The Relationship between Work Ethics (Based on the *Qur'ān* Sunnah and *Aḥadīth*), Intrinsic Motivation and Tacit Knowledge Sharing

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Abstract

Despite the contribution of existing literature on work ethics and employee's behavior, little has been known about work ethics based on *Ḥadīth*, *Qur'ān*, and Sunnah and tacit knowledge sharing. In extant literature, the discussion on work ethics has attracted attention of the scholars in recent times. However, most of religion based studies relied on Protestant based ethics that is based on ethics of Christianity. The results of Western studies cannot be applied to the work ethics that are based on Islamic beliefs called as Islamic Work Ethics (IWE). Protestant work ethics are based on the ideology of Webber that emphasis on monetary benefits in this Worldly life while ethics based on Islamic ideology (teachings of the Holy *Qur'ān*, Sunnah, and *Aḥadīth*) focused on this life and Hereafter. Thus, it is essential to test the relationships of IWE and intrinsic motivation on sharing behavior particularly tacit knowledge behavior. The objective of the current study is to test the effect of IWE and intrinsic motivation on tacit knowledge sharing. The data was collected from Muslims academics working in five researches based public universities of Malaysia. The data was analyzed in SPSS 24. The results showed that Islamic work ethics and intrinsic motivation have significant positive relationship with tacit knowledge sharing. It indicated that Muslims follow and practices the Islamic ethics and is internally motivated to share their personalized knowledge with their colleagues. This study has some recommendation for future studies.

Keywords: Tacit Knowledge, Autonomous Motivation, Self-Determination Theory of Motivation, Islamic based ethics

Introduction:

Recently, research on ethical consideration of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) in organizational environment such as Tacit Knowledge Sharing (TKS) is now gaining popularity among the researchers studies argued that religion based work ethics support employees to highly engage in work related activities [1]. Individual Islamic work ethics are the employees' moral standards and beliefs that are grounded on Islamic principles (the Holy *Qur'ān*, Ahadih and Sunnah). These Islamic principles provide guidelines that encourage ethical work-related behavior including tacit knowledge as one of the important. Previous studies have studied the effect of ethics based on Christian ethics Protestants Work Ethics

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[1] Abboushi, S. "Impact of individual variables on the work values of Palestinian Arabs". International Studies of Management & Organization, 20 (1990), 53-68; Jones, C. "As if Business Ethics were Possible, `within Such Limits'. Organization", 10 no (2003), 223-248. doi: 10.1177/1350508403010002003; Husin, Wan Norhasniah Wan, and Nur Farahana Zul Kernain. "The Influence of Individual Behaviour and Organizational Commitment Towards the Enhancement of Islamic Work Ethics at Royal Malaysian Air Force." Journal of Business Ethics (2019): 1-11.

(PWE) e.g. [2] and IWE on work outcomes [3] However, there are few studies that have examined the direct effect of IWE and knowledge sharing particularly tacit knowledge. Work ethics literature has concentrated on PWE [4] and less efforts has been given by the management on IWE [5] and tacit knowledge sharing behavior[6].

There are studies in organizational behavior such as knowledge sharing that have considered ethical issues because unwillingness to share is an unethical behavior [7]. An important antecedent for knowledge sharing behavior particularly tacit knowledge is IWE which is a ethical factor [14] [15]. The importance of work ethics can be realized as "work ethics is among the top-ranked factor in hiring employees. Employees who have good ethical conduct might have portrayed positive behavior in the workplace as emphasized by [8] "wisdom guides knowledgeable actions on the basis of moral and ethical values". Work ethics is an important contrivance for personalized (tacit) knowledge sharing. Work ethics energies workers to share their knowledge with their colleagues and is important factor for sharing behavior (tacit knowledge)[3], promotes the effectiveness of the organization[9], builds and sustains motivated employees, and pertains to work-related behaviors [10].

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[9] Meriac, J.P. "Work ethic and academic performance: Predicting citizenship and counterproductive behavior". Learning and Individual Differences, 22 no 4 (2012), 549-553.

[10] Miller, M. J., Woehr, D. J., & Hudspeth, N. The Meaning and Measurement of Work Ethic: Construction and Initial Validation of a Multidimensional Inventory. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 60 no 3 (2002), 451-489.

However, the impact of work ethics particularly Islamic work ethics has not been addressed adequately in knowledge sharing particularly tacit knowledge. Few studies linked the individual's work ethics such as justice, care, helping, and general ethics with general as well as tacit knowledge sharing and individuals attitudes[11]. Therefore, the current study examined the effect of seven aspects of Islamic work ethics on tacit knowledge sharing.

Literature Review:

In earlier studies, work ethics is recognized as an active and significant forecaster of work related outcomes[12]. Work ethics is usually pragmatic and well-defined in the organizations focused studies by many scholars. The author has defined it as "the commitment of value and hard work". This also refers to ethical virtues of working hard and careful and conscientiousness at work place[13]. The study of [14] advance the concept as "felt obligation or duty to work with commitment to a steady job with low appreciation for leisure time". The study argued that individuals with sturdy work ethics are more inclined towards fulfillment of their duties as required by their job. Therefore, work ethics evolved around the employees views and morals that they hold and this help to shape their work related intention and commitment. In ethics literature, working hard s deliberated as a cure and this improves employee's life such as they can live in a better position, become more responsible about their colleagues and get more promotions [27]. However, the history of religious based work ethic varied in diversified in several religions in several times.

According to [15], ethics includes morality which viewed as the right or wrong codes of conducts derived from religious beliefs. In other words, ethics are the right behavioral conducts governing the individual's behavior and guided by the religion. All the religions have their own moral principles and code of conducts (ethics) that guide their believers[16] such as PWE and IWE. IWE are based on the *Qur'ān* and Sunnah (Saying and Practice of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)[17]. Islam is a complete religious conviction that direct its cohorts in every pace of their life [18]. Islam has its own moral values regarding the work

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environment including behaviors[19] such as right or wrong, allowed or forbidden, and virtuous (ethical) or non-virtuous (unethical) [20] . The Islamic based moral conducts direct Muslims for their ethical behaviors (including truthfulness, honesty, proficiency, sincerity, and fairness). Additionally, IWE emphasis on the principles of support (cooperation), fairness (justice), kindness (generosity), discussion (consultation), and fair play (equity)[21]. IWE regards hard work is an important for efficacious life and involvement in organizational assigned assignment is compulsory for every Muslim as Islamic religion that embraces organizational undertakings at its premier regards.

In Islam, Muslims are turned through a valuable structure that is demarcated by the (the Holy *Qur'ān*, Sunnah and *Aḥadīth*). Muslims follow the Islamic rules by their autonomy (own will) than external forces. The Islamic principles are not forced rather than based on welfare and benefits of the followers. These values expected to exhibit in their routine/daily life (social, work, and personal life). Islamic based ethics and principles helps its followers to act on morally responsible conducts within an organization. These ethical values are based on the pillars of (hard work, efforts, competency, cooperation, commitment, transparency, and morally ethical conducts).

Islamic ethics suggested for hard work and equilibrium between personal, work and socialized life[22]. Islam give highest value to work and work related activities as Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) says that "hard work caused sins to be absolved". In Islam engagement in work related activities is obligatory for all Muslims. In Islam, "work is not viewed as an end to itself rather a source of personal growth".

Islamic codes of ethics guide their believer for helping others like sharing their tacit knowledge. IWE contain "hard work, efforts, competency, cooperation, commitment, transparency, and morally ethical conduct that are related to work outcomes"[23]. Argued that individuals with strong Islamic code of conduct are nearer to *Allāh* (SWT). This will increase their positive behavior including tacit knowledge sharing that are consistent with Islamic expectations. Tacit knowledge sharing behavior can be nurtured in other religions like Islam[3].

In Islam, IWE "focus on ends rather than means to foster personal growth". Islam promotes the helping behavior (knowledge sharing) as a holy act. This knowledge sharing behavior is documented in many *Aḥadīth* and verses of *Qur'ān* such as "The seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim."[24], the *Qur'ān* emphasize on the importance of knowledge and points on: "*Allāh* will raise those of you who have faith and those who have been given knowledge in rank" [25] and "seek knowledge from cradle to grave" . Some other *Aḥadīth*s also emphasis on knowledge and its sharing i.e., "One who treads a path in search of knowledge has his path to Paradise made easy by God…" [26] "a servant of God will remain

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[23] Al-Qur'ān, Mujadilah:11

[24] Al-Tirmidhī, Muhammad bin Īssā, Jamī al Tirmidhī, ḥadīth: 74 http://www.alim.org/library/ḥadīth/TIR/74

[25] Al-Qur'ān, Mujadilah:11

[26] Nawawī Yahya bin Sharaf, Riyadh-u-saleheen, Ḥadīth 245

http://www.alim.org/library/ḥadīth/TIR/74

standing on the Day of Judgment until he is questioned about his (time on earth) and this hadiths emphasize specifically on knowledge sharing are "acquire knowledge and impart it to the people"[27] and "convey to people even it is single sentence"[28]. Hence, grounded on the above mentioned *Aḥadīth*s, knowledge sharing is a duty for every follower, and Muslims with strong IWE are more enthusiastic to share their tacit knowledge.

Previous studies investigated the influence of job ethics on several work behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and knowledge sharing behavior [29] These studies found the impact of IWE on OCB (among top and executive management in Jordanian press organizations). Those studies underlined that Islamic ethics are embraced in employees sharing of knowledge. The study of [32] found that Islamic ethics effect on knowledge sharing and innovation capability (on employees working in public sector). The study recommended that it is crucial for Muslims to seek, teach, and share their tacit knowledge. In addition to above studies, [7] has measured the ethics of justice and cooperation with the mediation effect of organizational commitment on tacit knowledge sharing among advance study students in Taiwan and found that tacit knowledge sharing is affected by the cooperative behavior[30] and ethics of justice which are the elements of IWE [31]. Therefore, the study hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between Islamic work ethics based on seven pillars (efforts, hard work, competence, cooperation, commitment, transparency, and morally ethical conducts) and tacit knowledge sharing.

Prior studies have established and found positive relationship between employee's motivation [32]and sharing of their knowledge with others [33] [34]. also institute significant positive association between Islamic values and employee self-motivation intrinsic motivation. As a response, the individuals with high Islamic values esteem, high intrinsic motivation that is anticipated from them [35]. It is prominent in previous studies that intrinsic motivation is positively related with knowledge sharing[36] [37].

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[27] Al-Tirmidhi, Ḥadīth 107 http://www.alim.org/library/ḥadīth/TIR/74

[28] Bukhārī, Muhammad bin Ismāʿīl, Al Jamī-al-sahīh, Ḥadīth:667
http://www.alim.org/library/ḥadīth/TIR/74

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Based on the findings of these studies, this study proposed the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: Intrinsic motivation has a positive relationship with tacit knowledge sharing

Research Method:

Using the positivists approach, quantitative method was appropriate for the current study. Quantitative method is more appropriate for the study that have objective data or numerical values and based on empirical evidences. In quantitative approach, there is less involvement of researchers in undertaken research. More important, quantitative study provides "rigorous, scientific, and reliable" results [38] and is more apprehensive with the application of theory used in the particular research.

Using hypothesis testing approach, this study measure the dependence of tacit knowledge sharing on IWE and IM that increases the understanding of researcher about the nature of association among the IWE, IM and TKS, that in turn increase rigor of methodology.

This research intended to measure a relationship between seven pillars of IWE and tacit knowledge sharing using hypothesis testing method. The current study tested the relationships between the variables based on Islamic beliefs (code of conducts) that encourage tacit knowledge sharing among the academics. On the basis Islamic beliefs, current research hypothesized link between IWE and TKS,

Using survey technique, this study collected data from academics working in all the departments in five research-based universities of Malaysia through distributing questionnaires. The scales of Islamic work ethics were adopted from the study of IWE[39]. Islamic work ethics was measured through IWE seven pillars (efforts, hard work, competence, cooperation, commitment, transparency, and morally ethical conducts). TKS scale was adopted than adapted from the study of [7]. The current study's data was analyzed through SPSS in two stages. The current study conducted preliminary analysis and main analysis by using SPSS (Version 20.0). In the first stage, the current study reported the descriptive statistics of the respondents. In the second stage, main analysis is conducted by using SPSS to repost the significance of the relationships.

Result

Demographic information of the Study
Table 1.1 Demographic Information

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[37]Chou, H.-W., Lin, Y.-H., Lu, H.-S., Chang, H.-H. & Chou, S.-B. 2014. Knowledge sharing and ERP system usage in post-implementation stage. Computers in Human Behavior 33: 16-22.

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Item	Category	Number	%age
Gender	Male	128	40.64
	Female	187	59.36
Age	Below 25	3	0.952
	25-35	56	17.77
	36-45	125	39.68
	46-55	91	0.288
	more than 55	40	12.69
Ethnicity	Malay	289	91.74
	Chinese	7	2.222
	Indian	2	0.635
	Others	17	5.397

The demographic information of the academics working in Malaysian research-based universities presented in Table 1. The results showed that among the 315 respondents, 59.36% were female and 40.64% were male. The information regarding the age group depicted that 39.68 % were above 36 years old and most of the respondents are 91.74 % were Malay Muslims.

Main Analysis:
Measurement Model:
The measurement model test reliability and validity of items that reflects measures the constructs investigated in this study. Results obtained for loadings of items for IWE, IM and TKS showed in Table 2. The loadings values for all items are greater than 0.70. The loadings values fulfill acceptable values. The composite reliability of the study variables also fulfill the criteria because Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values are also greater than 0.70 [40], Table 2 showed that Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value is more than 0.5 [41]. All the values shown in Table 2 accomplish the adequate criteria as enlightened by the study of [42].

Table 2 Measurement Model Results

	Item	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	(AVE)
IM	AMI1	0.883	0.950	0.962	0.834
	AMI2	0.933			
	AMI3	0.954			
	AMI4	0.949			
	AMI5	0.842			
IWE	IWE1	0.734	0.980	0.982	0.664
	IWE10	0.834			
	IWE11	0.827			

[40] Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. Psychometric theory, 1978

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	IWE12	0.880			
	IWE13	0.765			
	IWE14	0.875			
	IWE15	0.918			
	IWE16	0.827			
	IWE17	0.705			
	IWE18	0.841			
	IWE19	0.869			
	IWE2	0.780			
	IWE20	0.818			
	IWE21	0.819			
	IWE22	0.814			
	IWE23	0.859			
	IWE24	0.849			
	IWE27	0.783			
	IWE28	0.717			
	IWE29	0.778			
	IWE3	0.783			
	IWE4	0.805			
	IWE5	0.824			
	IWE6	0.857			
	IWE7	0.824			
	IWE8	0.756			
	IWE9	0.818			
TKS	TKS1	0.958	0.976	0.983	0.934
	TKS2	0.978			
	TKS3	0.976			
	TKS4	0.954			

IM=Intrinsic motivation IWE=Islamic work ethics   TKS= Tacit knowledge sharing

Table 3 showed the results obtained for discriminant validity and matched with the criteria defined by[43]. According to the study of [55], criteria for measuring the correlation analysis is that the correlation among the constructs must be higher in diagonal values than off-diagonal values. This indicated the validity (discriminant) of the variable of interests. Results obtained and reported in Table 3 indicate that this study fulfil criteria of discriminant validity.

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[43]Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research,* 1981. 39-50.

Table 3 Discriminant Validity

	IM	IWE	TKS
IM	**0.913**		
IWE	0.447	**0.815**	
TKS	0.537	0.512	**0.966**

IM=Intrinsic motivation   IWE=Islamic work ethics   TKS= Tacit knowledge sharing

Structural model:

Structural model results reported and evaluated R^2 values, β values and significance level of hypothesized relationships. R^2 values explains predictive accuracy of the model (R^2 values of .67 (substantial), 0.33 (moderate) and 0.19 (weak)) respectively[44]. The predictive power of (R^2) value for this study is greater than moderate level (0.381). Figure 1 displayed R^2 estimates (.381) and β values for H1 is 0.340 and H2 is 0.384. This showed a significant positive relationship between IWE and TKS and also between intrinsic motivation and tacit knowledge sharing that indicates the adequate model fit of this study. In addition, the t-values are greater than 1.96 at 0.001 significance level reported in Table 4.

Table 4 Hypothesis Result

Effect	Hypothesis	B	T-value	P Values	Results
IWE -> TKS	H1	0.340***	5.849	0.000	Supported
IM -> TKS	H2	0.384***	6.541	0.000	Supported
R^2=0.381					

P<0.01

IM=Intrinsic motivation IWE=Islamic work ethics TKS= Tacit knowledge sharing.

Discussion of the Results:

The present study investigated the relationship among IWE, intrinsic motivation, and tacit knowledge sharing from the perspectives of Islamic principles and code of conducts and motivation. To summarize, there are two main reasons why this study is relevant. Firstly, the current study concentrated on IWE as it focused on composed or balanced life. IWE may motivate individuals' to share their personalized sharing of tacit knowledge. Secondly, the role of autonomous motivation, needs attention in knowledge management literature. Previous researchers have highlighted on extrinsic motivation on knowledge sharing. This study concentrates on intrinsic motivation. Lastly, this study intends to answer the call for tacit knowledge sharing in knowledge management literature.

The results obtained for H1 evidenced that IWE has a significant and positive relationship with TKS. This result showed that Muslim employees with high IWE expected to involve in sharing 0pof their tacit knowledge within an organization. This supported association is persistent with the principles and code of conducts based on Islamic laws and empirical findings of extant literature. The findings revealed that the Muslims academics are more honest, proactive; ready to help their colleagues and share their personalized knowledge with their colleagues. These Muslims academics are concerned about the improvement, welfare, and progress of their colleagues rather than their own benefit because they considered tacit knowledge sharing as an Ibadah or a righteous (religious) deed. According to Islamic ethics, if a Muslim academics hide his expert knowledge especially tacit knowledge from others, this behavior is disliked Islam 34 and they will be punished for this behavior. This is narrated by (Abu Hurairah) that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "He who is asked

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[44] Vinzi, V. E., Chin, W. W., Henseler, J. & Wang, H.. Editorial: Perspectives on Partial Least Squares. Springer 2010.

something he knows and conceals it will have a bridle of fire put on him on the Day of Resurrection."

Results of H1 between IWE and TKS is aligned with the results of the previous studies[45].   For instance, Lin (2007) examined and evidenced that TKS is affected by cooperativeness and fairness within the organization. Cooperation and Justice are the important pillars of IWE in the research. In addition, Wang (2004) found a positive relationship between ethical concern and knowledge sharing. He argued that sharing of tacit knowledge is viewed as ethical behavior among the employees.

The results obtained For H2 about positive association of intrinsic motivation with TKS is supported. The supported results indicated that the higher the intrinsic motivation among the employees, the more likely they are willing to share their tacit knowledge. The significant positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and tacit knowledge sharing was consistent with the Self-determination theory of motivation and previous empirical results.

The idea of intrinsic motivation indicated that academics are internally motivated to helping their colleagues in sharing their knowledge. This behavior evoked their internal feeling in which they enjoy while helping other especially sharing their tacit knowledge. Sharing knowledge helped the employees to get better, quick, and efficient knowledge in work environment[46]. Motivating employees to share their experienced based knowledge is linked to increase their productivity and retention of intellectual capital that add value to the organization.   The results implied that employees who feel enjoyment and pleasure in helping others specially sharing their tacit knowledge have a tendency to be most intrinsically motivated for TKS with colleagues.

Conclusion and Implications:

This study attempted to develop the understanding on promoting the TKS. The study conceptualized the unique relationship between IWE, intrinsic motivation, and tacit knowledge sharing based on previous literature. Current study supported a positive relationship between IWE and TKS and between intrinsic motivation and TKS. The aim of this research is to provide deep insights to the future researchers and managers that work ethics especially religion based IWE should be considered by the knowledge management in addition to other important variables. However, this study conceptualized the direct relationship of IWE with TKS and between intrinsic motivation and TKS and suggests to future studies that there is a need to further generalize the results of this study. This study also suggests incorporating more variables such as socialization, culture and other psychological variables. Furthermore, the future research also required to consider the IWE in other issues with mediation effect.

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[46] of Managing Employee Motivation Based On a Halal Lifestyle." International Journal of Academic Research In Business And Social Sciences 8, no. 5 (2018).