeli, 2003). WFC is considered as stressor which is detrimental to employee performance (Gilboa et al., 2008). It is a two dimensional phenomenon i.e. Work-To-Family Conflict (WFC) i.e. impact of work related issues affecting the family and Family-To-Work Conflict (FWC) i.e. impact of family issue affect work (Aslam, Shumaila, Azhar, & Sadaqat,

2011). Researchers like Greenberge et al.(1989), Gilboa et al.(2008) and Aslam et al.(2011) found WFC detrimental to OCB of employees. In a recent study, Dirk et al. (2019) suggest that WFC is detrimental to employees' OCB. Earlier, Mallah, Keerio & Shah (2015) reported the similar findings. They argue that WFC as well as FWC are detrimental to both work and family life creating an imbalance that consequently reduces the employees' helping behavior. Based on these findings, we may assume that

***H2: Work Family Conflict negatively affects employees' Organizational Citizenship Behavior.***

### **Islamic Work Ethics**

Collapse of major corporations like ENRON, Satyam and WorldCom during the last decade compelled the organizational managers to redress the unethical behaviors that resulted in such fiascos (Abdi, Dato, Nor, & Radzi, 2014; Zahra, 2015). This established the perception that placement decisions for positions of greater responsibility should be made on ethical grounds (Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008). Organizations started incorporating ethics in their HRD programs as ethics are important for reducing misconduct in organizations (Stansbury & Barry, 2007; Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008). This also encouraged research on this social and organizational phenomenon (Rokhman, 2010). Work ethic refers to a set of norms on the basis of moral goodness of diligence and hard work. Further, it is a faith in ethical usefulness of work and its ability to elevate character (Bin Shamsudin, Bin Mohd Kassim, Hassan, & Johari, 2010). Ethics not only help in gaining administrative control (Stansbury & Barry, 2007) but also in differentiating right from wrong (Khan, Abbas, Gul, & Raja, 2013). Ethics is the knowledge that studies the intelligence and the wisdom (Abbasi, Mir, & Hussain, 2012).

Two significant taxonomies of work ethics can be traced from literature which are widely explored i.e. the Protestant Work ethic (Lim & Lay, 2003) and the Islamic Work Ethic (Ali, 1988). The main focus of Protestant Work Ethics (PWE) is profit, spirituality and positive view of work for personal survival and growth. These ethics are result oriented.

On the other hand Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) suggests that any kind of work is honorable task and its perfection is the most blessed action by Allah. Major difference between PWE and IWE is of scope. PWE sees work as a symbol of grace. It is concerned with the benefits of society (Social responsibility) and personal well being. While in Islamic Work Ethics, businessman is considered responsible for the well being of whole Ummah, which leads to the concepts like generosity. Further, IWE suggests that work is not an end in itself; instead it is a mean to promote social relationships and personal growth (Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008).

Although roots of Islamic Work Ethic can be traced in Quran and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Sarwar & Abugre, 2013), scholarly work on IWE started with the work of Nasr (1984). He defined Islamic Work Ethic in terms of an orientation shaping and influencing the participation of believers in the workplace. He further considers work as a virtue in view of the needs of a person essential for maintaining work-life balance (Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008).

### **2.4 Role of IWE in Job Stressors and Employees' OCB Relationship**

A huge sum is spent every year by the employers on their employees' motivation so that they may work beyond their defined role. This beyond the defined role is termed as employees' organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Organ (1997) defined OCB as discretionary individual behavior aimed promoting the overall effectiveness of the organization without any formal reward system. Being contextual part of job performance, OCB is adversely affected by the job related stressors like work family conflict and job performance (Greenberge et al., 1989; Gilboa et al., 2008; Staufenbiel & König, 2009; Kinnunen & Natti, 2009; Aslam et al., 2011; Astarlioglu, Kazozcu, & Varnali, 2011; & Judeh, 2012 & Mallah, Keerio & Shah, 2015).

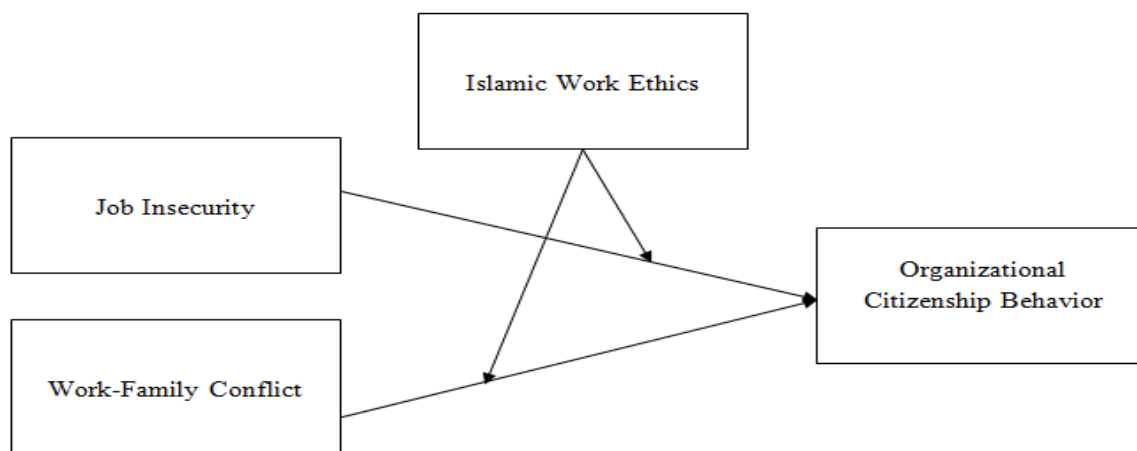
On the other hand, Raja Khan et al. (2020) and Khan et al. (2013) believe that there are certain factors that may moderates the work outcomes and job stressors relationship. They believe that IWE positively affects the level of employees' OCB which is also proved from Quran and sayings of Prophet Muhammad (SAWW). Similarly Ali (1992) believes that Islamic Teachings give greater importance to hard work and loyalty (disguised form of OCB) and sincerity to employer and work itself. Thus researcher believes that an employee high on IWE will exhibit higher level of OCB, will feel less stressed and will respond less negatively to these stressors.

The Job Demand-Control Model has relevance in this study on the basis of (i) strain path hypothesis and (ii) buffering hypothesis. In view of Karasek (1979), job insecurity as well as WFC to OCB is strain path while job demand (Job Insecurity and WFC in this case) is a stressor that produces stress response in the form of reduced citizenship behavior. Further, based on buffering hypothesis, IWE could be a buffer in the negative relationship between job insecurity and OCB as well as WFC and OCB. Employees high at IWE may exhibit increased OCB that may be viewed as sort of personal resource. In such situation, employees experiencing a higher level of job insecurity or WFC may deal the job demands more effectively using personal resources, and less likely to exhibit

reduced OCB. Thus it can arguably be said that IWE may buffer the negative relationship of job stressors and employees' OCB.

**H3: IWE moderates the job insecurity and employees' Organizational Citizenship Behavior relationship.**

**H4: IWE moderate the Work Family Conflict and employees' Organizational Citizenship Behavior relationship**



**Figure1:** Conceptual Framework

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Sampling and Data Collection Method

As the study intended to measure the main and moderating effect of variables, it was causal-explanatory in nature. Quantitative technique was employed to collect the data from the respondents of a tertiary healthcare organization located in Muzaffargarh district of Punjab province using self-administered questionnaire. The respondents of the study include (i) medical faculty members (consultant doctors, senior medical officers and medical officers) (ii) nursing staff, (iii) paramedics and (iv) support staff up to officer level. The researchers distributed 400 questionnaires to the respondents using convenience sampling technique. However, 384 workable questionnaires were received back giving a response rate of 94% which is quite satisfactory in this context.

#### 3.3 Measures

Measurement items were adopted from the previously conducted studies. Further, responses of the participants were anchored on a five point rating scale that ranged from strongly agree=5 to strongly disagree=1.

#### 3.3 Islamic Work Ethics

The researchers used a 17 items' scale of Ali (1988) to measure IWE. Examples of IWE include dedication to work is a virtue, Laziness is vice, life has no meanings without work. Reliability of the scale was checked through Chronbach Alpha Coefficient which was .085.

#### 3.4 Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Employees' OCB in health care sector was measured by a 16 items scale as used by Shahzad (2011) who adopted it from Podsakoff et al. (1990). Alpha reliability of the scale as measured by Shahzad (2011) was 0.73 in Pakistani context.

#### Job Insecurity

A 4 items' scale of Eist et al. (2014) was used to measure job insecurity. Reliability of the scale was checked through Chronbach Alpha Coefficient which was 0.87.

#### 3.4 Work Family Conflict

WFC was measured by a 5 items scale developed by Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrian (1996). Reliability of the scale was checked through Chronbach Alpha Coefficient which was 0.85.

### 4. Data Analysis and Results

Data were analyzed through SPSS Hayes' Process Macro and AMOS 21 that included model measurement, correlation matrix and multiple regression analysis.

**Table 1: Model Measurement**

Construct	Item	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	CR	AVE
Islamic Work Ethic	IWE1	.764	0.95	3.13549	0.952	0.541

	IWE2	.780				
	IWE3	.754				
	IWE4	.740				
	IWE5	.712				
	IWE6	.718				
	IWE7	.763				
	IWE8	.707				
	IWE9	.667				
	IWE10	.736				
	IWE11	.602				
	IWE12	.747				
	IWE13	.762				
	IWE14	.760				
	IWE15	.768				
	IWE16	.756				
	IWE17	.745				
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	OCB1	.725	0.94	2.603	0.943	0.508
	OCB2	.671				
	OCB3	.726				
	OCB4	.703				
	OCB5	.705				
	OCB6	.726				
	OCB7	.697				
	OCB8	.735				
	OCB9	.699				
	OCB10	.721				
	OCB11	.722				
	OCB12	.742				
	OCB13	.670				
	OCB14	.732				
	OCB15	.715				
	OCB16	.708				
Job Insecurity	JI1	.717	0.82	2.027	0.815	0.525
	JI2	.784				
	JI3	.716				
	JI4	.676				
Work-Family Conflict	WFC1	.705	0.80	2.129	0.804	0.507
	WFC2	.707				
	WFC3	.731				
	WFC4	.704				
	WFC5	.764				

#### 4.1 Model Measurement

Table 1 shows measurement model examined through convergent and discriminant validity. At first stage, convergent validity was measured through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) that included factor loading, Cronbach's alpha (CA) reliability, composite reliability (CR) as well as average variance extracted (AVE). It is

evident that values of CA, CR, and AVE are higher than 0.7, 0.7, and 0.5 fulfilling the conditions of CFA and demonstrating convergent validity.

At second stage, discriminant validity was evaluated by Fornell and Larcker method by comparing the correlations among variables and AVE of all the hypotheses. Table 2 shows that square root of AVE for all constructs was above the correlation values that shows acceptable discriminant validity.

**Table 2: Descriptive and Correlation Matrix**

	Mean	SD	CA	AVE	JI	WFC	IWE	OCB
JI	3.24023	0.88489	0.95	0.541	(.82)			
WFC	3.34115	0.88954	0.94	0.508	.458**	(.80)		
IWE	3.13549	0.93019	0.82	0.525	-.206**	-.190**	(.95)	
OCB	2.60354	0.80837	0.80	0.507	-.421**	-.443**	.229**	(.94)

It is evident at table 2 that job insecurity has negative relationship with Islamic work ethic ( $r = -.206^{**}$ ) and organizational citizenship behavior ( $r = -.421^{**}$ ). Similarly, work-family conflict has negative relationship with IWE ( $r = -.190^{**}$ ) and OCB ( $r = -.443^{**}$ ). However, IWE has positive impact of OCB ( $r = .229^{**}$ ) of employees. This confirms the first two hypotheses (H1 & H2) of the study.

#### 4.2 Moderation Analysis

We tested moderation effect of IWE in job stressors and work outcome relationship following Hayes' Process Macro. It was examined separately for both the independent variables to test their direct and moderated effect on dependent variable.

**Table 3: Results of Structural Model**

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-value	P-value	Study Results
JI ----> OCB	-0.3571	-8.489	0.0000	Supported
WFC ----> OCB	-.3856	-9.2545	0.0000	Supported
IWE ----> OCB	0.1313	3.2805	0.0011	Supported
JI*IWE ----> OCB	0.17	3.866	0.0001	Supported
WFC*IWE ----> OCB	0.1270	2.8656	0.0044	Supported

Table 3 shows that job insecurity has significant negative effect on OCB of employees ( $\beta = -0.3571$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Similarly, WFC has significant negative effect on OCB of employees ( $\beta = -0.3856$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Further, IWE has significant positive effect on OCB of employees ( $\beta = 0.1313$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). However, results of interaction of IWE and JI revealed that IWE buffers the negative effect of JI on OCB ( $\beta = 0.17$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Hence, the third hypothesis of the study is confirmed. Results of interaction of IWE and WFC revealed that IWE buffers the negative effect of WFC on OCB ( $\beta = 0.1270$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Hence, the fourth hypothesis of the study is confirmed.

#### Discussion

Based on job demand-control model (Karasek, 1979) and the assumptions of conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 2001), this study offers certain interesting findings regarding the direct as well as buffering effect of IWE in relationship of job stressors and work outcomes. Our study revealed a significant negative impact of job

insecurity and work-family conflict on organizational citizenship behavior of employees. Further, it also revealed that IWE positively affects employees' OCB.

Although, there are certain studies (Tufail et al., 2018) that reported no significant impact of job insecurity on job performance, Purba & Muhammad (2020) reported that job insecurity adversely affects employees' organizational citizenship behavior. Purba & Muhammad (2020) argue that job insecurity is detrimental to the performance of employees and hurts employees' OCB. Whenever, employees feel threatened at workplace regarding their job security, they are no more loyal to the organization and may hardly exhibit OCB (Staufenbiel & König, 2009). These findings support the findings of our study that job insecurity negatively affects employees' organizational citizenship behavior.

WFC is potential stressor that may harm employees' performance. When employees experience stress due to family issues, it may adversely affect the performance of employees. In such situation, if there is no buffering mechanism, it may aggravate the suffering of employees and they may become less loyal to the organization exhibiting reduced OCB (Beham, 2011). This suggests that a reduced level of OCB may be adopted as a strategy for the resource conservation (Yu, Wang, & Huang, 2018). These findings are consistent with the findings of our study. As a result of WFC, employees may feel exhausted emotionally and fail to keep them connected to the organization resulting in reduced level of OCB (Barsulai, Fwaya, & Makopondo, 2020). We argue that when employees experience work-family conflict, they may exhibit reduced level of citizenship behavior.

Consistent with the job demand-control model (Karasek, 1979), results of this study extend support for the moderation of IWE in the direct relationship of JI with OCB as well as WFC with OCB and in the indirect relationship between JI and OCB as well as WFC and OCB via IWE. These findings are consistent with the findings of the studies of Purba & Muhammad (2020) and Yu, et al. (2018).

### **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, it may be concluded that job insecurity and work family conflict are detrimental to the citizenship behavior of employees. However, IWE may buffer the negative impact of both the stressors on OCB of employees. Further, findings also suggest that IWE has strong positive relationship with OCB of employees.

### **Implications**

The study may have implications for organizational development managers operating especially in Islamic business markets. First, the study depicts that job insecurity and work family conflict are detrimental to the citizenship behavior of employees. However, Islamic work ethic may buffer the negative impact of both the stressors on OCB of employees. In view of this, OD managers may incorporate work related ethics in their HRD programs as guiding principles for organizational members regarding their ethical obligations to the organization. This would help them develop OCB among their employees.

Second, the study revealed a negative impact of job insecurity and work family conflict on citizenship behavior of employees. Efforts may be made to redesign jobs that may help employees better establish work life balance which in turn may develop OCB among their employees.

Third, when employees may have knowledge of IWE, they may consider work as noble task and may better able to cope with job stressors detrimental to their OCB. For this, training of IWE may help cultivate these ethics especially in Islamic countries as suggested by Khan et al. (2013).

### **Limitations and Directions for Further Research**

This study has certain limitations like other studies. The study was delimited to only one healthcare centre located in Southern Punjab may cause issue of generalization of results. Secondly, human behavior is subject to change or the work environment may affect the severity of job stressors, application of cross-sectional design for data collection may cause biased results. We examined the IWE as buffer in relationship of work stressors and positive job outcomes i.e. OCB employing conservation of resource theory and job-demand model. Future researchers may employ certain other theories to test the buffering effect of IWE in relationship of same stressors with a negative job outcome. In an example, studies may employ social exchange theory to test moderating impact of IWE in relationship of same stressors with a negative job outcome such as knowledge hiding behavior.

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