

## **Islamic Work Ethics as Mediator between Trust and Knowledge Sharing Relationship**

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### **Abstract**

This research is intended to make few important contributions in the field of Ethics and Knowledge Management, firstly by investigating the contribution of Interpersonal Trust in Knowledge Sharing and secondly that how Islamic Work Ethics is important in making environment more conducive to Knowledge Sharing. The conclusion of this study is based upon the interpretation of results generated from survey data collected from the banking sector of Pakistan. All variables were measured on likert scale. The research represents that Islamic Work Ethics highly and positively mediates the relationship between Trust and Knowledge Sharing. Higher the level of Trust and Islamic Work Ethics, higher will be the level of Knowledge Sharing. The findings indicate that for knowledge sharing, ethical values and trust is necessary. The organization who wants to enhance knowledge sharing should create an ethical and trustworthy environment. According to the researchers knowledge it is the first study which measured the impact of trust on knowledge sharing in the banking sector and also the first to investigate the contribution of Islamic Work Ethics on Trust development and how it contributes in Knowledge Sharing. This research further explores that how trust mediates the relationship between Islamic Work Ethics and Knowledge Sharing.

**Keywords:** Islamic work ethics, trust, knowledge sharing, mediation, ethical values.

### **1. Introduction**

The strength and durability of a structure is mostly dependent upon its foundation and the foundation of an organization is its men, material and capital, for the effective utilization of these elements, knowledge plays a vital role. In this competitive environment and stress

economies knowledge has a pivotal role. It takes the organization at a vantage point to better formulate their policies to be cost efficient by reducing the tendency of reinventing the wheel and innovative by continuous sharing and augmentation of knowledge (Bashouri & Duncan, 2014; Denning, 2006; Lin, 2007).

Organizations are suffering in interpersonal trust generation and knowledge sharing between their employees with variable degree of severity, even those organizations which are highly successful in trust generation and knowledge sharing are still needs to be improve (Kumaraswamy & Chitale, 2012; Lohr, 2002). A noticeable research has been conducted on the relationship of Trust and KS which found significant and positive (Casimir, Lee, & Loon, 2012; Laycock, 2005; Ma, Qi, & Wang, 2008), but the research on variable which can contribute to strengthen this reciprocal relationship is scarce. Trust is important for KS especially tacit knowledge which is otherwise grueling.

It is evident in the past literature on KS that Trust plays an important role (Fathi, Eze, & Goh, 2011; Sankowska, 2013; Swift & Hwang, 2013) but still there is a great room for enhancement of KS. After the critical literature review on KS, specifically contribution of Trust in KS the quest for the augmentation of KS and intrigue for the exploration of novelty started. Previous researches has explored that in order to share knowledge, socialization is important, stronger the socialization higher will be the Knowledge Sharing (Chennamaneni & Teng, 2012) and this study identifies that by the addition of Islamic Work Ethics (Constitutes of ethics of justice and ethics of care) strong socialization is built which make the employees willing in sharing their knowledge.

The concept of ethics is a hot issue in this current era of business. It is directly related to the controversies surrounding the issue is to eliminate the selfishness of workers and organizations for their self-interest by neglecting the stakes of others. This selfishness creates a hostile environment which is destructive for society as a whole. Knowledge is a competitive edge to the individual and according to Ma, Qi, & Wang (2008) knowledge workers are reluctant to share their tacit knowledge which creates barrier to knowledge sharing.

The increase in unethical practices in a quest of self-interest and profit maximization has greatly increased the importance of ethics in the workplace. Ethics encourages the values of morality in society. Where the boundary of law ends, the boundary of humanity begins and that humanity is ethics. Ethics goes beyond law and where law is silent behavior plays an important role to guide human action. Ethics must have benchmarks where they can get directions. In the Holy Quran, Almighty Allah has made the life of His Prophet (PBUH) as a benchmark. "There is indeed a good model for you in the Messenger of Allah - for the one who has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah profusely." (Quran 33:21). This research depicts that if organization generates ethical environment, its employees will be highly trustworthy and willing in Sharing their Knowledge.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Role of Knowledge Sharing in Organizational Success*

Information is the processing of data, knowledge is the processing of information (Rowley, 2007) and knowledge sharing is a process where knowledge (explicit and tacit) is willingly

exchanged between individuals, groups and organizations (Bock, Zmud, Kim, & Lee, 2005; Hassandoust, Logeswaran, & Kazerouni, 2011). Without knowledge or with insufficient knowledge, survival of both the individual as well as the organization is at risk. One source that can result in a long lasting competitive edge for organizations is knowledge and sharing of knowledge helps the organizations to be successful, continuously innovating and creating new knowledge (Nonaka, 1991, 1994; Zack, 1999). In this knowledge intensive economy knowledge is considered as a vantage, the more you are at vantage the better you will be able to devise a comprehensive competitive strategy. KS entail enormous benefits and gives competitive edge to the organization and individual also (Chennamaneni, Teng, & Raja, 2012).

In concurrent organizations KS has gain paramount importance by mitigating intellectual capital loss of the organization when knowledge worker leaves. At the departure of knowledge worker the portion of knowledge attached to it gets drain which results in knowledge loss, while KS assist to retain knowledge of workers within the organization. KS helps in innovating processes and reducing product cost, enhancing workers' productivity and increasing their satisfaction (Lim, Ahmed, & Zairi, 1999).

A conducive environment is important for knowledge sharing which helps the organization to be more innovative (McDermott & O'Dell, 2001) and helps to minimize design mistakes and enhances innovative capability of the firm (Bashouri & Duncan, 2014). KS requires a strong association between the workers, more they are associated, more they will be informal to each other (Chennamaneni, Teng, & Raja, 2012), informality in relations creates an environment of mutual trust and willingness to share knowledge (Issa & Haddad, 2008). Willingness of worker is important because KS is a process which cannot be forced or mandated (Hassandoust, Logeswaran, & Kazerouni, 2011)

Literature on KS depicts that organizations have the tendency to view KS in relation with Social Exchange Theory (Casimir, Lee, & Loon, 2012; F.Cabrera & A.Cabrera, 2005) and Business Transaction Theory (Barachini, 2009) which deals with cost benefits analysis, but if worker perceives that cost of sharing knowledge is higher than it benefits then worker will be hesitant to share knowledge (Denning, 2006). Tangibility and intangibility of benefits are important consideration in KS, if employees perception of benefits is "tangible" like pay increase, promotion, and fringe benefits, such an attitude is not conducive to KS and organization needs cultural change (McDermott & O'Dell, 2001; Issa & Haddad, 2008), while if employees behavior is ethical, socially responsive and strongly committed to the organization it generate a conducive environment for KS.

In knowledge management, explicit knowledge is easy to share, retain, codify and readily available while tacit knowledge is difficult to share, retain, codify and not readily available (Gavrilova & Andreeva, 2012; Nonaka 1991, 1994, 2001; Polanyi 1966). Smith (2001) referred to (Wah 1999b; Lee 2000; Bonner 2000a) that tacit knowledge has greater contribution in attaining competitive edge and entails 90% of the overall knowledge. Sharing of tacit knowledge requires strong association between employees and a mutual trust (Chennamaneni & Teng , 2012; Ma, Qi, & Wang, 2008). Strong association and informal relationship is the prerequisite of tacit knowledge sharing which can be achieved by establishing trustworthy relationship (Holste & Fields, 2010).

Literature has explored different social dilemmas where employees are reluctant to share their knowledge, includes ; nature of self-preservation, job insecurity, fear to loss of competitive position, lack of trust and perception that cost of KS outweighs it benefits(Bock, et al. 2005; Min, 2007). Individual hide their knowledge to retain their competitive position which creates barriers to the organizational success.

In an order to cater these social dilemmas and enhance knowledge sharing a conducive environment is important (Syed-Ikhsan & Rowland, 2004). Previous literature has explored that trust is an important contributor of KS, higher the trust higher will be the knowledge sharing (Casimir, Lee, & Loon, 2012; Ford & Staples, 2010; Hassandoust, Logeswaran, & Kazerouni, 2011; Laycock, 2005). According to Chennamaneni & Teng (2012) Critical antecedents to KS have not been fully explored yet.

### *2.2 Role of Trust in Providing Conducive Environment for Knowledge Sharing*

In order to build an environment of Knowledge Sharing, it is of paramount importance that organizations have an environment of trust and collaboration and understanding of the intensity of Knowledge Sharing. It is imperative to know how much employees are socialized within their organization because close contacts are essential for the transfer of tacit knowledge. Socialization creates an environment of collaboration and cooperation that is necessary for effective learning.

Trust is considered a crucial pillar which holds the organization intact. Trust is also explained as the people's belief and faith that they will act in a positive way (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Trust in the organization builds cooperation among employees and management (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Trust to be fruitful in organizations it must be present at all levels of management. The key factors that can build mutual trust for an organization's employees are communication and Knowledge Sharing (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995).

Trust provides a strong base for knowledge sharing because without it the process of knowledge sharing is meaningless. A knowledge worker is always reluctant to share knowledge until a relationship of trust is built (Casimir, Lee, & Loon, 2012). Many researchers have tested the variable of trust in the fields of Social, Psychological and Behavioral sciences but none of these have fully elaborated the broader nature of trust (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998). Trust can only be fruitful in an organization if it is present at all levels. Those organizations that have embedded trust as a norm in their values tend to be more successful than those who have not. Therefore, trust in an organization builds co-operation among employees and management (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

People must interact with one another because they are dependent on others to fulfill their everyday needs. This interdependency establishes a relationship where trust plays an important part in survival and growth of already established relationships. The more specialized nature of some jobs requires a higher level of trust. It is understandable that no one likes to lose their competitive edge or share it with others until they are sure that it will be beneficial (Wickramasinghe & Widyaratne, 2012).

Trust has major impacts on organization's structure, performance, efficiency and innovativeness (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Those organizations that have trust

as a norm in their system tend to be more successful than those that lack trust (Peterson, 1998). Trust also creates a strong socialization that transforms groups into teams and those teams then have strong influence on Knowledge Sharing (Bakker, Leenders, Gabbay, Kratzer, & Engelen, 2006). Organizational innovativeness can be affected by trust in management and trust in employees. Trust in an organization builds co-operation among employees and management and it can only be fruitful if it is present at all levels of management. Additionally, trust can affect employees and organizations in a positive manner and researchers have found that it has positive effects on the organizations and can cause positive outcomes (Casimir, Lee, & Loon, 2012; Dolan & Garcia, 2002; Kuo, 2013).

One of the key factors that build mutual trust for employees is communication and Knowledge Sharing. Trust helps to promote Knowledge Sharing in employees through communication. Research also shows that better communication with managers can also reduce the fear of unknown anxieties (Harrison & Doerfel, 2006). The presence of trust enables employees to have a proactive approach of solving problems that might occur, rather than a reactive approach, allowing them to utilize their abilities towards organizational innovativeness. Consequently, organizations that have successfully implemented values of trust in their working environment are able to promote Knowledge Sharing and organizational innovativeness (Sankowska, 2013).

Employees' trust in their managers is due in large part to better organizational communication, empowerment, and greater employee development. Accordingly, organizational communication is directly associated with greater employee trust in management (Tzafrir, Harel, Baruch, & Dolan, 2004) which leads to more Knowledge Sharing by employees. Trust also improves leadership as employees have faith in their management to not break this trust. It is because of this trust that employees feel safe to share their thoughts and views with each other which could result in organizational innovativeness.

Knowledge sharing entails sharing of both explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is easy to share and more public in nature while tacit knowledge is the expert knowledge which is difficult to share until the relation of trust is build (Holste & Fields, 2010). Literature on KS is on consensus that trust is an important contributor of KS, especially sharing of tacit knowledge which is otherwise difficult to share (Ford & Staples, 2010).

Trust creates an environment of Knowledge Sharing where trust acts as an input while innovation is the output of the Knowledge Sharing process. Although the importance of trust in Knowledge Sharing has been examined, it needs more attention (Wang & Noe, 2010) as knowledge can be attained through different means including reliance on knowledge worker and the transfer of expertise and knowledge from expert to novice.

### *2.3 Contribution of Islamic Work Ethics in Generating Conducive Environment for Knowledge Sharing*

Religion has a great impact on society whereas most nations are based on religion and the religious impact on human life cannot be ignored. Social values and norms significantly impact the development of ethics but religion undoubtedly plays a fundamental role. Religion provides the base to economic, moral and social ethical dimensions (Ali & Al-Owaidan, 2008).

It is imperative to set standards in order for the people to have direction. “There is indeed a good model for you in the Messenger of Allah - for the one who has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah profusely.” (Quran 33:21). Such benchmarks are very effective in promoting ethical values in a cost effective way (Irwin & Bradshaw, 2011). In many cases individuals will argue that they are acting ethically when in reality they are actually violating ethical values. In the Quran, Almighty Allah highlighted this dilemma. “When it is said to them, .Do not spread disorder on the earth. they say, .We are but reformers. Beware, it is, in fact, they who spread disorder, but they do not appreciate” (Quran 2:11-12). In the Quran, Almighty Allah stated true stories of the deeds of past nations and their consequences and then guided them towards the right path. “Surely, in the narratives of these, there is a lesson for the people of understanding” (Quran 12:111). In the same way, ethics, through human behavior is influenced by history, culture and working conditions. Therefore, way a worker performs is an important consideration in the formulation of a knowledge management system (Wang & Noe, 2010).

Islamic Work Ethics may differ across demographics but it has a positive influence on organizational performance and innovative capability (Yesil, Sekkeli, & Dogan, 2012). Study conducted by (Murtaza, Abbas, Raja, Roques, Khalid, & Mushtaq, 2014 ) represented that IWE has a positive effect on Knowledge Sharing Behavior. Ethics are context specific and differ from society to society but in Islam, work ethics mostly remain the same because they are derived from the Quran and Sunnah. Work ethics, like prohibition of bribery and refraining from usurping another’s wealth intentionally (Quran 2:188); abstaining from alcoholic drinks (Quran 4:43); avoiding extramarital sexual relationships (Quran 24:2-3); refraining from gambling (Quran 2:119); being truthful (Quran 39:33) ; being honest (Quran 5:119); being patient (Quran 25:63); being humble (Quran 24:125); being generous (Quran 17:24); giving alms (Quran 2:43, 2:83, 2:110); and being trustworthy (Quran 4:58) are accepted by every Muslim.

Ethics have gained greater importance in recent decades and have become an important area of concern as related to the cooperation and responsibility of management (Rizk, 2008). It is a discipline that encourages values of morality in society. It is because of ethics that one has the ability to be able to understand the difference between right and wrong (Possumah, Ismail, & Shahimi, 2012). Arab ethical values promote the concept of Akhlaq-ul-Hasana, which constitutes different traits of morality and appropriate conduct in regard to individual behavior. Hence, business ethics combines the ethical values of the entire organization.

Ethics is categorized as ethics of justice and ethics of care. Ethics of justice address the issue, that individual pursuing divergent goals are vulnerable to conflict generation so in order to resolve these conflicts certain principles are required which would ensure fairness. Although ethics of justice abides by law but still it is not sole rational for ethical decision (French & Weis, 2000). In many situations ethics are required which are not abide by law (Ethics of care), such as the case of hostility, nepotism, unfair distribution of wealth, and a variety of unfriendly environmental practices. These practices create unrest within organizations and then, within the society as well. To cope with this growing problem Islam

tries to inculcate ethical practices to inhumane behavior so that managers and organizations will consider the stakes of others when making decisions.

“And O my people, perfect the measure and the balance with justice and do not make the people short of their things, and do not go about the earth spreading disorder” (Quran 11:85). “O you who believe, do not devour each other’s property by false means, unless it is trade conducted with your mutual consent. Do not kill one another. Indeed, Allah has been Very-Merciful to you” (Quran 4:29). Ethics of justice based on principles of equality while ethics of care is based on sympathy, compassion and friendship (French & Weis, 2000), IWE is composed of both of these ethics (Ali 1988; Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008).

Ethics cannot be confined and quantified. Therefore, in order to understand ethics, and to adopt ethical behavior, benchmarks are necessary to provide direction. In the Holy Quran, Almighty Allah said, “There is indeed a good model for you in the Messenger of Allah - for the one who has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah profusely” (Quran 33:21). The verses revealed by Almighty Allah in the Quran and sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is Sunnah and the combination of these constitutes Islamic Work Ethics (Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008). Islamic Work Ethics are then those which are derived from the Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). The life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) serves as a benchmark and is directly guided by Almighty Allah,

“He does not speak out of (his own) desire. It is but revelation revealed (to him)” (Quran 53:3-4). Islam has defined guidelines to perform work with honesty, dedication, and devotion by ignoring all sorts of unethical activities in the workplace (Yousef, 2000).

It is because of ethics that one has the ability to understand the difference between right and wrong (Haroon, Zaman, & Rehman, 2012). Islamic Work Ethics covers a broader spectrum of ethics because it encompasses all aspects of life which are based on the Holy Quran and Sunnah. Ethics in Islam highlight all those aspects that have a positive impact on society because it combines all the preaching of the Quran and Sunnah based on moral values.

In today’s hyper-competitive global economy, organizations are determined to improve product quality, reduce cost, obtain greater market shares, increase production at an optimum level, and, ultimately, maximize profit. With this focus, organizations are more inclined towards a mechanistic structure and this mechanistic approach works for the satisfaction of their shareholders and measures everything in terms of money. However, this mechanistic structure of profit maximization is going against human values because there is prioritization of money over social relationships which is unethical and tends to generate a tense environment which cannot be conducive for KS.

When organizational practices become highly standardized and repetitive, the employee focus becomes limited hindering the enhancement of knowledge and, ultimately, employees’ innovative capability (Robb, 2006). In a mechanistic structure employees are like a machine that restricts innovation and change. In order to decrease the desire for profit maximization and the move from mechanistic to organic within organizations, ethics plays an important role in developing a peaceful environment.

The debate regarding ethical practices is on the rise because individuals are more inclined towards profit maximization which could deprive humanity from adopting good moral

values. Organizations are at large employing Knowledge Management Systems which entails enormous benefits but unfortunately only few have proved their ability to enjoy these benefits (Bock, et al. 2005). It is of utmost importance, therefore, that organizations provide training and then practice ethical values in organizations. Ethical culture generates value and, ultimately, increases profit for the organization both in terms of finances and better corporate social image.

Previous researches have explored the contribution of ethics in KS. Lin (2007) reported that in ethical climate individuals willingly help each other and have significant influence on KS. Islamic Work Ethics is a vast and broader concept as compared to work ethics because it emphasizes hard work and covers all aspects of life based on The Holy Quran and Sunnah. Islamic Work Ethics could be defined as a set of values or system of beliefs derived from the Qur'an & Sunnah concerning hard work. Ethics in Islam highlights all those aspects which have a positive impact on society because it combines all the preaching of the Quran and Sunnah based on moral values. Islamic work ethics is based on the conduct of the individual.

The point at which materialistic rewards become ineffective is the point at which the ethical aspect comes into play. It was narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Prophet Mohamed said: "There is no man who memorizes knowledge then conceals it, but he will be brought forth on the day of Resurrection bridled with chains of fire" (Majah Hadith.261). Ethics and law have different definitions but are parallel to one another. Researchers argue that where the boundary of the law ends, the boundary of humanity begins and that humanity is ethics (Bernasconi, 2014).

There is resemblance between ethics of justice and explicit knowledge and between ethics of care and tacit knowledge. Ethics of justice are usually documented and abide by law and explicit knowledge can also be documented, so implementation of both can be enforced and monitored, while ethics of care are not documented and not abide by law and tacit knowledge is difficult to document, so implementation of both is difficult to enforce and monitored. IWE is composed of both, ethics of justice and ethics of care (Ali, 1988; Ali & Al-Owaihah, 2008). In order to gain competitive edge sharing of knowledge (explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge) is of prime importance and ethics (ethics of care and ethics of justice) can provide conducive environment for knowledge sharing.

### **3. Research Hypotheses**

This research considers the impact of Islamic Work Ethics on knowledge sharing with the mediation of Trust by posing the following hypotheses:

- **H<sub>1</sub>:** Knowledge sharing tends to increase as Interpersonal Trust increases.
- **H<sub>2</sub>:** As Interpersonal Trust increases, IWE tend to increase.
- **H<sub>3</sub>:** Other factors being equal, high level of IWE makes the environment more conducive which enhances Knowledge Sharing.
- **H<sub>4</sub>:** It is possible that at least level of Trust related increase in the KS might be mediate by IWE.

#### **4. Methodology**

##### *4.1 Sample and Respondents*

It is a quantitative research conducted in the private banking sector of Pakistan. Convenience sampling methodology was used and questionnaires were forwarded to the following financial institutions that consented to have their employees participate in the study: Muslim Commercial Bank Ltd., Allied Bank Ltd., United Bank Ltd., Habib Bank Ltd., Summit Bank Ltd., Alfalah Bank Ltd., Burj Bank Ltd., Askari Bank Ltd., Khushali Bank Ltd., Faisal Bank Ltd., and Soneri Bank Ltd. Research participants include; branch manager, operations manager, teller, loan officer and customer care officer. Prior approval was taken from branch managers to distribute questionnaire and all the data from the questionnaires were gathered through self-administered, self-reported questionnaires to ensure the proper reliability of data collection. The author has personally visited banks branches so that details about the study and contents of instrument can be clearly communicated to avoid any ambiguity which can result in wrong interpretation of any component (question) and might lead to inappropriate results. This sort of questionnaire distribution was although time taking and tiresome process but conducted to possibly attain accurate results. All the respondents have voluntarily participated in this study and complete anonymity was granted by convincing them that this study has truly of academic purpose and not any concern with their management. A total of 315 questionnaires were distributed while 185 questionnaires were returned with a response rate of 59%. Of the returned questionnaires, 163 were found to be valid (e.g., completed questionnaires) and useful for this study.

##### *4.2 Instrument and Measurement*

Islamic Work Ethics was measured using a five-point Likert scale consisting of 17 items. This instrument also used by (Ali & Al-Owaidan, 2008, (Whiteoak, Crawford, & Mapstone, 2006); Yousef, 2000, 2001) is a modified version first developed by Ali (1988) that originally consisted of 46 items. Trust was measured on a five-point Likert scale and is viewed from two dimensions; trust between the employees and trust between employees and management. Knowledge Sharing was also measured on a five-point Likert scale comprised of five dimensions: Work Culture, Interaction, Willingness to share knowledge, Recognition, and Information Technology (IT). All variables were measured on a five-point Likert scale with: 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree) and 5 (Strongly Agree).

The following three demographic variables are used:

1. Gender- Coding for male is 1 and for female is 2.
2. Age- 1 (20-27 years); 2 (28-35 years); 3 (36-43 years); and 4 (44 years and above).
3. Education- 1- Bachelor (14 years of schooling in Business administration or Commerce) and below, 2- Masters (16 years of schooling in Business administration or Commerce) and above.

#### **5. Data Analysis**

A stepwise analysis of data is performed using SPSS 20.0. The results have been analyzed by using reliability, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression weights, and path analysis. Initially, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were checked and

briefly illustrated in terms of their frequencies and percentages. Demographic variables were measured and their relation with Trust, Islamic Work Ethics, and Knowledge Sharing was checked. The details of frequencies and relationship of demographic variables with research variables (Trust, Knowledge Sharing and Islamic Work Ethics) are provided in the descriptive statistics of the study (see Table 1, 2 and 3). The reliability of the scales used in this study, checked by calculating Crobach’s Alpha of scale, are presented in Table 4 while Table 5 shows the mean, standard deviation, and inter-correlations of the variables. Regression weights are measured and results are shown in Table 6 and 7.

*5.1 Descriptive Statistics*

The data has been represented in a numeric way due to its quantitative approach. The frequencies and impact of these demographic; gender (Table.1), age (Table.1.2), and education (Table.3), in generating ethical climate, developing trust and willingness to share knowledge are denoted.

**Table 1: Gender**

Gender	Mean			
	IWE	Trust	KS	Frequencies
Male	3.8325	3.5456	3.6589	125
Female	3.8947	3.6132	3.6994	38
Total	3.8470	3.5613	3.6684	163

Male participants comprised the majority of respondents with 125 or 76.7% of the total respondents. There were only 38 female participants, 23.3% of the total participants, which would indicate that most of the respondents working in the banks surveyed are men. Another reason for such a low response rate from females is that they were found to be more reluctant to accept the questionnaires and more hesitant to share their responses.

Ethics are context specific and differ from society to society. Langlois & Lapointe, (2010) conducted a study in Canadian context and found that gender differences did not account for any change in ethical values and supported the results of (Allen, Bacdayan, Kowalski, & Roy, 2005). The study conducted in Kuwait found that males possess higher work ethics than the females (Ali & Al-Kazemi, 2007), while (Alleyne & Persaud, 2012) conducted their research in Barbados and found that females displayed higher ethical values as compared to males.

This study supports the findings of Alleyne & Persaud (2012) and represents that females have slight edge over the males in possessing Islamic Work Ethics. The result of this study also indicates that females have slight edge over the males in generating Trust and Sharing of Knowledge.

**Table 2: Age**

Age	Mean			Frequencies
	IWE	Trust	KS	
20-27 years	3.7718	3.5750	3.6707	66
28-35 Years	3.9179	3.5481	3.6673	81
36-43 Years	3.7843	3.5722	3.7368	9
44-51 Years	3.8151	3.5714	3.5714	7
<b>Total</b>	3.8470	3.5613	3.6684	163

The age of participants ranged from 20 to 51 years. There are 66 participants aged between 20-27 years (40.5% of overall population), 81 participants (49.7% of overall population) are between 28-35 years old, 9 participants (5.5% of overall population) are between 36-43 years old, and 7 participants (4.3% of overall population) are aged between 44-51 years. The examination of age showed that most respondents are young and aged between 20 to 35 years old.

Age differences have not depicted any pattern of change in IWE, Trust and Knowledge Sharing and moreover the respondents having the age of 36 years and above are very small in numbers so it is difficult to draw any conclusion on such a small quantity of respondents.

**Table 3: Education**

Education	Mean			Frequencies
	IWE	Trust	KS	
Bachelor and Below	3.8127	3.5708	3.6081	65
Masters and Above	3.8697	3.5551	3.7084	98
<b>Total</b>	3.8470	3.5613	3.6684	163

Bachelor-(14 years of schooling in Business administration or Commerce) Masters-  
(16 years of schooling in Business administration or Commerce)

Educational level of respondents divided into two categories; Bachelor (14 years of schooling) and below and Masters (16 years of schooling) and above. The participants with bachelor education (14 years of schooling) and below are 65 (39.88% of overall respondents), participants who possess a master's degree (16 years of schooling) and above are 98 (60.12% of overall respondents). The majority of respondents had completed a Master's degree in Commerce or Business Administration).

The data depicted that mean value of Islamic Work Ethics increases as the level of education increases. Employees with higher level of education exhibit higher level of work ethics. Knowledge sharing also increases with the increase in level of education. Employees with Masters and above education are more willing to share knowledge while the employees with Bachelor or below degree are found slightly more trustworthy than others.

**Table 4: Reliability Statistics**

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
<b>IWE</b>	.887	17
<b>Trust</b>	.817	20
<b>Knowledge Sharing</b>	.849	19
<b>Scale as a Whole</b>	.915	56

The reliability statistics of each variable and, then, as a whole are shown in Table 4. The minimum threshold of Cronbach's Alpha is 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), while the Cronbach's Alpha of 17 items of the Islamic Work Ethics Scale is .887 which is highly reliable. The Cronbach's Alpha of 20 items of the Trust Scale is .817 which is also highly reliable. Finally, the Cronbach's Alpha of 19 items of Knowledge Sharing is .849 which is highly reliable. Next the reliability of all items as a single scale was checked and the Cronbach's Alpha of 56 items is found to be .915 which is highly reliable. For a reliable research scale, the value of Cronbach's alpha should be 0.70 or higher. Therefore, as the value of Cronbach's Alpha of all three scales is checked independently, and as a whole, it is found to be greater than 0.70 demonstrating that the research scale used in this study is highly reliable.

**Table 5: Mean, standard deviation, and inter-correlations of the variables.**

No.	Variables	2	3	M	SD
1	<b>Islamic Work Ethics (IWE)</b>	.400***	.365***	3.846987	0.521835
2	<b>Trust</b>	-	.636***	3.561350	0.444698
3	<b>Knowledge Sharing (KS)</b>	-		3.668389	0.463065

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

Correlation analysis of all three variables is given in Table 5. Knowledge Sharing (KS) is the dependent variable, Trust is the independent variable and Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) is the mediating variable. The correlation between Trust and KS is .636\*\*, the correlation between IWE and KS is .365\*\* and the correlation between IWE (Islamic Work Ethics) and Trust is .400\*\*. Correlation between the research variables is less than 0.80 which fulfill the classical regression assumption that correlation less than 0.80 represents that there is no multicollinearity between the variables.

The mean of IWE is relatively high which represents the inclination of the targeted banking sector towards an ethical climate. Similarly, the mean of KS is reasonably high which shows that employees and management are mostly willing in sharing knowledge. The mean of Trust is comparatively low which suggests that employees and management are reluctant in trusting each other and this is probably due to the higher level of individual responsibility in banking sector operations.

5.2 Empirical Results

5.2.1 Validity analysis

Validity analysis of IV (Trust) was performed with varimax rotation. Independent variable show that value (.827) of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy is high and significant (.000\*\*\*). Validity analysis of DV (Trust) was performed with varimax rotation. Dependent variable show that value (.816) of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy is high and significant (.000\*\*\*).

Validity analysis of MV (IWE) was performed with varimax rotation. Independent variable show that value (.842) of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy is high and significant (.000\*\*\*).

5.2.2 Regression Results

Mediation model is tested according to the steps suggested by (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

*Step-1.* Significant relationship is found between trust and knowledge sharing which according to Baron & Kenny (1986) should be significant.

**Table 6: Regression Analysis between Trust and Knowledge Sharing.**

Variables	Independent Variable Trust					
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj R <sup>2</sup>	F change	β	Sig
Dependent Variable Knowledge Sharing	.636	.404	.400	109.120	0.636***	.000

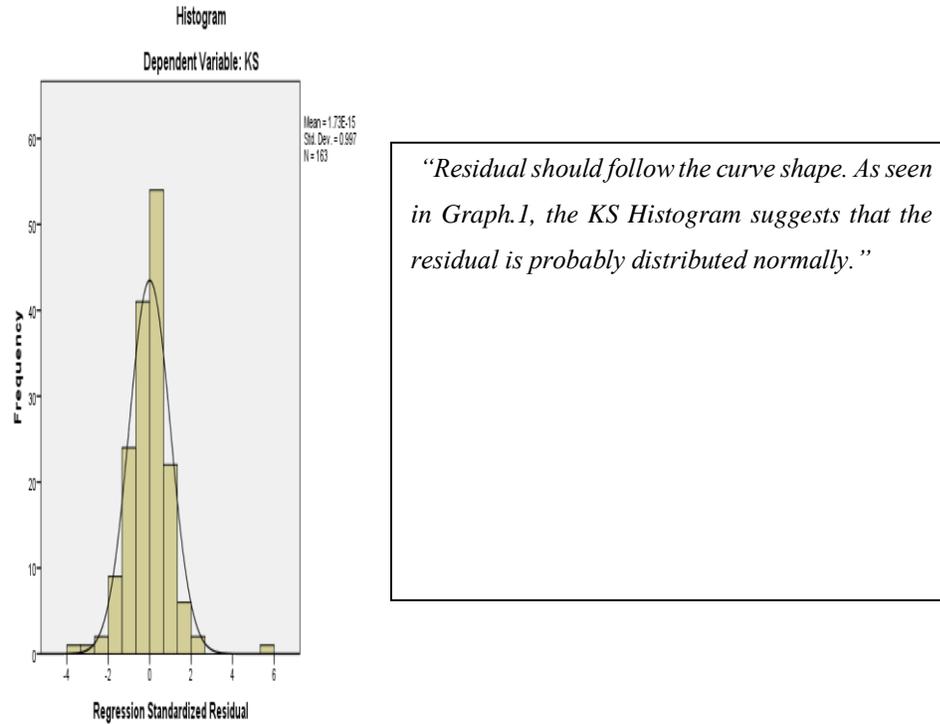
Note: \*p<0.10, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01

According to the Table 6(a) Adjusted R Square is .400 which represents that 40% variance in the Dependent Variable (KS) that is explained by the by variation in the Independent Variable (Trust). R square is .404 illustrating the 40.4% variation in the Dependent Variable (KS) explained by variation in the Independent Variable (Trust).

Sig (significance) represents that estimates are highly reliable at 95% level of confidence. The Standardized Coefficient of Trust is .636 which represents its impact on the Dependent Variable (KS). An increase in Trust will result in greater Knowledge Sharing.

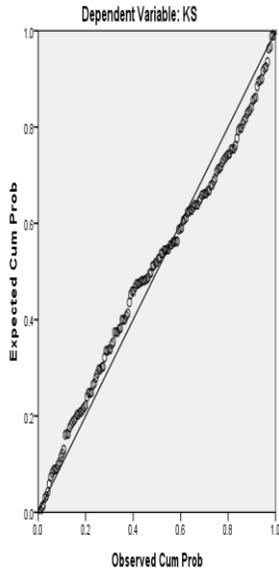
### 5.3 The Production of Plots

Plots are produced for the visual diagnosis of residuals and problem of misspecification and heteroskedasticity. Production of plots also helped to diagnose the violation of the Classical Regression Assumptions.



**Figure 1: KS Histogram**

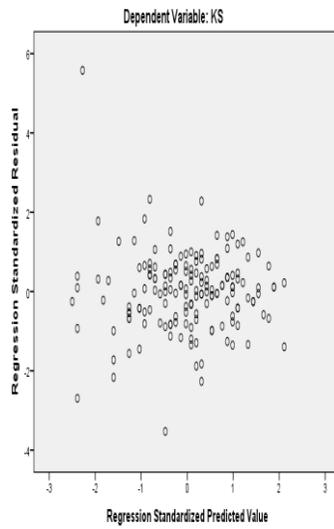
Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



*“In Graph.2, the P-P Plot shows the normality of the data and portrays a normal distribution.”*

**Figure 2: KS P-P Plot**

Scatterplot



*The Regression Standardized Residual, as shown in Graph.3, exhibits that it is following no specific data pattern which supports the regression and hypothesized relationship.’*

**Figure 3: KS Scatter Plot**

Figure 1 and 2 represents normality and linearity of data while figure 3 represents that residuals are normally distributed which depicts that there is no autocorrelation and heteroscedasticity.

*Step-2*

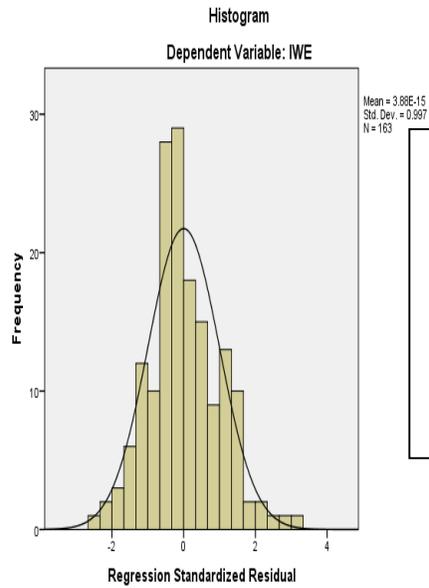
**Table 7: Regression Analysis Between Trust and IWE.**

Variables	Independent Variable Trust					
	<b>R</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Adj R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>F change</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>Sig</b>
<b>Dependent Variable</b> Islamic Work Ethics (IWE)	.400	.160	.155	30.603	0.400* **	.000

Note: \*p<0.10, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01

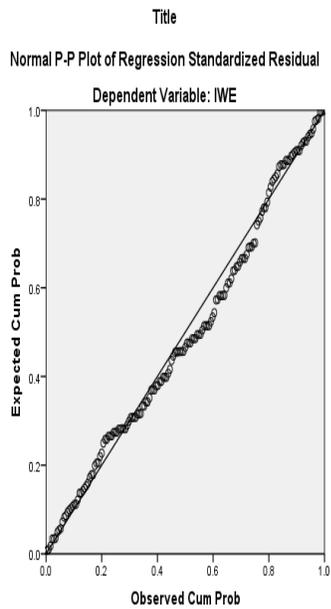
As seen in Table 7 the Adjusted R Square is .155 which represents that 15.5% variance in the Dependent Variable (IWE) that is explained by the variation in the Independent Variable (TRUST). R square is .160 illustrating which represents that 16% of the variation in the Dependent Variable (IWE) which is explained by variation in the Independent Variable (TRUST).

Sig (significance) represents that estimates are highly reliable at 95% level of confidence. The estimated coefficient of Trust is .400 which represents its impact on the Dependent Variable (IWE) as shown in Table 7 Higher the Trust, higher will be the ethical environment.



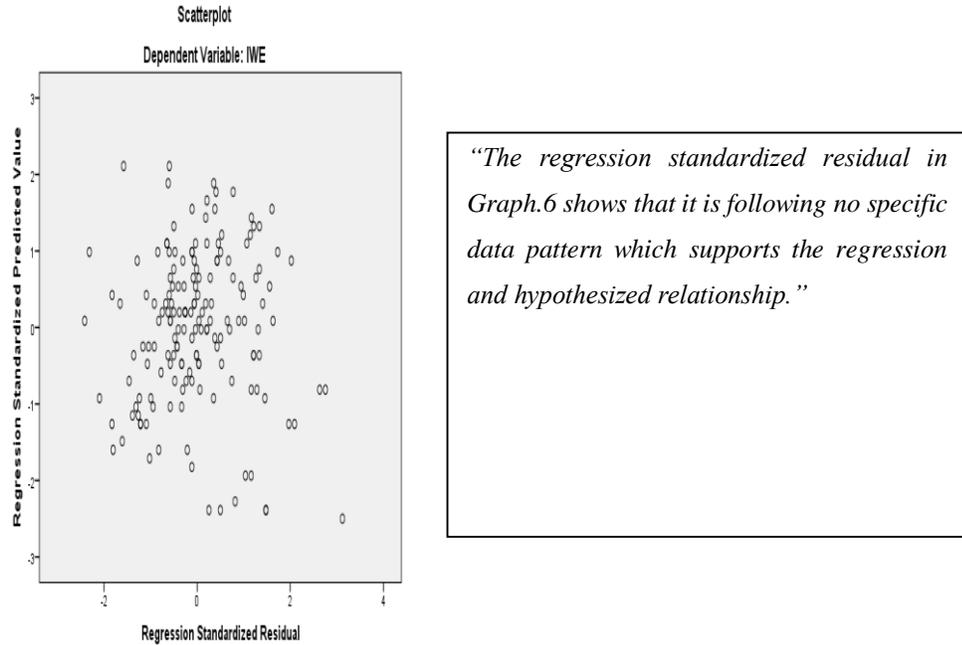
*“Residual should follow the curve shape. As seen in Graph.4, the IWE Histogram suggests that the residual is probably distributed normally.”*

**Figure 4: IWE Histogram**



*“The P-P Plot, Graph.5, shows the normality of data and indicates that the residual is probably distributed normally.”*

**Figure 5: IWE P-P Plot**



**Figure 6: Trust Scatterplot**

Figure.4 and 5 represents normality and linearity of data while figure.6 represents that residuals are normally distributed which depicts that there is no autocorrelation and heteroscedasticity.

*Step-3*

Both the Independent variable (Trust) and Moderating variable (IWE) is regressed on the Dependent Variable (KS) to check the Moderation effect.

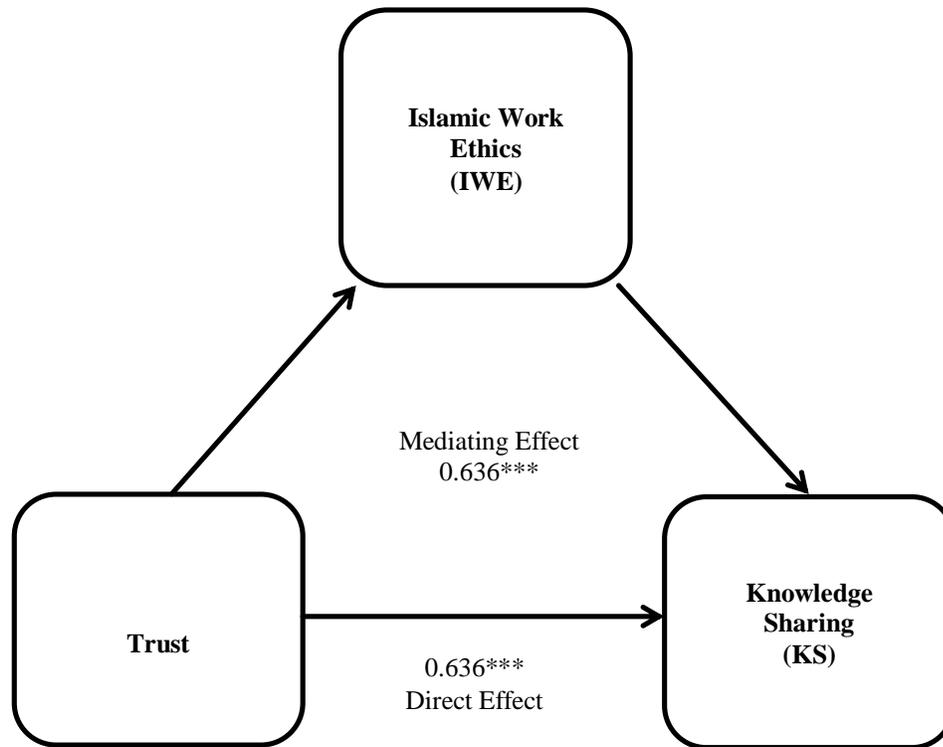
Table 8 represents the regression coefficient to predict Knowledge Sharing (DV) from Trust (IV) and Islamic Work Ethics (MV).

**Table 8: Regression Coefficient**

Variables	Dependent Variable Knowledge Sharing (KS)					
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj R <sup>2</sup>	F change	β	Sig
<b>Independent Variable</b> Islamic Work Ethics (IWE)	.647	.419	.411	57.583	0.132* *	.047
<b>Independent Variable</b> Trust	.647	.419	.411	57.583	0.583* **	.000

Note: \*p<0.10, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01

According to the Table 4.3. R Square = .419, Adjusted R Square = .647, F Statistics = 57.586 and level of significance is (Trust) \*\*\*p<.001 and (IWE)\*\*p<.005 which represents the acceptability of both Trust (Independent Variable) and IWE (Mediating Variable) in predicting variance in KS (Dependent Variable). Regression estimates of Standardized Coefficients (β) for the path between IWE and KS represents that relation is highly significant p<0.05 and Standardized Coefficient = .132 while relationship between Trust and KS is also highly significant p<.001, and Standardized Coefficient = .583.



**Figure 7: Mediating Effect**

Considering stated results of the path analysis, both the direct and mediating effects found significant, so apparently there is a partial mediation shown by Islamic Work Ethics in the relationship between Trust and Knowledge Sharing. The beta value between Trust and Knowledge Sharing as depicted in Table 6 is 0.636 while the beta value after the mediation of IWE as depicted in Table 4.3 is 0.583. When comparing both the values, it can be stated that the value of Standardized Coefficients between Trust and KS after the mediation is lower than the value of a direct relationship. This finding proves the hypothesis of the study that IWE mediates the relationship between Trust and KS thus accepting the hypothesis that IWE mediates the relationship between Islamic Work Ethics and Knowledge Sharing.

## 6. Discussions

The findings of this study contributed in the literature of KS by exploring that how organizational environment can be made more conducive for KS by the addition of IWE. Researchers have tried to explore the contribution of Trust in KS (Ford & Staples, 2010; Kuo, 2013; Politis, 2003) but in order to enhance KS the mediation of IWE is novelty. The findings reveal that ethical environment has multidisciplinary effects; it directly enhances Trust and Knowledge Sharing and also mediates relationship between them. Mediation of IWE between Trust and KS helps to make environment more conducive for Knowledge

Sharing, which enhances employee willingness to share knowledge. Employee willingness to Knowledge Sharing ultimately enhances organizational productivity, reduce cost, and give competitive edge to the organization (Gilson, Lim, Luciano, & Choi, 2013).

Islamic Work Ethics does not constitute solely the ethics related with Muslims but also share some similarities with Judaism and Christianity (Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008). IWE constitutes of ethics of justice and ethics of care, ethics of justice helps in sharing of explicit knowledge because it can be documented so it's sharing can be monitored but tacit knowledge cannot be documented (until it becomes explicit) so its sharing is difficult to ensure. Tacit knowledge is considered as a competitive edge so most of the employees are reluctant to share their tacit knowledge, to resolve this dilemma ethics of care plays its part. Ethical environment helps to build strong socialization which according to Nonaka (1991) is important for sharing of tacit knowledge. Previous researches has explored that in order to share knowledge socialization is important (Chennamaneni & Teng , 2012) and this study identifies that be the addition of IWE (Constitutes of ethics of justice and ethics of care) strong socialization is built which make the employees willing in sharing their knowledge.

The research finding represents that females represent higher Ethical values, greater level of Trust and more willing in Knowledge Sharing than males, although this difference is small but exists in all three research variables. Islamic Work Ethics increase as the level of education increase. Employees with higher level of education are more willing to Knowledge Sharing. The mean of Islamic Work Ethics is relatively high representing the inclination of the targeted banking sector towards an ethical climate. Similarly, the mean of Knowledge Sharing is reasonably high which reveals that employees and management are mostly willing in sharing knowledge. The mean of Trust, however, is comparatively low which demonstrates that employees and management are reluctant in trusting each other and this is probably due to the higher level of individual responsibility in banking sector operations.

This study identifies the role of trust in generating ethical environment and mediating role of IWE between Trust and KS.

- **H<sub>1</sub>:** The impact of trust on Knowledge Sharing is found highly significant. The research confirmed that Trust is essential to generate an environment where employees feel safe and comfortable in sharing their knowledge. Knowledge Sharing is a very sensitive phenomenon. There are different aspects which need to be considered in the affective Knowledge Sharing process, such as, a friendly environment, a supervised Knowledge Sharing process, employee ability and motivation to share knowledge, and a trust-based relationship (Casimir, Lee, & Loon, 2012; Ford & Staples, 2010; Hassandoust, Logeswaran, & Kazerouni, 2011). This research shows that trust is mandatory in affective Knowledge Sharing, if trust is high, it will enhance Knowledge Sharing. Trust is the cornerstone in Knowledge Sharing and higher level of Trust is mandatory for Knowledge Sharing.
- **H<sub>2</sub>:** The hypothesized relationship of is confirmed and the relationship between Trust and Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) is found highly significant. This research proves that to develop an ethical environment trust is an important factor which needs to consider so research results proved that as Interpersonal Trust increases, IWE tends to increase.

- **H<sub>3</sub>:** Hypothesized relationship is accepted, the impact of Islamic Work Ethics is checked against knowledge Sharing and was found significant. Islamic Work Ethics creates an ethical environment which makes the employees willing for Sharing their Knowledge so higher the IWE higher will be the knowledge sharing.
- **H<sub>4</sub>:** The mediation effect of IWE is checked and the value of beta proves that Islamic Work Ethics positively mediates the relationship between Trust and Knowledge Sharing, and that a higher level of Islamic Work Ethics and Trust results in a higher level of Knowledge Sharing. The results show that if an organization adopts Islamic Work Ethics then its employees will be highly trustworthy and willing in Sharing their Knowledge.

### **7. Limitations and Direction for Future Research**

This study is limited to a single sector in the business environment which, in turn, might limit the ability to generalize its outcomes. The sample size is small and could be increased in order to obtain greater generalization. Study included only interpersonal trust however impersonal or institutional trust can also be included as another dimension to check its contribution in Knowledge Sharing. This research has made important contribution in the literature on knowledge sharing by exploring that ethical climate makes the environment more conducive for Knowledge Sharing and builds strong socialization between employees. More the environment is conducive and more the employees are socialized, more there is possibility of sharing of tacit knowledge. Future research will explore that how much the conduciveness of environment contributes in augmentation of tacit knowledge sharing which otherwise difficult to share.

The impact of Islamic Work Ethics with a mediating effect of Trust can also be addressed in regard to organizational innovative capability and this will open a new horizon for the organization to focus on work ethics.

### **8. Conclusion and Recommendation**

This study is concerned with investigating the mediating effect of Trust between Islamic Work Ethics and Knowledge Sharing. The research found that the nature of Islamic Work Ethics of a targeted banking sector is conducive in generating an environment of trust and plays a crucial role in generating a fruitful atmosphere for Knowledge Sharing. In previous literature knowledge sharing was mostly viewed in relationship with Business Transaction and Social Exchange Theory which deals with cost benefits analysis, but the problem exists, that if worker perceives cost of sharing knowledge is higher than its benefits then worker will be hesitant to share knowledge, however current study is expected to make an important contribution by exploring the importance of ethical environment in which work perceives his ethical responsibility to share knowledge and expected to cater the dilemma.

The data characterized that females have slight edge over the males in possessing Islamic Work Ethics, generating Trust and Sharing of Knowledge. Islamic Work Ethics increases as the level of education increases. Employees with higher level of education possess higher level of work ethics. Knowledge sharing also increases with the increase in level of education. Employees with Masters and above education are more willing to share knowledge. It is imperative that organizations continue emphasizing the significance of

ethics during their employee recruitment processes, orientations, and training sessions. Islamic Work Ethics creates a friendly environment which is useful in fostering trust. Higher the ethical values, higher will be the trust. Ethical values are a crucial component of any organization in order to generate an environment of Knowledge Sharing which boosts productivity and the ability to score a competitive edge.

### 9. Contribution of The Study

Current study is the first attempt to investigate the mediating effect of Islamic Work Ethics between Trust and Knowledge Sharing. It examined the contribution of Trust in generating ethical environment and also investigated the importance of Trust in generating a fruitful environment of Knowledge Sharing in the banking sector of Pakistan. Study is expected to be a milestone for onwards research in the field of IWE and further exploration of its contribution in KS.

To the best of the authors' knowledge, this study makes an original contribution to the existing literature on knowledge sharing behavior by using interdisciplinary approach and highlighting the importance of work ethics in direct augmentation of KS and indirect through augmentation of Trust.

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