The Impact of Absenteeism and Islamic Work Ethics on Project Delivery in Public Projectized Organizations in the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

أثر التغيب وأخلاقيات العمل الاسلامي على إنهاء المشاريع في المؤسسات العامة في الامارات العربية المتحدة

by

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ABSTRACT

It has been argued that absenteeism adversely affects employees' productivity, especially in public sector. As the modern world demands a lot from the employees so the stress levels of the employees were increased and are not able to balance the work and the personal life where the individual is affected physically and psychologically that leads to employee's absenteeism. This adverse impact might be magnified when it occurs in projectized organizations due to the significance of 'time' in fulfilling project objectives. Work ethics might be a feasible solution to reduce this adversity. This study aims to assess of the impact of Islamic work ethics on project managers' absenteeism and consequently the impact of both variables on project delays in public projectized organizations in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The study deconstructs the concepts of: Islamic work ethics, absenteeism and project scheduling and relies on literature to develop a quantitative scale the measure those three variables. Through the use of a questionnaire, data was collected from 116 project managers that work for public organizations in the UAE. The collected data was analysed through a series of statistical tests and the results show that there is a negative relationship between Islamic work ethics and absenteeism; and a positive relationship between Islamic work ethics and project completion within scheduled time. The main conclusion of this study enhancing work ethics can be a factor that reduces the absenteeism in turn increases the productivity of the organizations through the on-time completion of projects. Practitioners might work on creating a work environment that foster positive work ethics.

Keywords: Project management, people management, public sector, private sector, Islamic work ethics, project scheduling, absenteeism

نبذة مختصرة

يؤثر التغيب على إنتاجية الموظفين سلباً عامةً ، وفي القطاع العام خاصة. وبما أن العالم الحديث يتطلب الكثير من الموظفين ، فقد زادت مستويات التوتر لدى الموظفين وغير القادرين على تحقيق التوازن بين العمل والحياة الشخصية حيث يتأثر الفرد جسديًا ونفسيًا مما يؤدي إلى تغيبه عن العمل. قد يتضخم هذا التأثير السلبي عندما يحدث في المؤسسات والشركات بسبب أهمية "الوقت" في تحقيق أهداف المشروع. قد تكون أخلاقيات العمل حلاً ممكنًا للحد من هذه المحن. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم تأثير أخلاقيات العمل الإسلامي على تغيب مديري المشاريع وبالتالي تأثير كلا المتغيرين على تأخر المشروع في المؤسسات العامة في الإمارات العربية المتحدة. تحلل الدراسة مفاهيم: أخلاقيات العمل الإسلامي ، التغيب عن العمل وجدولة المشروع وتعتمد على الموارد ومقالات والابحاث في هذا المجال لوضع مقياس كمي لقياس تلك المتغيرات الثلاثة من خلال استخدام استبيان حيث تم جمع البيانات من 116 من مديري المشاريع الذين يعملون لصالح المؤسسات العامة في الإمارات العربية المتحدة. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها من خلال سلسلة من الاختبارات الإحصائية , وتظهر النتائج أن هناك علاقة سلبية بين أخلاقيات العمل الإسلامي والتغيب عن العمل, ووجود علاقة إيجابية بين أخلاقيات العمل الإسلامي وإنجاز المشروع خلال الوقت المحدد. يمكن أن يكون الاستنتاج الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة هو تعزيز أخلاقيات العمل كعاملاً يقلل من الغياب وبدوره يزيد من إنتاجية المؤسسات من خلال استكمال المشروعات في الوقت المحدد. قد يعمل الممارسون على خلق بيئة عمل تعزز أخلاقيات العمل الإيجابية.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Research Background

Working for public organizations have been a privilege for plenty of employees due to the financial stability of the organization and the enormous support that employees usually get. Project managers are not an exception of this and they might be ready to take some risks when they feel that the government is ready to support a struggling project further. Unlike the private sector, the public sector might give a sense of calmness because they normally have more resources, they could have more room of tolerance with errors and they might have further flexibility with project stakeholders. Although the governmental quality assurance standards usually try minimize such effect through plenty of auditing techniques on the one side and other leadership techniques on the other, yet employees can always find ways to play around that and they usually look for the protection of government laws that usually reduce the coercive power of managers on the contrary to the private organizations. This sense of comfort that project managers have might affect their performance and this in turn will lead to a waste of government resources. Therefore, the ethics of the project manager plays a major role in achieving the project goals and consequently enhance the organization's strategic goals (Menzel 2016).

Unlike private sector, employees in public organizations have more tolerance in relation to absenteeism. The politics of public organizations usually have an impact on employees' emotional intelligence, and this in turn might have an impact on personnel absenteeism (Vigoda-Gadot and Meisler 2010). This poses the question about enhancing the productivity of employees in public sector, and how to avoid the negative impact of absenteeism. Looking for solutions in terms of regulations and policies might not be feasible due to the conflict of interest among different public organizations and different public authorities. For example, labour-supporting authorities will do their best to enhance the rights of the employees and will push to create regulations in this direction. On the other hand, other organization will aim to achieve the highest utilization of human resources within the limit of the regulations; therefore, the solution might be found in other emotional and spiritual factors such as employees' ethics; consequently, the question will be how far work ethics impact absenteeism. This is highly needed to be answered in the domain of project management because time is an influential factor in fulfilling the objectives of projects and absenteeism has a direct impact on productivity

time. That is to say, projects are the mostly affected part of the job when it comes to absenteeism. Thus, project managers' absenteeism can be a significant factor of completing projects on time and thus it is worth studying if it can be influenced by the project managers' work ethics. The UAE's population is mainly Muslims and thus Islamic Sharia has a major role in controlling employee's emotional intelligence, attitude to work, productivity and overall performance; therefore, studying the impact of Islamic work ethics in the UAE will be of a high benefit for both practitioners and academicians.

Research Aim and Research Questions

This study aims to demonstrate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and project manager's absenteeism and then demonstrates the impact of absenteeism and Islamic work ethics on project delivery in public projectized organizations in the UAE.

The main research questions are as follow:

- *Do Islamic work ethics hinder the absenteeism of the project managers in projectized public organizations in the UAE?*
- *Do Islamic work ethics enhance the determination of the project manager to finish projects within the scheduled time in projectized public organizations UAE?*
- *Does absenteeism hinder the determination of the project manager to finish projects within the scheduled time in projectized public organizations in the UAE?*

In order to answer the above research questions and support the aim of the research, the analysis will be structured to test the research hypotheses and achieve the following set of objectives:

1. Review the literature of Islamic work ethics, absenteeism and project scheduling to deconstruct three variables and identify the aspects of each concept in relation to project management.

2. Determine the most crucial measurement scale for Islamic work ethics, absenteeism and project scheduling.

3. Propose a conceptual model which illustrates the relationship between Islamic work ethics, absenteeism and project scheduling.

4. Assess the practicality and the relation between Islamic work ethics, absenteeism and project scheduling.

5. Provide a set of recommendations for academicians and practitioners on how Islamic work ethics can be enforced to hinder absenteeism and enhance the completion of projects within the scheduled time in the UAE projectized public organizations.

Dissertation Structure

The dissertation will be structure into five chapters that show the development of the research and the flow of information. The structure is illustrated in figure 1.

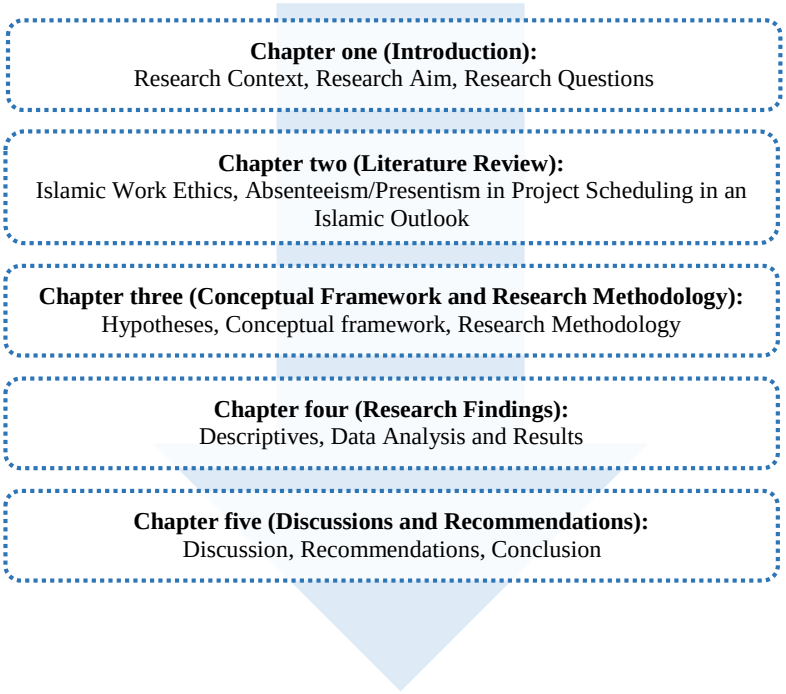

Figure 1: Structure of the dissertation

The first chapter will function as an introduction that will pave the way to the full study. It will project the research context, it will highlight the research aim, and it will enlist the research questions. The second chapter will be dedicated to the literature review, and it will present a qualitative literature review of three main areas: Islamic Work Ethics, Absenteeism/Presentism in Project Scheduling in an Islamic Outlook. The objective of this chapter is to identify the trends of previous research in these areas and establish the foundation of the study. The third chapter will detail the hypotheses that are established in this research and visualize them in an illustrative conceptual framework. Moreover, it will describe and justify the research methodology that is followed in the research. The fourth chapter is dedicated to a description of the data collected as well as a description of the data analysis followed. Furthermore, this chapter presents the results of the data analysis. The final chapter will sum up the research

findings and evaluate the fulfilment of research objectives. This chapter will revisit the aim and objectives of this research and illustrate how they have been met within the research.

Moreover, it will propose a set of recommendations to scholars and practitioners. In addition, it will conclude the research with limitations of the study and suggestion for future research.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter, there will be an attempt to identify the trends of previous research in the areas of work ethics, absenteeism, and project scheduling. The qualitative review of literature will focus on the Islamic outlook of these areas. This chapter will be the foundation that will be used to build the conceptual framework of this research.

General Work Ethics: from an Islamic Prospective

The Islamic Work Ethics concerning implies that undertaking a task is equivalent to the fulfilling of religious obligation. The Quran states that avoidance of duties results in the decrease of faith amongst people. Analysis of ethics implies the different aspects and various dimensions of human behaviour with regard to the undertaking of the respective tasks. The research and analysis of the outcome of adhering to and compliance with various kinds of ethical values have gained a huge importance. Consequently, various kinds of ethics that have to be followed at the workplace depending upon its location were formulated and implemented. Along with the teachings of Quran, the teachings of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) are also inclusive of the Islamic Work Ethics.

Islamic Work Ethics

According to (Ali 1988), In Islam, work is considered virtue and every human needs to live in the society. Islam stands for life fulfilment and individuals are motivated towards the business to gain the highest regard (Ahmad 1976). The existing economic and social backwardness of Arabs and other developing countries, hence, install in every individuals the historical and institutional perspectives but not religious beliefs. Without social theories and motivational components only attributing work ethic completely, and then an individual is misled. (Ali, 1986) through his research found out that in the scale of work ethics Arab manager's scores were higher than the Americans or other managers from European Countries. In conclusion, Mr. Ali's Arab Administrators were more productive than the managers from western countries.

Individualism is another issue, related to the work ethics. Arabs are highly individualistic claimed by (Almaney 1981) and (Baali and Wardi 1981). They stored the Arabs failures

towards cooperation and economic programs to the quality of individualism. Instead, the Western Scholars and researchers claim that, individualism is the foundation of the work ethics and success is more in Western society.

Later, (Ali 2008) and (Manan et al. 2013) explained that the key objective of Islamic ethics is the notion, which compels every individual to give up evil doings and help him/her to practice good deeds through his/her life; therefore, Islam offered a unique perspective about ethics and articulated a specific theory about work ethics. Remarkably, the development in economic and creating the capital while embracing Islam morals in social and psychological aspects is mandatory (Aldulaimi 2016). There are three important aspects were developed by (Alam and Talib 2015) based on Islamic work ethics. These aspects are social, attitudinal and humane. All of these aspects are related to experiencing a positive bond with individualism (one of the Hofstede's dimensions of organizational culture). In addition, Athar, Shahzad, Ahmad and Ijaz (2016) found the strong bond between Islamic work ethics, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Thus, concluded these Islamic work ethics play an important role in increasing the employee's commitment towards the work and workplace.

Off late, researchers have dug deeper into the Islamic work ethics to have a better insight of the ethics to be followed while conducting and undertaking business as far as Islamic values are concerned. The Arab countries, particularly the ones located in the Middle East, have strongly supported Islamic work ethics as they are governed by Sharia (Rawwas, Javed and Iqbal, 2018). Furthermore, supporters and advocates of Islamic work ethics have hitherto opined that following Islamic work ethics has led to lower levels of absenteeism from work in comparison to the following of work ethics prescribed by other religions. Implementation of Islamic work ethics has also led to the economic development of the Arab world and the Middle East since it advocates for productivity and rejects the concept of being idle.

Since the late 1980s, Islamic Work Ethics have garnered huge support from employers, particularly in the Arab nations and the region of Middle East due to the huge number of people belonging to the Islamic community. The development of Islamic Work Ethics is deemed to be resulted in the decrease of the absence from work thereby paving the way for the delivery of incredible performance at the workplace by the employees as per the opinions and views of the people involved in delving into the matters concerning Islamic Work Ethics (Cowan 2018). Additionally, Islamic work ethics have proved to be extremely beneficial in the interest of the maintenance of a good work culture in countries located in the Middle East. It has also facilitated the concept of Islamic finance in a more effective and efficient manner. It differs

from the work ethics associated with Confucianism, which implies that altruism is a part of carrying out activities on a daily basis. On the other hand, Islamic work ethics stresses over hard-core professionalism thereby valuing humanity to a lower level; furthermore, motivation of employees is the manifestation of recognition and incentivisation and not the outcome of merely following a certain set of ethics, based on a specific religious point of view. Islamic work ethics have been successful primarily in countries that value Islam. Among these notable countries are Bahrain, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Islamic work ethics imply a discriminatory approach thereby leads to the propagation of derogatory treatment towards people belonging to certain groups and classes, especially the ones belonging to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community (LGBT).

The international conventions regarding the protection of human rights in Islam also prescribe punishments such as beheading and death penalty (Amilin, et al. 2018). This implies that non-adherence to Islamic work ethics even to the slightest extent may result in dire consequences. It also includes stringent action as a result of blasphemous acts committed in such a manner thereby interferes with the basic values and traditions of Islam. As a result, unethical activities would probably lead to deterrence. The Quran has laid emphasis to a large extent on the Islamic work ethics thereby results in the blatant violation of the rights, related to the freedom of religion. Islamic work ethics also imply that contravening any concept that is related to Islam would result in breaching the ethics while undertaking any business activity thereby it leads to stringencies to a huge extent. It further asserts that turnover of employees is lower in comparison to the employees following other forms of religious ideologies relating to the compliance of ethics at the workplace (Fazeli 2018); however, such claims have merely been made by scholars who are primarily engaged in research and analysis concerning the disciplines of Islamic work ethics thereby they are restricted or limited. This has further led to the emergence of various kinds of literature gaps in course of the conducting and undertaking the research-based discourse. It is essential to address such gaps at the earliest.

Absenteeism

The concept of absenteeism implies the leave from work for a certain period devoid of any strong reason. The main factor that is related to the absenteeism of employees from the workplace is the low level of motivation to work. It may also lead to the high turnover of employees. Absenteeism takes place mainly because of the negativity in the work environment prevalent and also due to huge workload and low pays thereby it leads to exploitation of employees.

The term “absenteeism” is derived from the Latin Word, “absentia” (Mashonganyika 2004). In 1904, the word absenteeism came into public appearance and the trem “absenteeism” was used for the first time in New York Times (Patton 2005). This term, “Absenteeism”, began to attract the scholars in 1940’s with appearance of the first empirical studies by (Jackson 1994), and 9Noland 1945) on the causes and consequences of absenteeism (Mashonganyika 2004). According to (Banks, et al. 2012), there is no standard definition about absenteeism; it is described mostly as non-attendance of workers for scheduled work.

(Dame Carol Black 2010, Retrieved 14th 2017) states that Absenteeism is an unplanned absence or being absent from the work. It indicates the poor performance of an individual also breaking the contract between the employer and the employee. The latest and modern definitions of absenteeism by (Investopedia 2018) given as absenteeism is the usual non-presence of an employee at work place which extends beyond the normal allowed amount of time. Absence levels are there in all private and public organizations regardless sectors. The Larger Organizations have higher absenteeism compared to small sectors. (Annual Survey Report 2016).

What are the reasons that lead the workers not to go to work? The terms regulated and unregulated absenteeism, used in a recent research studies, was done by (Pallares et al. 2014) where regulated absences are due to common sicknesses (cold, fever, stomach flu, etc.), accidents, or family sick days. On the other hand, unregulated absences are unpredictable absenteeism without proper reason where employees abandon the workplace purposefully. Some researchers suggested that being absent from work could be a strategic move by employees to recover and detach from negative working environments (Vignoli et al. 2016).

(Augustino Robert 2017) narrates that employee non-attendance is one of the most serious problem that is facing the society. Managers of the organizations have the responsibility to find out the causes of their human resources who are missing the work. Absence can be due to many and different reasons. The causes for not appearing at work can be alienated in to four groups as below:

1. **Innocent Absenteeism**

This absenteeism refers to the workers who are absent for reasons due to uncontrollable event like wounds and natural calamities. The employee cannot be responsible or cannot be blamed for non-attendance. It is called as blameless, innocent or unauthorized absenteeism.

2. **Blameworthy Absenteeism**

Culpable or Blameworthy malingering refers to workers who are non-attendant without approval for reasons, which are within their control. For example, an employee who is on sick leave even though he/she is not sick, and it can be proven that the absent employee, who was not sick, is guilty of blameworthy absenteeism. Hence, to feel guilty is to be culpable. In an employee relations context, this means that progressive discipline can be applied.

3. Sanctioned or Authorized Absenteeism

When any employee is absent from the workplace with the permission of higher management or the consent person, it is called as sanctioned or authorized absenteeism.

4. Unconstitutional or Unauthorized Absenteeism

The absent from the work without permission or not informing to even consent person is called as unconstitutional or unauthorized absenteeism.

By using the meta-analysis, (John and Miraglia 2015) summarized the validity, reliability and accuracy of absenteeism as self-reports. Self-reports absent results show the range of sufficient test-retest reliability and reveal the good rank; however, tworkers have more tendency to underreport their absenteeism, and also self-reports absent is more accurate when sickness absence is more than the absence for any reason. In conclusion, the self-reported absenteeism might serve as a valid measure in some correctional research designs.

(Kocakulah et al. 2016) express that the tendency towards the absenteeism is rising over the years and becoming very difficult in business sectors. The main reasons for unplanned absences are the employee's illnesses and personal problems which affects morale, absence, and productivity at workplace. Employers have been attempting to decide the validity of these sicknesses and offer incentives and propose possible solutions to alleviate these absences. They recognized the prime factors of absenteeism, possible "cures" that exist for these factors, and present results of organizations that have implemented programs to fight the problem of absenteeism.

Presenteeism

A growing body of research indicates that the problem of workers being on the job but not producing at their usual output can cut individual productivity by one-third or more. This is known as "Presenteesim" which is aligned with sickness (Kocakülâh 2017). Presenteeism is a term that is used to indicate to an employee who under any circumstances is physically present but not producing anything.

According to (Investopedia 2018) presenteeism is defined as the problem of a worker who cannot do the task fully at workplace because of personal issues or other medical problems. Though the employee is physically present at work, he/she is less productive. (Forbes 2018) some quotes in his article say that absenteeism affects the economy of the USA more than $ 150 million every year. Further, the journal of American Medical Association conducted a study which reveals that the productivity lost only due to sickness and followed by depression.

Compared to Absenteeism, presenteeism is positive phenomenon, but the production is lost but being present at work is the main sign. Not many research studies done on presenteeism. However, absenteeism is much a more studied concept. Absenteeism is always unplanned without any reasonable issue behind it. Some studies say that absenteeism is also difficult to measure.

Here are some of the reasons for presenteeism: one may fear losing his/her job, less sick leaves, fidelity towards the company, replacement issues and employment shortage.

Absenteeism Causes

As already mentioned in this research, there are short-term and long term absences. Though the genuine sickness of the workers is the common reason for absenteeism and many research studies are done, there can be other hidden reasons too. There are, however, additional factors too that affect the employee. (Miller J, 2016) narrates that the main causes for absenteeism are job satisfaction, personal issues and prolonged medical issues, other multi-dimensional problems, the involvement between employers, workers, workplaces, and social and economic factors. Loss of productivity and work delay from workplace are the indicators to the project management to check these signs immediately. However, the universal understanding is the same of the different factors affect the employees at workplace. (Beehr 2014) and (Deery & Jago 2015) explain other factors like gender, age, lack of perception about the organization, stress and psychological factors are also aligned with absenteeism.

1. Psychological Factors

Psychological factors at work refer to work connection among work environment, cultures, requirements, needs, health influence and work performance. According to (Fernandes & Pereira, 2016) work always demands on quantitative (Work load & Place), Cognitive (making decisions) and emotional (equalization). There are higher levels of absenteeism that experiences distortion in their psychological situations. (Fernandes and Pereira 2016) examined the effects behind psychological risk factors at work place concluded that, poor psychological working atmosphere lead to various problems.

2. Illnesses and Injuries

The CIPD survey report (2016) explains the main causes for short-term absenteeism among the employees are reported as 75% that relating miner sicknesses that of cold, cough, flu, headache and stomach pain. The same survey asked the organizations to select the most common causes for the short-term worker's absence. The results show, physical illnesses: minor sicknesses (95%), stain in the neck (47%), back pain (34%). Mental illnesses: anxiety/depression (34%), frequent medical problems (31%), outside the work injuries (18%), serious medical conditions such as Cancer or Heart problems (16%), pregnancy-related absences (not maternity leave) (11%), work-related accidents (6%), and drink- or drug-related conditions (2%).

3. Age

Age can be a factor when it comes to absenteeism, but scholars are divided between how and why it affects employee absences. (Rembiasz1 2017) speaks about age which declines work ability at the organizations. Mental and physical functions become weak as we grow older. Individual develop some health issues and chronic diseases which become worse to continue the work. The process of physical, mental and psychological and statues in the society differs from person to person depending on the work environment. (Kaźmierska & Stankiewicz 2016) points out that, older employees have more work-life balance and having experiences at work with management and peer group makes them strong compare to young employees (Who do not have much work experience) who are more liable to absent.

4. Stress

In today's fast paced world, it is impossible without stress. It is worldwide phenomenon that occurs in various forms in every workplace. (Slavyanska, Dimitrova and Stankova 2017) the term "stress" defined as a mental tension (strain) which is caused by personal problems or the workplace (management or employees). (Khurshid 2017) stress occurs when there is too much work and limited time to complete it and get into depression high blood pressure, mental illness, coronary heart disease and end up with poor performance such as lose of time, accidents and employee's absenteeism increasing the costs for organizations. Long-term stress can be a serious threat of an employee; in turn it affects family life (Shagvaliyeva &Yazdanifard 2014). The employees become physically and psychologically exhausted because of challenging work schedules. Again their research study results show that, the worker's life style, mental and physical affects the productivity and work performance of the employee at workplace.

There are three main hospitals affiliated to Dubai Health Authority conducted a research study by Al Mazrouei, Al Faisal, Hussein, El Sawaf & Wasfy in 2015, the findings that the high score level of stress was (48.9) among the physicians and among the females, because their involvement and roles back grounds from traditional families. In addition, a survey was done by CIPD (2016), stress was the most common cause for log-term absenteeism, and the participating organizations were 29% and the results from 53% responses shown as long-term absence is one of the most common absenteeism. Again, stress was also termed as the cause for the short-term absenteeism. The responded organizations were 13% and reported were 47% as short-term absenteeism one of the most common.

(Beehr 2014) said the stress is slightly linked with job satisfaction and adds to absence inside and outside the work place. In addition, the work related stress developed from factors such as heavy workload, poor communication skills, changes in the organizations and rapport between the employees and the management (Mondy & Martocchio, 2016). Stress play a negative role in both personal (Symptoms like headache, blood pleasure, back spasms, coronary heart disease, poor health behaviour and mental depression) and organizational level (high employee turnover, poor control and increase in absenteeism).

Project Management in Islamic Outlook

The Islamic Work Ethics imply that it is extremely important to deliver the completed projects on a timely basis by adhering to the prescribed schedule, cost and ensure productivity and project precise project deliverables. It would help in the increase in the quality of production

of the person concerned as project manager or sponsor thereby being immensely beneficial for the organisation concerned. Therefore, it is vital to accomplish the projects in a timely manner on part of the organisation with regard to the Islamic Work Ethics (Murtaza, et al., 2016).

Absenteeism in the Project Environment

In project management, the workplace attendance and absenteeism are fundamental because it affects the project as a cost of production, yet lost productivity also affects the whole society and its economy directly and indirectly. While Absenteeism at workplace adds costs to the additional burden on workers and employees (Mishra and Verma 2017), it explains absenteeism as a main setback, which affects the whole industrial economy unfavourably. Additionally, absenteeism is one of the most establishing factors among the employees. In any organizations, the consequences are losses in production. The productivity and the losses by absenteeism explained in term of money would be disturbing the management of the Industry. According to (Dickerson OB, Horvath EP 2014) Attendance at workplace, productivity and commitment towards organization are the important components of human resource performance. Workplace attendance and the absenteeism are interlinked in many factors.

Generally, workplace attendance is considered to reflect the complex person-work-enterprise-society relationship. These factors may vary between the societies, workplaces, workers and individuals to influence only in certain cases. (Akgeyik 2014) says the statistics reflect that worker absenteeism produces from dramatic costs to national economies in terms of lost productivity. According to (Pecillo-pecek 2013), research has been shown that more than 44% of illness absence, without appropriate reason at work place, 27% of health issues which are caused by inadequate psychological factors and 17% are not exactly accidental absenteeism. Therefore, worker's attendance and the operation at the sites are very important for the success of the project. Productivity of the project at the site too depends on the skilled and experienced employees. Over all the environment of the projects are the employees and productivity.

(Eurofound 2016) article quotes saying "The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions draws attention to the fact that different methods are used nationally to analyse the cost of absenteeism". Other countries do not use these analyses which involve problems in getting information about the costs of productivity losses. In addition, Derry and (Zatzick 2016) narrates non-attendance has become a common phenomenon in engineering industries and lost the control over the economic disorder

(Maged Mustafa 2018) explains project management is an especial element for the prevention of the project failures and to maintain the costs, timeframes and the needed resources within the budget for smooth process of the project. It's proved by many research studies that, project management has been successful in products delivery and the offer values to the industries Standish Group (2014).

Research Gap Analysis

Gaps in a research occur when there has been a laxity in the analysis over the concerned discourse thereby resulting in the failure to address the research questions or non-fulfilment of the aims and objectives intended for the research or in some cases, both (Galvan, J.L. and Galvan, M.C., 2017). Such gaps lead to the lack of details with regard to the aspects of the concerned subject matter of the research. In order to address the issues as a result of the gaps, a comprehensive solution must be arrived at and subsequently concluded upon at the earliest. This would further aid in the conducting and undertaking of the research in a more amicable and appropriate manner. Taking account of the literature review, it is observed and deduced that the analysis over the correlation between Islamic Work Ethics and low levels of absence from the workplace implies that the research has been conducted and undertaken by being restricted and limited by research. This further involves intolerance towards religions other than Islam. As a result, huge importance is laid over Islamization in order to follow certain ethics at the workplace since such a fallacy implies that failure to comply with such ethics or unintentional breach of such ethics would result in showing utter disrespect towards Islam as a religion (Khalid, et al., 2018). Additionally, strict adherence towards Islamic Work Ethics does not necessarily mean low level of absenteeism from work thereby leading to the low turnover of employees from the workplace. Such factors are mainly implied by the incredible work environment (Lazear and Shaw, 2018).

The gaps in the literature also imply that there has been extremely little or no research over the work ethics involved in religions other than Islam and the ideologies that are followed in the workplace beyond the Arab world and the Middle East (Jabbar, et al., 2018). Furthermore, the research has mainly focussed over the report compiled as per the feedback from a very narrow group of people thereby being curtailed due to religious aspects. It is primarily based on a one-sided view involved in a research thereby failure to consider the opposite opinions and viewpoints. Due to the limitations and restrictions imposed, wider areas of the research have not been explored and implemented. It is further imperative that the research is manly based on the propaganda of Islam as a religion to a massive level by furnishing the incredibility

involved in following the Islamic Work Ethics with regard to the lower levels of absence from the workplace. This further implies that the solutions regarding the addressing of issues at the workplace involve the compliance with Islamic Work Ethics. However, such solutions are not comprehensive in nature as the result in the widening of the existing gaps of the literature involved the research. Islamic Work Ethics is totally contradictory to the concepts concerning universalism as it is bound by territorial and religious aspects. It is also contrary to the theory of motivational needs on a hierarchical basis which has been developed and formulated by the renowned American psychologist Abraham Harold Maslow.

Islamic work ethics state that absenteeism leads to lower amount of productivity (Ilyas 2018). However, scholars have failed to analyse the fact that absenteeism does not necessarily mean the decrease in the level of delivery of performance as the presentation of the quality of work is more important than just simply putting in hours of work which results in an unsatisfactory outcome. Deriving a comprehensive solution in a timely manner is more important than lower levels of absenteeism. Furthermore, it is essential to reward employees for their delivery of incredible performance in the form of incentives and awards thereby resulting in motivation of employees which would further lead to the low turnover of employees. It is imperative that adherence to Islamic Work Ethics would not necessarily result in the job satisfaction of the employees as various people belong to different backgrounds. It is to be seen that whether Islamic Work Ethics are compatible with the tenets required for the formulating and implementation of the policies relating to Diversity at the Workplace in order to undertake a non-discriminatory approach. Such non-discriminatory approach must be related to the basic principles of natural justice of equality and fairness in the interests of egalitarianism and humanitarianism. However, the concepts governing Islamic Work Ethics are no different from discriminatory approach as it implies the preference of Islam over other religions. Additionally, Islamic Work Ethics is not concerned about the welfare of the workers or employees in an appropriate manner as per universal norms and standards.

Critical Analysis

While this study stresses upon the benefits of Islamic Work Ethics relating to low absenteeism, it should be noted that such kinds of perceptions and apprehensions are restricted and limited by religious points of views. Additionally, these types of notions and opinions trigger and eventually result in the mass propaganda of Islam thereby leading to Islamisation. Furthermore, such beliefs may also result in the issues concerning proselytism, which implies the forcible conversion of people into Islam.

The discourse has provided a wider scope and opportunity for enthusiastic research scholars to extend the research in a more efficient and effective manner. Such research must be conducted and undertaken by analysing the links between Islamic Work Ethics and absenteeism in a deeper manner. It must help in the addressing of the gaps that emerged in the reviewing of the literature of the research at the earliest. It should also be seen whether the compliance with Islamic Work Ethics is the only solution to resolve the problems and address the issues relating to absence from workplace since the key thing involved in absenteeism is the motivation of employees which drives them to produce positive results with regard to the concerned projects, tasks and activities.

Consideration of ethics involved in the conducting and undertaking of the research is extremely essential for the purpose of carrying out analysis since breach of research ethics results in blatant violation of laws relating to intellectual property rights as far as copyright is concerned. Collection and sampling of primary and secondary data must be done in a more appropriate manner at a wider level in order to get an insight of the broader aspect of the relationship between the following of Islamic Work Ethics and the low levels of absence from work which is perceived and apprehended to result in the rise of productivity of employees at the workplace (De Stobbeleir, el., 2018). It must also be noted that the research must contain such a presentation that it guides the intended reader properly.

Chapter Three

Conceptual Framework and Research Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, there will be a projection of the conceptual framework of the research. Moreover, it also outlines the hypotheses of the study and describes the methodology that is followed to answer the research questions. It is essential to develop a conceptual framework in order to make a critical analysis of a research thereby facilitating the ease of distinguishing effectively and appropriately.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework provides an insight into the link between the dependent and independent variables. The framework provides an insight into how Islam work ethics influences the rate of absenteeism in the workplace. The research is concerned primarily about the relation of Islamic Work Ethics and the low levels of absenteeism from work and impacting projects thereby providing a platform to make an analysis over the issues and questions relating to the higher levels of motivation of employees. It would further aid in the paving of a pathway regarding the differences involved in the lower turnover of employees being the outcome of following Islamic Work Ethics or rewarding in the form of awards and incentives. In this research, an inductive approach has been followed since the research and analysis has been narrowed down to a religious aspect instead of focussing on the major factors relating to the low absenteeism from the workplace. The main concepts involved in the research involve Islamic Work Ethics, absenteeism and productivity.

The concept of Islamic Work Ethics implies the duties and obligations which are needed to be fulfilled by a person as per the Quran and the teachings imparted by Prophet Mohammed. Islamic Work Ethics are primarily expected to uphold the traditions and values of Islam. The concept of absenteeism implies the non-reporting of employees to the respective work station beyond a considerable amount of time. Unauthorised Absence or Absence without Leave leads to the misconduct on part of the employee concerned thereby resulting in action on grounds of acts which constitute indiscipline. Such kind of misconduct results in the breach of work ethics to a huge extent. The concept of productivity implies the undertaking of a qualitative task which is eventually expected to result in a satisfactory outcome. It is expected to meet the desired goals and objectives in a timely manner through a comprehensive approach.

The factors governing the link between the following of Islamic Work Ethics and the low levels of absence from work primarily involve the geographical location of the workplace and the surroundings concerned. In addition, the economic situation of the country or region where the workplace is situated also plays an important role in defining the linkage between the following of Islamic Work Ethics and the low levels of absenteeism from the workplace. It is not necessary that the implementation of Islamic Work Ethics would always lead to the desired outcomes with reference to the decrease in the levels of absence from the workplace in question. To roll up, it is observed that the research-based discourse is mainly centred around the propagation of Islam being a factor of employee motivation.

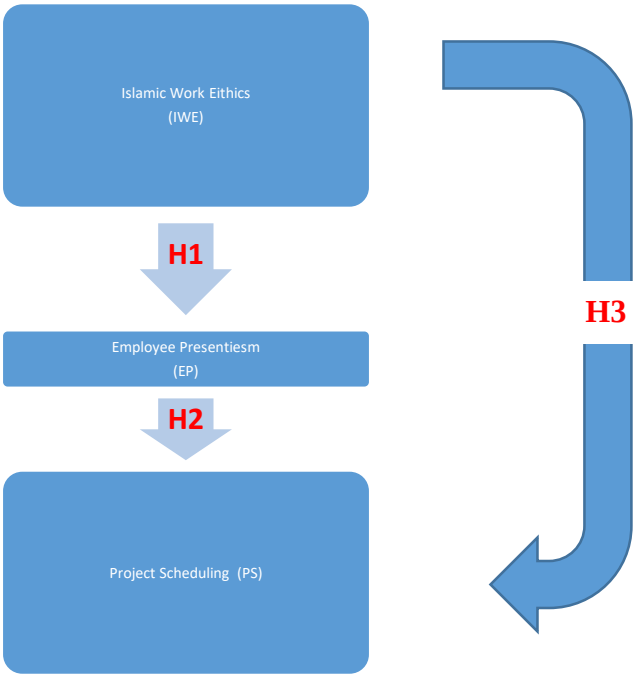

Figure 2: conceptual framework

Research Hypotheses

Considering the literature review conducted, it is evident that work ethics among the Islam community is an important consideration, which involves undertaking a task equivalent to fulfilling an obligation. The fact that every individual must work to live well in the current society depicts that the members of the Islam community must work to fulfil their obligation in the world. Work ethics and absenteeism are the two variables explored in the study. Work ethics is the independent variable while absenteeism is the dependent variable.

The basic assumption of the study is that a Muslim employee who understands the importance of work ethics has a limited chance of being absent from the workplace and high chances of finishing the project as scheduled. This will be broken down into three hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1:

A project manager who exhibits Islamic work ethics has low level of absenteeism in public project the UAE.

Hypothesis 2:

A project manager who exhibits Islamic work ethics has increased chances of in public projectized organizations in the UAE.

Hypothesis 3:

A project manager who exhibits low level of absenteeism in public project the UAE has increased chances of finishing projects as scheduled.

Research Methodology

The presented research methodology section is effective in discussing the process in which data will be collected, interpreted and analysed to support the research hypotheses. The proposed study will utilise a quantitative method research design which tests the relationship between Islam work ethics and the rate of absenteeism in the workplace. The quantitative research approach in the proposed study will involve gathering data through questionnaires as the researcher seeks to interpret the generated findings from the study (Salmon, 2016). Through this method, the researcher is provided with an opportunity to explore the social phenomena through the implementation of inductive reasoning. This technique creates an opportunity for the researcher to explore the social phenomena based on an assumption that data will always influence theory. The questionnaire which will be utilised for the study will include important elements which explain the link between the dependent and the independent variable. The questions will be established based on the findings evident in the literature review section. The questions will assess the elements of the dependent variable in the study such as absenteeism in the workplace as well as project scheduling. The generated data from the study will be documented in tables and further visualised on graphs to establish the existing link between be the variables. The scale of Islamic work ethics is adopted from Ali's scale (1988), and the scale of absenteeism is adapted from (Hausknecht, Hiller, and Vance 2008), while the scale of project scheduling is adapted from (Assaf and Al-Hejji 2006).

Reliability Analysis

To test for reliability, Cronbach Alpha test was implemented. To establish reliability, data obtained from a pilot test conducted initially will be analysed through the use of SPSS software. Based on the generated findings from this activity, a correlation matrix will be obtained as a way of providing a stronger ground for the relation of the variables. To generate internal consistency reliability, Cronbach Alpha test is conducted. Pearson Product Moment

Correlations which relies on the use of SPSS is implemented to establish the validity of the research instrument. If the generated scores correlate with that of the total scores, it is evident that this qualifies the instrument as valid.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation test was implemented to test for the existing correlation between the dependent and the independent variables. The independent variable factors examined in the study includes the various forms of absenteeism such as innocent absenteeism, blameworthy absenteeism, sanctioned or authorized absenteeism, and unconstitutional or unauthorized absenteeism and how they are associated with the Islamic work ethics. The derived correlation values between the figures were established between 0.3 and 0.6 which shows a high level of correlation. The high correlation level depicts the correctness of the chosen hypothesis of the study.

Regression Analysis

The chosen approach for the study was non-experimental. Regression analysis comes in handy in hypothesis testing. The approach is relevant in descriptive statistics since the relationship being investigated is can be described based on the behavioural characteristics of the participants. The fact that a non-experimental research design was implemented in this case suggests that the researcher could examine the relationship without manipulating the variables. Hierarchical regression analysis is also recommended in this case since it enables the researcher to test if the group of variables contributes positively to the variance noted in the study. A program such as SPSS was employed to evaluate how work ethics influences the rate of employee absenteeism and finishing projects within scheduled time.

Chapter four
(Research Findings)

Introduction

This chapter sums up the descriptions of the data collected through the questionnaire. Moreover, the chapter presents a description of the statistical tests that are conducted to analyse the data. Finally, the chapter presents the results of the data analysis.

Sample

The questionnaire was distributed to 200+ project managers in different public organizations in the UAE. 146 responses were received. Incomplete responses and responses from non-Muslims have been eliminated. The total responses used for data analysis is 116. Different

employees from different hierarchical levels responded to the questionnaire all of the chosen participants will be from an Islamic denomination.

Demographic Analysis

The criteria implemented to identify the members of the sample included chosen employees from both genders as long as they were from the Islamic denomination. Additionally, the members of the workforce members must be from public organizations in the UAE. Out of the 116 participants who took part in the study, 63% were males and 37% were female.

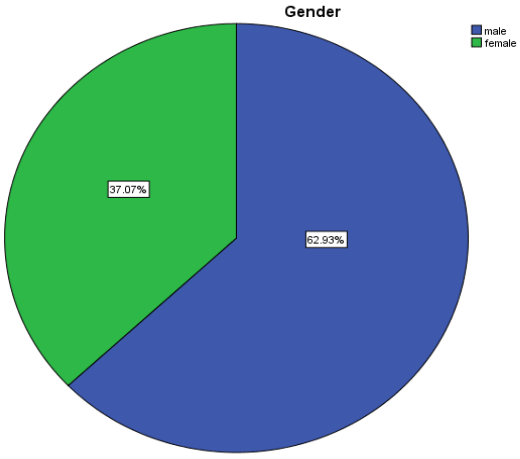

Figure 3: Gender Distribution

The huge number of male participants in the study is reflected in the fact that the members of the workforce in the Islamic firms are majorly of the male gender. 28% of the participants are Emirati; while the other 72% are expatriates from different nationalities. This reflects the status of job in the UAE.

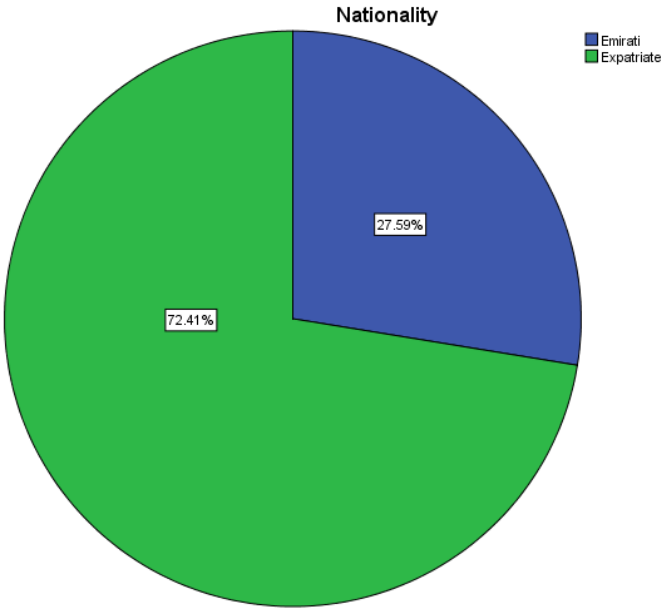

Figure 4: Nationality

The majority of the participants are less than 40 years old. This reduces the effect of old-age illness on absenteeism since ideally the participants should be in a healthy status. The elder the employees the higher probability of being on sick leave. Therefore, it is positive to the study to have participants from a relatively young age.

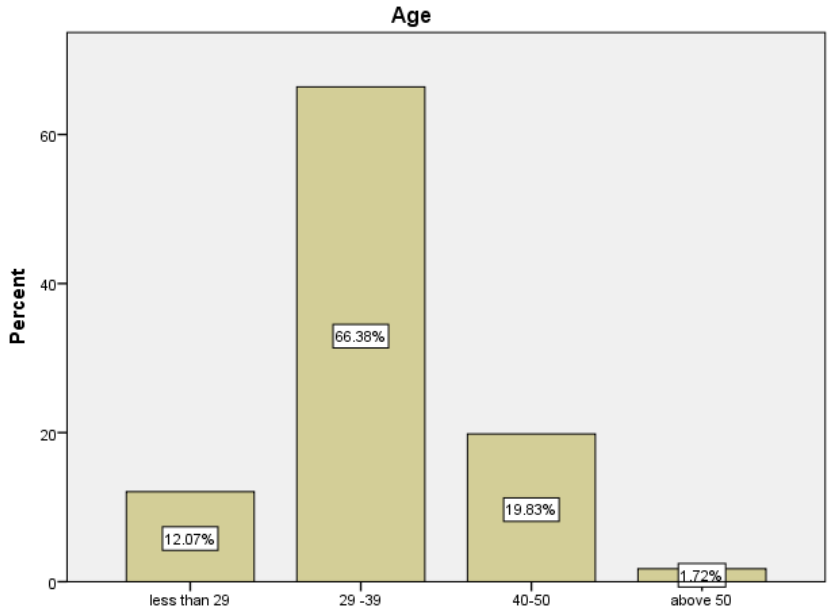

Figure 5: Age

As revealed in the methodology section, the study targeted participants from different managerial levels; however, the data collected was biased to middle management as follows: 5% of participants are in lower management; 81% of participants are in middle management;

while 14% are in the top management. The figure below provides an insight into the percentage Job Status obtained during the study.

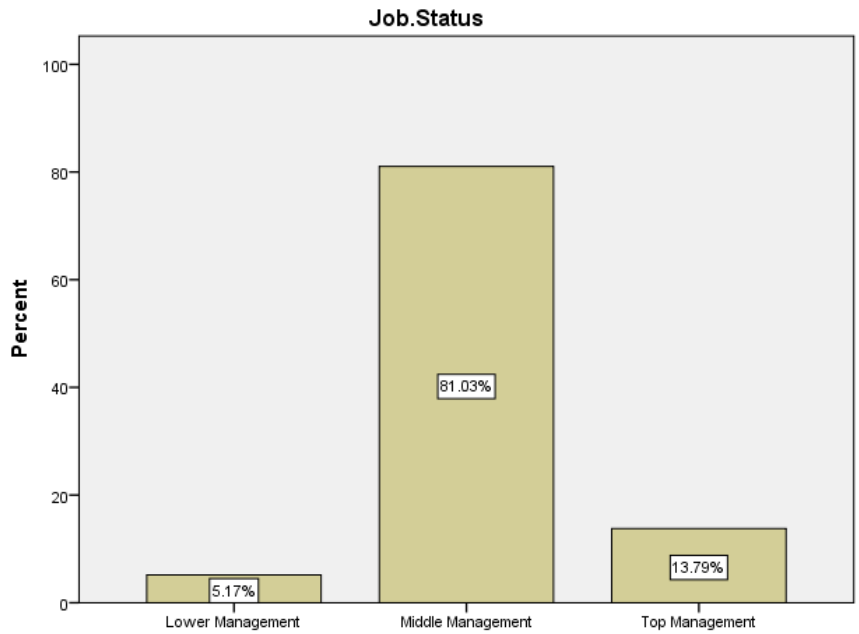

Figure 6: Job Status

The study also identified participants who had a higher level of experience in the workforce. Out of the 116 participants 85% had more than six years work experience.

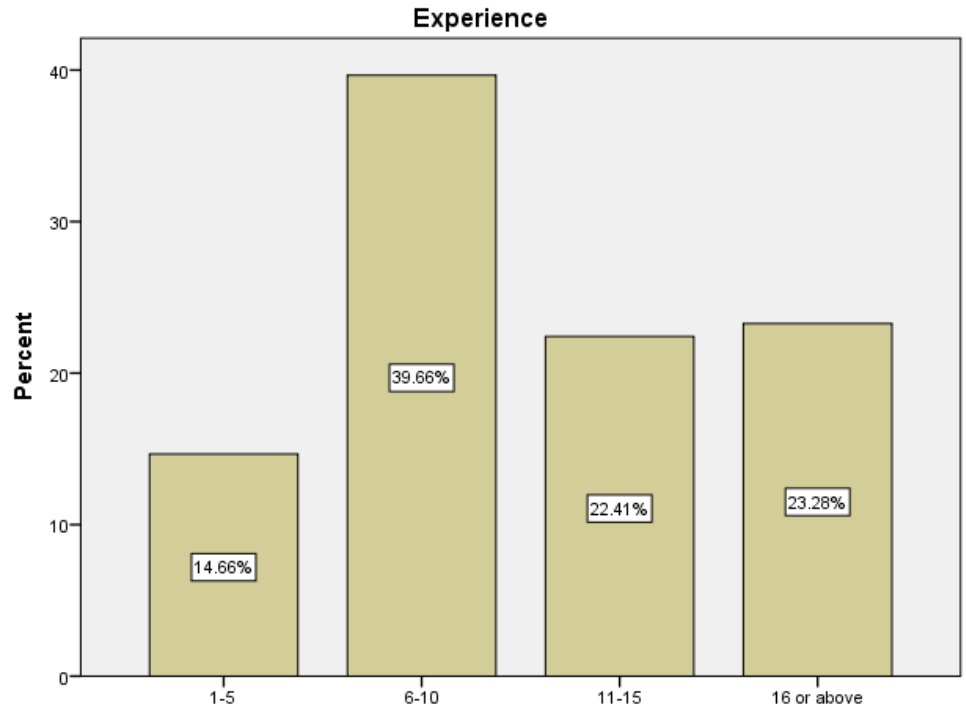

Figure 7: Work Experience

The professionals who have been in the workforce for longer have an increased potential of offering credible data, which can be utilised in the study. Rather than obtaining most of the opinions from the section of the participants who lack enough experience in the workforce. The generated assumption stems from the notion that the professionals who have been in the workforce for longer can easily provide an understandable trend about their rate of absenteeism and how it was influenced by the work ethics. Therefore, the chances of generating more accurate results are achieved in the process. To measure the consistency of the obtained research data, reliability analysis should be conducted.

The academic qualification of the participants shows that all of them have a university degree, while 56% of them have a post-graduate degree as shown in the graph below.

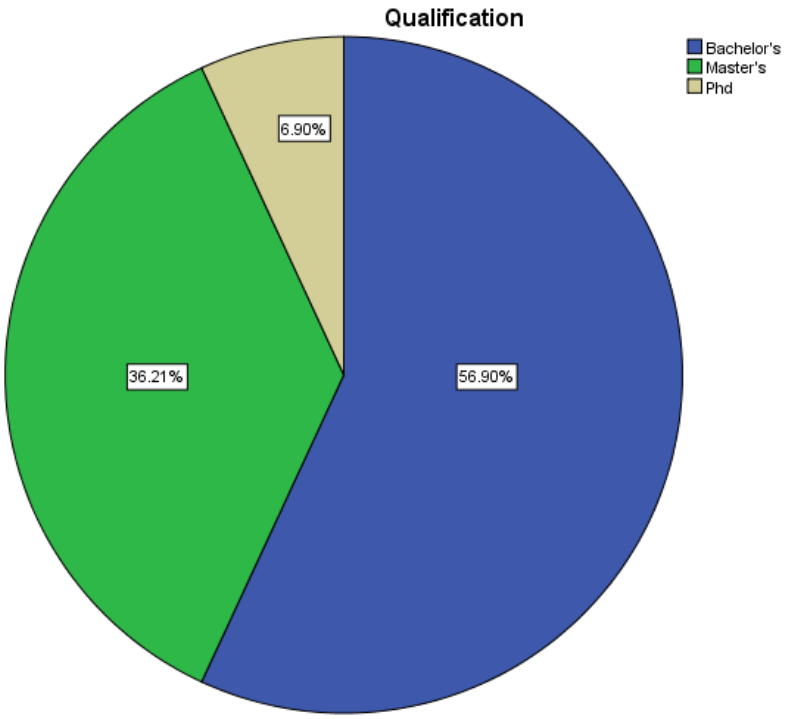

Figure 7: Qualifications

Reliability Analysis

The results of reliability tests show the items of ‘Islamic work ethics’ consolidate a reliable variable, the items of ‘absenteeism’ consolidate a reliable variable and the items of ‘project scheduling’ consolidate a reliable variable as all Cronbach's Alpha is higher than 0.7. See table 1.

Reliability Statistics

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Islamic work ethics	0.910	7
absenteeism	0.828	5
project scheduling	0.942	6

Table 1 Reliability test statistics

Correlation test

A correlation test was conducted to test the bivariate relationship among the three variables: Islamic work ethics, absenteeism and project scheduling.

Correlations

		Islamic work ethics	Absenteeism	Project Schedule
Islamic work ethics	Pearson Correlation	1	-.834**	.884**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	116	116	116
Absenteeism	Pearson Correlation		1	-.774**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000
	N		116	116
Project Schedule	Pearson Correlation			1
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N			116

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

Table 2 Islamic work ethics, absenteeism and project scheduling.

Islamic work ethics and absenteeism have a negative significant correlation, r= -.834, p = .05. Islamic work ethics and project scheduling have a positive significant correlation, r= .884, p = .05. Project scheduling and absenteeism have a negative significant correlation, r= -.774, p = .05.

Regression test

A multiple linear regression test was conducted to predict the value of project scheduling based on the value of Islamic work ethics and absenteeism. The regression model is significant at 0.01 level. R_2 indicates that 78.2% variations in project scheduling can be explained by Islamic work ethics and Absenteeism. A change in F value is significant from zero (206.767). Only Islamic work ethics has significant impact on project scheduling. See Appendix B.

Chapter five
Discussions and Recommendations

Introduction

In this chapter, there will be a summary of the main points in the study. Moreover, the chapter will highlight the justified conclusions that have been reached throughout the study. Furthermore, the chapter will demonstrate the limitations of the study as well as the recommendations that the study offers to academicians and practitioners.

Discussion of the Results

The results of the statistical tests show that the three hypotheses were supported.

Hypothesis 1:	A project manager who exhibits Islamic work ethics has low level of absenteeism in public project the UAE.	Supported
Hypothesis 2:	A project manager who exhibits Islamic work ethics has increased chances of in public projectized organizations in the UAE.	Supported
Hypothesis 3:	A project manager who exhibits low level of absenteeism in public project	Supported

	the UAE has increased chances of finishing projects as scheduled.	

Table 3 Hypotheses Testing Results

The fundamental goal of this study is to establish how the Islamic work ethics influence the rate of employee absenteeism in the workplace. The study confirms the positive relationship between the variables. The study examines the context of the proposed relationship between the Islamic work ethics and the rate of absenteeism in the workplace. Through the literature review, it was established that there are several forms of absenteeism likely to be experienced in the workplace such as innocent absenteeism, blameworthy absenteeism, sanctioned or authorized absenteeism, and unconstitutional or unauthorized absenteeism. Poor work ethics intensifies the chances that the members of the workforce will be absent in the workplace since it suggests that the people fail to understand their requirements in the society and the work environment.

The review reveals that absenteeism in the workplace is driven by several factors such as psychological factors, illnesses and injuries, age, and stress. However, the study still confirms that with a proper Islamic work ethics, the members of the workforce in Islamic organisations will not fail to report to work due to unnecessary reasons. The literature review analysed previous recent studies on work ethics which makes it easy to establish the link between the dependent and the independent variables such as absenteeism in the workplace. The study relied on 116 respondents to generate findings for the study. The hypothesis of the study summarises the findings of the study depicting that there is a direct relationship between a positive work ethics and absenteeism in the workplace.

Recommendations

1. To reduce the rate of absenteeism in the workplace, it is recommended that the management should foster Islamic work ethics in the workplace to enhance the employee's positive attitude towards presenteeism. Through proper emotional intelligence training strategies, the members of the workforce will understand how to behave while in the workplace while at the same time have an increased knowledge about proper work ethics benefits.
2. Increasing the level of awareness among the staff members about their obligation to the community and to the workplace will reduce the chances that the members of the workforce will stay away from work hence promoting success.

3. Increasing strategies of motivation for the members of the workforce in the workplace is also an important strategy for the members of the workforce since it enhances the chances that the members of the workforce will be encouraged to show up to work and accomplish their duties as required.
4. Implementing training sessions and seminars is also an important factor of consideration in this case. Through such sessions, the members of the workforce will be educated about complicated concepts and terminology which are important for promoting project success. As a result, achieving a successful vision whereby the rate at which the members of the workforce reporting to work as required increases as needed. When the employees understand the importance of work ethics, it is evident that they will work with the firm to achieve a common positive objective of reducing the absenteeism rate.

Limitations of the study and future research

The study approached projectized public organizations that operate in different sectors and thus the sensitivity of project scheduling could vary from one sector to another. The study relied on 116 responses only the thing that makes generalization of results is challenging due to the limited number of the sample. By relying on questionnaires only, the study was limited to answer yes no questions only and thus the findings for the study became limited to answer specific questions. If it was possible to interact with the respondents to generate findings about the factors, which encourages their absenteeism in the workplace, the study would have become more beneficial and would have higher contribution to knowledge. It is recommended to have further experimental studies on a larger sample with a distinction among the sector in which the public organization operates. The future studies should use various tools of data collection in a sense that further interaction is obtained with the sample.

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Appendix A

Survey

This survey is aimed for a dissertation that will be submitted to the British University in Dubai to obtain an MSc in Project Management. This survey will not collect any specific information related to you, but all responses will be recorded in the survey without revealing your identity and will be treated in a confidential manner. If you have any enquiries or further details, please contact Ms. Noora Alkaeibi (120109@student.buid.ac.ae).

1. Gender

○ Female	○ Male

2. Religion

○ Muslim	○ Non- Muslim

3. Qualification

○ Bachelor's Degree	○ Master's Degree
○ PhD degree	

4. Age Group

○ Less than 25 Years	○ 29 - 39 Years
○ 40 – 50 Years	○ 51 – 60 Years

5. Number of years' experience in the job

○ 1 – 5 Years	○ 6 – 10 Years
○ 10 – 15 years	○ More than 15 years

6. Job Status

○ Top Level	○ Middle Level
○ Lower Level	

7. Nationality

○ UAE	○ Non- UAE

1. Islamic Work Ethic

Statement	**5=Strongly Agree**	**4=Agree/**	**3=Undecided /**	**2=Disagree/**	**1=Strongly Disagree/**

• I should take community affairs into consideration is my work.					
• Competition to improve quality should be encouraged and rewarded					
• Competition to improve quality should be encouraged and rewarded					
• My excess personal needs contributes to the prosperity of society as a whole.					
• Society would have fewer problem if employees are committed to work.					
• Creative work is a source of happiness and accomplishment.					
• Good work benefits both myself and others					
• A successful employee is the one who meets deadlines at work.					

2. Absenteeism (Presenteeism)

Statement	**5=Strongly Agree**	**4=Agree/**	**3=Undecided /**	**2=Disagree/**	**1=Strongly Disagree/**
• My dissatisfaction at work place leads to increase in absenteeism					
• Absenteeism is very much influenced by the norms and ethical values of the country					
• My absenteeism is a negative event that will affect the performance of my project team					
• Due to absenteeism, the productivity of my project team goes down					
• Project manager's ethics can create a working environment that decreases absenteeism					
• My dissatisfaction at work place leads to increase in absenteeism					
• Absenteeism is very much influenced by the norms and ethical values of the country					
• My absenteeism is a negative event that will affect the performance of my project team					

3. Project Schedule

Statement	5=Strongly Agree	4=Agree/	3=Undecided /	2=Disagree/	1=Strongly Disagree/
• I consider time as major criteria used to measure project success or failure.					
• I always plan to complete my projects within the allotted time.					
• Project manager's ethics can create a working environment that decreases absenteeism					
• I motivate my project team to complete their task by the scheduled time.					
• Delivering the project on time will increase the stakeholders' satisfactions.					
• Completing my projects on time so that other depending projects can be completed by as scheduled.					
• I consider time as major criteria used to measure project success or failure.					

Thank you

Appendix B

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.886[a]	.785	.782	2.74735	.785	206.767	2	113	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Absenteeism, Islamic work ethics

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3121.326	2	1560.663	206.767	.000[b]
	Residual	852.916	113	7.548		
	Total	3974.241	115			

a. Dependent Variable: Project Schedule

b. Predictors: (Constant), Absenteeism, Islamic work ethics

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.909	1.115		1.712	.090
	Islamic work ethics	.696	.070	.782	9.906	.000
	Absenteeism	.166	.107	.122	1.548	.124

a. Dependent Variable: Project Schedule