

Employee Commitment to Work Ethics: Influencing Factors in the Public and Private Sectors in Jordan

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Abstract

This research study examines the level of commitment to work ethics among employees in the public and private sectors in Jordan, as well as the motivations behind their behavior. The study investigates whether employees' commitment to work ethics is driven by religious or legal reasons and analyzes the factors that influence this commitment. The research explores the impact of religious and legal values, organizational culture. A questionnaire was developed and distributed to approximately 600 individuals, generating 253 complete responses for analysis. The results indicate strengths in terms of respect, ethical conduct, and adherence to Islamic values, but also highlight areas that require improvement, such as honesty, equal opportunities, and the prevention of gossip and slander. The findings provide valuable insights to guide organizational efforts in fostering a positive, inclusive, and ethically responsible work environment.

Keywords: *Work Ethics, public and private sectors.*

Introduction

Ensuring ethical and moral behavior in the workplace without supervision poses a significant challenge for businesses, institutions, and all daily interactions between individuals and organizations. Most divine legislations brought by religions have focused on the ethics of interpersonal dealings, emphasizing honesty, integrity, and care for others, whether they are humans, animals, or natural resources (Aminnuddin, 2020). This legislation stresses the importance of helping others and upholds numerous values and ethics that govern life. Religions encourage adherence to these ethical standards to obtain good rewards in the afterlife and in the life, and to avoid punishment in the hereafter or in the life.

On the other hand, humans have established laws and codes of ethics since ancient times to regulate human behavior in the workplace or in various aspects of life (Baumane-Vitolina et al., 2016). These laws are designed to govern human behavior, ensuring uprightness through either an approach of persuasion or deterrents through fiscal or moral punishment, as well as through fiscal or moral rewards (Tzafestas, 2018)

Academics and sociologists have developed numerous theories to explain individual behavior and understand the motivations that govern their actions in the workplace.

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Among these theories are those that study internal factors of the individual or external influences (Richards & Schat, 2011). Rights theory entails a company providing equal services to individuals of all races, while care theory involves behaving ethically to fulfill one's duty of care towards others. In morality theory, people act ethically by, for example, transparently reporting all sales and profits because it is considered the right thing to do. Virtue theory can be observed when an individual treats a customer ethically due to their inherent character traits. In deontological theory, employees exhibit moral behavior because they feel obligated to do so within the workplace. For instance, in utilitarianism, an individual may dig a well to benefit an environment suffering from water scarcity. Lastly, justice theory implies that if an individual has been wronged by the state, they should receive compensation for the harm done to them. (Shanmugham & Ramya, 2012), (Su, 2017), (Leidner & Tona, 2021), (Feng et al., 2022), (Garlington et al., 2019), (Lazar & Graham, 2021), (Daher, 2018), (Dubas et al., 2014)

This study aims to explore the level of commitment of employees in the public and private sectors in Jordan to work ethics and identify the motivations that derive their behavior. The study seeks to understand whether employees' commitment is based on religious or legal reasons, as well as analyze the factors that influence this commitment.

The impact of various factors will be studied, including religious and legal values, institutional environment and organizational culture, fiscal and non-fiscal incentives, vision, and managerial leadership. So, this study is an attempt to shed light on the details of employees' commitment to work ethics in Jordan and understand the motivations and influencing factors involved.

Literature Review:

Theories surrounding ethical behavior at work and the provision of services are essential in understanding and shaping organizational practices and individual conduct (Fernando & Bandara, 2020). One prominent theory is consequentialism, which asserts that ethical actions are determined by their consequences. According to this perspective, an action is morally right if it produces the greatest overall good or the least amount of harm. In the workplace context, consequentialism encourages individuals to consider the impact of their decisions and actions on various stakeholders, such as customers, colleagues, and the wider community (Kim, 2022). Influential theory is deontology, which emphasizes adherence to moral duties and principles. Deontological ethics posits that certain actions are inherently right or wrong, regardless of their consequences. In the context of work and service provision, this theory emphasizes the importance of sustaining principles such as honesty, integrity, and respect for others' autonomy, employees are expected to adhere to ethical guidelines and professional codes of conduct to ensure the delivery of high-quality and morally sound services (Coelho & Purkis, 2009)

Furthermore, virtue ethics places emphasis on the development of virtuous character traits to guide ethical behavior. This theory suggests that individuals should cultivate virtues such as honesty, empathy, and fairness to consistently make ethical choices. In the workplace, virtue ethics encourages organizations to foster a culture that values integrity, trust, and ethical decision-making (Chadwick, 2012). Social contract theory argues that ethical behavior arises from the implicit agreements and social norms established within a community or organization. According to this theory, individuals have a moral obligation to fulfill their roles and responsibilities, while organizations are expected to provide a fair and just work environment, respect for individual rights, equal treatment, and transparency are crucial components of this theory when it comes to service provision (Pinto, 2021).

Religion or being religious is seen as a significant factor that motivates people to follow ethical behavior at work. It encourages honesty, commitment, and eliminates the need for

constant monitoring of employees. However, the effects of religious beliefs in the workplace can vary. Some religious individuals may face criticism for their interactions with women, such as avoiding them or treating them differently. Moreover, religious beliefs can be influenced by different ideologies, ranging from extreme to moderate views (Aminuddin, 2019). Adhering to Islamic ethical principles, such as honesty, trustworthiness, and fairness, when dealing with customers has a significant impact on customer loyalty in their interactions with banks. When customers experience a transaction based on trust, honesty, and integrity, it enhances their confidence in the business, regardless of its nature. They feel assured that there is no deception involved, and these values are emphasized not only in Islam but also in all religions (Nasuka et al., 2021).

Islamic values play a crucial role in leadership and management by recognizing the leader or manager as a catalyst for promoting organizational values and culture. They are seen as influential figures who have the capacity to shape the work culture and instill Islamic principles within the workforce. By embodying and promoting Islamic values, leaders create a foundation for a cohesive and ethical work environment.

According to (Sholihah, 2020) “Islamic business ethics are ethical norms based on the Qur’an and Hadith that must be used as a reference by anyone in business activities. Islamic Business Ethics is a process and effort to find out what is right and what is wrong and then do the right thing with regard to the company’s products and services, with parties interested in the company’s demands”

This approach leads to the establishment of a stable system of oversight that fosters employee satisfaction. When employees observe their leaders upholding Islamic values such as justice, honesty, and integrity, it generates a sense of trust and fairness within the organization. Employees feel valued and recognized for their contributions, resulting in increased job satisfaction and dedication (Yulianti et al., 2021). The positive impact of these Islamic values extends beyond the internal dynamics of the organization. Employees who feel secure and appreciated in their work are more likely to provide exceptional services to customers or citizens. By maintaining the principles of Islamic leadership, organizations can enhance the level of service delivery, as employees are motivated to serve others with integrity, compassion, and excellence (Galanou & Farrag, 2015). Moreover, Islamic values in leadership and management contribute to the overall ethical framework of the organization. By promoting transparency, accountability, and respect, leaders inspire a culture of trust and collaboration among employees. This, in turn, leads to improved teamwork, effective decision-making, and a positive work environment where individuals can grow personally and professionally (Thaib & Pa, 2014).

Adopting Islamic ethics in organization has a positive impact on the productivity, performance, and its positive influence on society. This is indicated by a study conducted to measure the impact of Islamic ethics on organizational performance in Malaysia in 2021 (Buldan et al., 2021). However, some people believe that applying Islamic values and ethics in institutions may have a negative effect on their competitiveness, as Islamic values do not accept competitive practices in the business field that characterized by cutthroat competition and sometimes unethical competition.

The adoption of Islamic ethics in organizational performance can bring numerous benefits. Firstly, it promotes integrity and honesty within the business. Islamic ethics emphasize the importance of truthfulness, transparency, and trustworthiness in all dealings. By adhering to these values, organizations can build a reputation for ethical behavior, which enhances trust among stakeholders and fosters a positive work environment. Furthermore, Islamic ethics prioritize justice and fairness in decision-making processes. This ensures that all individuals within the organization are treated equitably, regardless of their status or position. Fairness fosters employee satisfaction and

loyalty, leading to increased motivation and dedication to the institution's goals. It also contributes to a harmonious work environment, reducing conflicts and promoting teamwork (Algumzi, 2017). In addition, Islamic ethics emphasize accountability and responsibility. Individuals are encouraged to take ownership of their actions and fulfill their duties diligently. This mindset encourages employees to strive for excellence and continuously improve their performance. Moreover, accountability ensures that resources are utilized efficiently, minimizing waste and maximizing productivity (Daud et al., 2017).

The purpose of this study

In work environments, materialistic values and self-interest prevail, negatively affecting work performance quality and customer satisfaction. Consequently, this has an impact on loyalty towards institutions and negatively affects the sustainability of private sector organizations. It also diminishes public trust in public sector institutions among citizens. Therefore, this study aims to examine the implementation of ethics in the workplace and analyze its variations based on demographic factors, as well as individuals' religious background and orientation.

Data and Methods:

To achieve the objectives of this study, a questionnaire was developed to examine the implementation of Islamic ethics in the workplace, both in the public and private sectors of Jordan. The questionnaire consisted of 27 questions, including demographic factors. To assess respondents' agreement with statements, a Likert scale was employed, ranging from 1 to 5. This scale provided a measure of alignment between the given statement and the participants' personal beliefs or practical experience. The ranking used in the Likert scale was based on a framework developed by Iowa State University (Brown, 2010). The Likert scale used in this study ranged from 1 to 5, representing different levels of agreement. Specifically, the scale was interpreted as follows: a rating of 1 indicated a very low level of agreement, a rating of 2 indicated below average agreement, a rating of 3 indicated average agreement, a rating of 4 indicated above average agreement, and a rating of 5 indicated a very high level of agreement.

The questions encompassed inquiries related to both the principles and ethics of Islam, as well as general ethical norms within the workplace. Additionally, a question was included to determine the religious orientation of respondents, specifically whether they had religious inclinations or not. This was done to explore potential variations in response averages between individuals with religious affiliations and those without. The research questionnaire was distributed electronically via social media platforms and email, reaching approximately 600 individuals. A total of 253 complete responses were received and considered suitable for analysis.

The collected responses were compiled into an Excel file and converted into a format compatible with SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. This allowed for the calculation of descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, standard deviation, and means. Furthermore, correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between independent and dependent variables, shedding light on potential associations among the variables under investigation.

Results and Discussion:

Table 1 provides a comprehensive analysis of the demographic characteristics of the study's respondents. The sample consisted of 253 participants. Among the respondents, 43.9% identified themselves as male, while 53.1% identified as female. The age range of

the participants was from 1 to 5, with a mean age of approximately 2.72. The standard deviation of 1.11 indicates some variability in the age distribution, with the majority (53.4%) falling within the 20 to 30 years old. In terms of occupation, the mean score was approximately 1.95, among the respondents, 54.2% belonged to the private sector, while 39.5% were from the public sector. The study sample covered all 12 provinces of Jordan, but the highest percentage was from Amman, with 69.2%, followed by Irbid, then Zarqa and Madaba with percentages ranging from 4% to 7%.

Regarding general orientation, the scale ranged from 1 to 3, with a mean of approximately 1.80. Specifically, 56.5% identified as religious, 7.1% as secular, and 36.4% reported having no specific orientation. Participants were asked to indicate the type of service provided by their organization, which ranged from 1 to 9. The mean score was approximately 4.76. Most respondents (35.2%) were in the education sector, while approximately 10% were from the health sector, and 8.3% of respondents from tourism sector. The level of education among participants was about 78% of the respondents held a bachelor's degree.

Table 1 demographic characteristics of the study's respondents

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean	St. Deviation
Gender	Male	111	43.9	43.9	0.56	0.50
	Female	142	56.1	100.0		
Age	less than20	14	5.5	5.5	2.72	1.11
	20-30	135	53.4	58.9		
	31-40	35	13.8	72.7		
	41-50	45	17.8	90.5		
	Above 50	24	9.5	100.0		
Occupation	student	5	2.0	2.0	1.95	0.99
	Private sector	137	54.2	56.1		
	Public sector	100	39.5	95.7		
	Unemployed	11	4.3	100.0		
Place of residence	Amman	175	69.2	69.2	2.74	3.41
	Zarka	12	4.7	73.9		
	Balqa	14	5.5	79.4		
	Madaba	10	4.0	83.4		
	Kerak	3	1.2	84.6		
	Tafilah	5	2.0	86.6		
	Maan	3	1.2	87.7		
	Aqaba	2	0.8	88.5		
	Ajloun	3	1.2	89.7		
	Jerash	2	0.8	90.5		
	Mafrq	5	2.0	92.5		

	Irbid	19	7.5	100.0		
General Orientation	Religious	143	56.5	56.5	1.80	0.94
	Secular	18	7.1	63.6		
	No orientation	92	36.4	100.0		
Field of Work	Health	26	10.3	10.3	4.76	3.19
	Education	89	35.2	45.5		
	Technology	11	4.3	49.8		
	Tourism	21	8.3	58.1		
	Agriculture	2	0.8	58.9		
	Industry	8	3.2	62.1		
	Finance	13	5.1	67.2		
	Trade	13	5.1	72.3		
	Other	70	27.7	100.0		
	Education	Below High School	3	1.2	1.2	3.04
High School		19	7.5	8.7		
Undergraduate		197	77.9	86.6		
Graduate		34	13.4	100.0		

Regarding the statistics for the variable's levels used in the model, table 2 reveals that the work policy places a strong emphasis on treating all colleagues and clients with respect, as indicated by a high mean score of 4.29, This demonstrates a positive work environment that values professionalism and mutual respect. However, there is room for improvement in terms of perceiving honesty and integrity as applied values in the workplace, as indicated by an average mean score of 3.08. This highlights the need to enhance awareness and reinforce the importance of these values to foster a stronger culture of integrity. Furthermore, the mean score of 2.55 suggests that there is a need to further promote equal opportunities and combat discrimination within the workplace. Implementing and reinforcing policies that support diversity, inclusion, and fairness is essential. Similarly, the below-average mean score of 2.61 indicates the potential for improvement in preventing gossip and slander. Encouraging open communication, promoting a positive work culture, and addressing issues promptly can contribute to a more respectful and supportive environment.

On a positive note, employees strongly value maintaining ethical and responsible conduct in the workplace, as reflected in the high mean score of 4.31. This highlights the commitment of employees to upholding ethical standards and maintaining integrity. However, there is still a moderate level of tolerance towards unethical practices, as indicated by the mean score of 3.16. It is crucial to reinforce anti-corruption policies and provide clear guidelines to ensure a zero-tolerance approach towards unethical behavior.

In terms of adhering to Islamic values in the workplace, employees recognize its importance for the organization's success, as demonstrated by the high mean score of 4.37. This highlights the role of Islamic principles in guiding behavior and decision-making within the workplace. However, there is an average perception of the workplace promoting and supporting Islamic values, as indicated by the mean score of 3.33. It is important to further reinforce this aspect and provide opportunities for employees to

practice and integrate Islamic values into their work. Recognizing the importance of adhering to Islamic values in delivering services, employees demonstrate a high mean score of 4.18. This highlights the integration of Islamic principles into organizational practices for sustainability. Additionally, employee’s express confidence in upholding Islamic values in their interactions and service delivery, as reflected by the mean score of 3.92.

Moreover, employees generally perceive a high level of implementation of privacy and confidentiality practices when dealing with clients, as evidenced by the mean score of 3.63. This reflects the commitment to maintaining professional standards and respecting client confidentiality. Additionally, delivering high-quality services that meet client expectations is recognized as significant, as indicated by the mean score of 3.63. This demonstrates a customer-oriented approach and the organization's commitment to client satisfaction. Although the mean score of 3.27 suggests an average perception of avoiding deceptive and misleading practices, it is important to ensure clear guidelines and ethical standards in advertising and marketing activities to maintain transparency and build customer trust. Similarly, the mean score of 3.15 suggests an average perception of providing fair pricing and avoiding price exaggeration, emphasizing the need for transparent and competitive pricing practices to ensure customer trust and satisfaction. Treating all clients equally and avoiding discrimination is perceived with an average mean score of 3.16, indicating the importance of reinforcing policies and providing training to ensure consistent and unbiased treatment. Moreover, there is a moderate perception of avoiding practices that exploit vulnerable populations, as indicated by the mean score of 3.21. Strengthening policies and procedures is crucial to protect and support vulnerable groups effectively. Finally, employees have an average level of awareness and agreement with the code of ethical behavior at the workplace, as indicated by the mean score of 3.06. Regular reinforcement and training can further enhance employees' understanding and adherence to ethical guidelines.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics for the variable’s levels used in the model

Question	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rate
Our work policy emphasizes treating all colleagues and clients with respect in the workplace.	253	1.00	5.00	4.29	1.23	Above average
How strongly do you perceive honesty and integrity as applied values in the workplace?	253	1.00	5.00	3.08	1.18	average
The workplace ensures equal opportunities and prohibits discrimination among employees.	253	1.00	5.00	2.55	1.27	Below average
I believe that gossip and slander is avoided in my workplace.	253	1.00	5.00	2.61	1.35	Below average
I belief that maintaining ethical and responsible conduct is essential in the workplace.	253	1.00	5.00	4.31	1.20	Above average
Unethical practices, such as bribery and corruption, are not tolerated in the workplace.	253	1.00	5.00	3.16	1.35	average
adhering to Islamic values in the workplace is important for the success of the organization.	253	1.00	5.00	4.37	1.14	Above average

My workplace promotes and support Islamic values in work?	253	1.00	5.00	3.33	1.23	average
my colleagues and superiors apply Islamic values in the workplace	253	1.00	5.00	3.17	1.17	average
respecting the privacy and confidentiality of clients is implemented in your work when providing services	253	1.00	5.00	3.63	1.15	average
my workplace emphasize the importance of delivering high-quality services that meet clients' needs and expectations	253	1.00	5.00	3.63	1.21	average
My workplace avoiding deceptive and misleading advertising or marketing practices	253	1.00	5.00	3.27	1.29	average
My workplace providing fair pricing and avoiding price exaggeration when delivering services?	253	1.00	5.00	3.15	1.24	average
my workplace treating all clients equally and avoiding discrimination	253	1.00	5.00	3.16	1.23	average
My workplace avoids practices that exploit vulnerable populations, such as refugees, children, the elderly, and women	253	1.00	5.00	3.21	1.15	average
adhering to Islamic values in delivering services is important for the sustainability of the organization	253	1.00	5.00	4.18	1.15	Above average
I believe I can uphold Islamic values when providing services or engaging with others	253	1.00	5.00	3.92	1.09	average
I have been informed about and signed a code of ethical behavior at my workplace	253	1.00	5.00	3.06	1.58	average

Regression Analysis:

Based on the provided regression results for the variable "WorkPolcy" , The R2 is 0.055, indicating that approximately 5.5% of the variance in the dependent variable (WorkPolcy) can be explained by the independent variables, and we conclude that there is evidence of a significant relationship between the independent variables and the variable "WorkPolcy with F value,2.03 and p-value 0.05. The Variable "HonestyWork". The low p value of 0.02 suggests that there is a significant relation between the demographic factors together with the respondents opinion on applying honesty and integrity in the workplace. while the dependent variable "EqualOpp" which has P value: 0.82, and the same for the variable "AvoidGossip" with p. value equals to 0.93. which indicates not statistically significant "EthicalWork": The F value of 1.25 and the associated p value of 0.03 also suggest that there is a significant relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable "EthicalWork". Also "UnethiImplem" the F value of 3.62 and the very low p value of 0.00 indicate a significant relationship between the independent variables. for the dependent variable "UnethiImplem", the results reveal statistically significant at p value 0.00. as well as for the variable "AdheringIslamic"at p-value 0.01, while the variables "CapableIsVal" and "PromIsVal are not statistically significant. The F values for these dependent variables (0.64 and 0.93, respectively) "CollSupIslam", "RespPriv", "DeceptiveMkt", and "PriceExagg", "AdhIsValSe" suggest that there is a

significant relationship between the independent variables and these dependent variables. The p values (0.03, 0.04, 0.03, 0.02, and 0.03) support these findings. "AvoidDiscr" and AvoVuPop the results suggest no significant relationship with the independent variables. The p values (0.56 and 0.86, respectively) further support these findings.

		R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
WorkPolicy	Our work policy emphasizes treating all colleagues and clients with respect in the workplace.	.055 ^a	2.03	0.05
HonestyWork	How strongly do you perceive honesty and integrity as applied values in the workplace?	.036 ^a	2.90	0.02
EqualOpp	The workplace ensures equal opportunities and prohibits discrimination among employees.	.015 ^a	0.52	0.82
AvoidGossip	I believe that gossip and slander is avoided in my workplace.	.010 ^a	0.36	0.93
EthicalWork	I believe that maintaining ethical and responsible conduct is essential in the workplace.	.041 ^a	3.01	0.03
UnethiImplem	Unethical practices, such as bribery and corruption, are not tolerated in the workplace.	.094 ^a	3.62	0.00
AdheringIslamic	adhering to Islamic values in the workplace is important for the success of the organization.	.055 ^a	3.46	0.01
PromIsVal	My workplace promote and support Islamic values in work?	.010 ^a	0.36	0.93
CollSupIslam	my colleagues and superiors apply Islamic values in the workplace	.030 ^a	2.08	0.03
RespPriv	respecting the privacy and confidentiality of clients is implemented in your work when providing services	.053 ^a	1.97	0.04
ProvdQual	my workplace emphasize the importance of delivering high-quality services that meet clients' needs and expectations	.006 ^a	0.21	0.98
DeceptiveMkt	My workplace avoiding deceptive and misleading advertising or marketing practices	.034 ^a	3.23	0.03
PriceExagg	My workplace providing fair pricing and avoiding price exaggeration when delivering services?	.042 ^a	3.55	0.02
AvoidDiscr	my workplace treating all clients equally and avoiding discrimination	.023 ^a	0.83	0.56
AvoVuPop	My workplace avoids practices that exploit vulnerable populations, such as refugees, children, the elderly, and women	.013 ^a	3.47	0.86
AdhIsValSe	adhering to Islamic values in delivering services is important for the sustainability of the organization	.032 ^a	1.14	0.03
CapableIsVal	I believe I can uphold Islamic values when providing services or engaging with others	.021 ^a	0.74	0.64

Conclusion:

The survey results shed light on various aspects of the workplace environment in both public and private sectors in Jordan. While there are strengths in terms of respect, ethical conduct, and adherence to Islamic values, there are also a gap and areas that require attention and improvement, such as perception of honesty, equal opportunities, avoiding gossip, and ensuring fairness. These findings provide valuable insights to guide organizational efforts in fostering a positive, inclusive, and ethically responsible work environment.

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