

Relationship of Flexibility and Resilience with Islamic Work Ethics

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Abstract

Background and Objectives: Islamic work ethics is influenced by several variables, such as some psychological components. In this regard, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship of flexibility and resilience with Islamic work ethics.

Methods: The statistical population of the current descriptive-correlational study included all the employees of Shahid Mahallati Hospital in Tabriz in 2019. A total of 200 individuals were selected using nonprobability convenience sampling and answered the questionnaires of resilience, flexibility, and Islamic work ethic. The obtained data were analyzed in SPSS software using the Pearson correlation coefficient and regression test. A p-value less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Results: As evidenced by the obtained results, Islamic work ethic has a positive significant correlation with the components of resilience (personal competence ($P < 0.001$), confidence in one's instincts ($P < 0.003$), positive acceptance of change and secure relationships ($P = 0.001$), control and spiritual influences ($P < 0.004$) and the components of flexibility (task flexibility ($P < 0.008$), skill flexibility ($P < 0.001$) and behavioral flexibility ($P < 0.00$)). It was also found that resilience with 60% and flexibility with 45% can predict Islamic ethics among the staff of Shahid Mahallati Hospital in Tabriz.

Conclusion: Considering the impact of resilience and flexibility components on Islamic ethics, it can be concluded that people with a high degree of resilience and flexibility demonstrate a stronger tendency and commitment to Islamic ethics.

Keywords: Ethics, Flexibility, Resilience.

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Introduction

The peculiar role of ethics in work and organizational environments is well-recognized (1). There is no doubt that work ethics is the prerequisite for a correct organizational ethical climate in Islamic society (2). Islamic ethics is a set of ethical and spiritual principles in the Islamic context that distinguishes right from wrong (3). Therefore, it is of paramount importance to identify the factors that can predict Islamic ethics (4). Resilience as one of the most important

variables in the field of positivist psychology is the human ability to adapt to social conflicts and stressful life events(5, 6).

Geffecott et al. (2009) indicated that resilience is the reason behind the adaptation of healthcare staff and increased public's trust in these sectors (7). According to related studies, resilience in the workplace can be a good predictor of job performance, job attitudes, such as organizational commitment, and other work outcomes (8-10). Friborg et al.

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(2003) believe that resilient individuals have high self-control, good social-adaptive behaviors, high levels of empathy, and can effectively manage their daily activities (11).

In their study, Darvishzadeh and Dasht Bozorgi (2016) reported a significant relationship between resilience and moral judgment and described resilience as a good predictor of moral judgment. Resilience seems to include some components, including responsibility, preoperative thinking, desire postponement, adherence to rules and norms, and task prioritization. Therefore, resilient people can be claimed to have an unwavering commitment to ethics (12). In their study conducted in this regard, Krautscheid et al. (2020) also found a significant relationship between protective factors of resilience and moral distress and believe that increased resilience helps to improve ethics (13).

According to Nursing Resilience Model proposed by Stephens (2012), teaching resilience to employees in medical settings increases self-confidence and fosters ethical sensitivity (14). One of the variables that may be related to Islamic work ethics is workforce flexibility (15) which is recognized as the ability to adjust and adapt to threats and opportunities (16). Wright and Snell (1992) argue that flexibility is the human resource utilization of the skills and behavior patterns needed to make the best decisions in a competitive environment, mainly in the three areas of task, skill, and behavior (17).

Moreover, flexibility has been well correlated with work ethics in related studies (18). In his study, Bartels (2008) suggested that flexibility is an important and influential component affecting cognitive ethics and should be taken into account in ethical issues (19). According to Rest model (1986), ethical performance is a combination of four processes, and personality traits have been recognized as one of the contributing factors (20). It seems to be a combination of personality traits, such as flexibility, conscientiousness, and openness to experiences that are predictors of ethical intention.

People with higher psychological flexibility

tend to act ethically when pressured into doing unethical things. These individuals appear to make wiser decisions and adhere to ethical principles in unethical situations (21). A careful study of the research background demonstrated that the relationship between resilience and flexibility has been studied with other dimensions of ethics. Nonetheless, no study has been conducted on the relationship between these two variables in the context of Islamic work ethics.

Given the Islamic culture of our society, it is important to devote close attention to the Islamic ethics of work in organizations. Therefore, the assessment of the predictors of Islamic work ethics, especially in medical settings, emphasizes the importance of such studies. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the predictive role of flexibility and resilience in Islamic work ethic in the staff of Shahid Mahallati Armed Forces Hospital in Tabriz.

Methods

This descriptive-analytical correlational study was performed on the staff of Shahid Mahallati Armed Forces Hospital, Tabriz, in 2019. The statistical population of this study consisted of 420 people, among whom 200 cases were selected using nonprobability convenience sampling based on the Cochran table.

The inclusion criteria were as follows: 1) being a Muslim, 2) written consent to participate in the study, 3) the age range of 22-50, 4) basic literacy, 5) formal and contractual employment at Shahid Mahallati Hospital, 6) administrative and medical staff (nurse, physician, paramedic, and assistant nurse), and 7) working in the hospital environment for at least 30 h per week. On the other hand, the exclusion criteria entailed improper or incomplete filling of questionnaires and short work shifts (less than 30 h per week) when completing the questionnaire.

After obtaining permission from the director of Shahid Mahallati Hospital in Tabriz, sampling was performed in the counseling room of the hospital when the staff shift was over, and the staff responded to the questionnaires of flexibility, resilience, and

Islamic ethics. It should be noted that research ethics codes, including informed consent, confidentiality, compliance with Sharia, legal, and professional law, and no physical-psychological damage, were observed. The obtained data were analyzed in SPSS software (version 20) using Pearson correlation tests and linear regression. A p-value less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Flexibility questionnaire

This test was developed by Beltrán-Martín et al. (2008) to measure human resource flexibility and has three dimensions, including task flexibility, skill flexibility, and behavioral flexibility. The questionnaire is comprised of 11 items and each item is scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1=very low to 5=very high. The items 1, 2, and 3 are related to task flexibility, items 4, 5, 6, and 7 concern skill flexibility, and items 8, 9, 10, and 11 involve behavioral flexibility.

The reliability of this questionnaire was obtained at 0.82 using Cronbach's alpha, pointing to the appropriate reliability of this tool (22). Moreover, in Iran,

the reliability coefficient of this questionnaire was reported as 0.91 using Cronbach's alpha in a study conducted by Seyed Naghavi et al. (2012). In addition, the validity of this questionnaire was evaluated and confirmed using confirmatory factor analysis (23).

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)

This questionnaire is a brief self-rated instrument that measures resilience, which consists of 25 items on a 5-point Likert scale (completely incorrect = 1 forever true = 5). The results of factor analysis indicate that CD-RISC is a five-factor scale: personal competence, high standards, and tenacity (8 items); trust in one's instinct, tolerance of negative effects, and strengthening effects of stress (7 items); positive acceptance of change and secure relationships (5 items); control (3 items) and spiritual influences (2 items). The cut-off score of this questionnaire is 62.5 and its Cronbach's alpha coefficient has been reported. Furthermore, the test-retest reliability

coefficient was calculated at 0.87 at a 4-week interval (24). In Iran, Mohammadi (2005) standardized this scale and reported a reliability coefficient of 0.89 (25).

Islamic Work Ethics Scale

Islamic Work Ethics Scale was developed by Ali and Al-Kazemi (2007) to measure Islamic work ethics and comprises 17 items. This questionnaire was designed based on Islamic teaching and recommendations on work and consists of three components, namely useful work (five items), accurate and humanitarian work (six items), and independence and social usefulness(six items).

This questionnaire is scored on a five-point Likert scale (from 1=completely correct to 5=not correct at all) and its Cronbach's alpha was reported to be 0.85 (26). Moreover, in Iran, this questionnaire was translated and validated by Mir Hashemi in 2008 and its reliability was obtained as 0.89 using Cronbach's alpha which indicates the appropriate reliability of this questionnaire (27).

Result

With respect to gender, 73 (36.5%) participants were female and 127 (63.5%) cases were male. The mean age of the participants was 35.5. Moreover, the study subjects included nurses (n=55), secretaries (n=48), paramedics (n=34), administrative staff members (n=42), physicians (n=8), and assistant nurses (n=13). Furthermore, regarding educational level, 17 (8.5%), 147 (73.5%), and 36 (18%) of participants had diploma, associate and bachelor degree, and master's degree and higher, respectively.

Concerning work experience, 33 (16.5%), 75 (37.5%), 78 (39%), and 14 (7%) cases had a work experience of less than 5 years, 6-10 years, 11-20 years, and more than 20 years. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test confirmed the normality of the data ($P < 0.05$). Table 1 presents the results of the Pearson correlation coefficient.

As illustrated in Table 1, Islamic ethics is significantly correlated with the components of flexibility (task, skill, and behavior) and the components of resilience (personal competence,

Table 1. Correlation coefficient of flexibility, resilience and its components with Islamic ethics

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Islamic ethics	1								
Task flexibility	**0.43	1							
Skill flexibility	**0.62	**0.47	1						
Behavioral flexibility	**0.56	**0.34	**0.64	1					
Personal competence	**0.68	**0.33	**0.64	**0.63	1				
Trust in one's instincts	**0.61	**0.38	**0.47	**0.54	**0.70	1			
Tolerance of negative effects	**0.51	**0.31	**0.3	**0.23	**0.53	**0.55	1		
Positive acceptance of change and secure relationships	**0.69	**0.45	**0.45	**0.59	**0.61	**0.54	**0.58	1	
Control and spiritual influences	**0.5	**0.3	**0.39	**0.32	**0.51	**0.48	**0.44	**0.58	1

**P≤ 0.01

*P≤0.05

Table 2. Regression coefficients of Islamic ethics predictors based on resilience

Variables	Regression coefficient	Standard error	standardized regression coefficient	t	Significance level
Constant value	8.1	3.4		2.2	0.052
Personal competence	0.6	0.1	0.2	4.2	0.001
Trust in ones' instincts	0.3	0.1	0.1	2.1	0.053
Tolerance of negative effects	1.3	0.2	0.3	6.4	0.060
Positive acceptance of change and secure relationships	0.6	0.3	0.03	0.5	0.001
Control and spiritual influences	0.9	0.4	0.1	2.02	0.054

Table 3. Regression coefficients of Islamic ethics predictors based on flexibility

Variables	Regression coefficient	Standard error	standardized regression coefficient	t	Significance level
Constant value	12.6	4.6		2.7	0.007
Task flexibility	1	0.3	0.1	2.6	0.008
Skill flexibility	1.6	0.3	0.37	5.07	0.001
Behavioral flexibility	1.03	0.2	0.27	4.02	0.001

trust in ones' instincts, tolerance of negative effects, positive acceptance of change and secure relationships, control and spiritual influences) (P<0.001).

Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the effect of resilience on Islamic ethics. The results of analysis of variance indicated that the level of F for resilience was 60.53 indicating the significance of the model according to the significance level (P <0.001). Moreover, based on the coefficient of determination, this variable predicts 60% of alterations in Islamic ethics.

Therefore, based on the results displayed in Table 2, it can be argued that resilience dimensions are able to predict changes in employees' Islamic ethics. In addition, "positive acceptance" variable exerted a greater effect on Islamic ethics. It is noteworthy that the component of "tolerance of negative effects" in this model was not significant.

Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the effect of flexibility on Islamic

ethics. The results of the analysis of variance demonstrated that the level of F for flexibility was obtained as 55.5 indicating the significance of the model according to the significance level (P<0.001). According to the coefficient of determination, this variable can predict 45% of the changes in Islamic ethics.

Based on the results depicted in Table 3, it can be argued that the dimensions of flexibility are able to predict changes in employees' Islamic ethics. Moreover, the variability of skill flexibility exerts a greater effect on Islamic ethics.

Discussion

The results of the present study denoted that Islamic work ethics was significantly correlated with flexibility and resilience among the staff of Shahid Mahallati Armed Forces Hospital. Moreover, resilience (along with its components) and flexibility (along with its components) were shown to be good predictors of Islamic ethics. The results of the current

study on the relationship between flexibility and Islamic work ethic are consistent with the studies conducted by Gringeri (1995) and Bartels (2008) (18 and 19).

In a study in this regard, Goodarzi and Hajiha (2017) reported a significant relationship between the flexibility of accounting staff and their ethical judgment. They asserted that considering personality traits is of utmost importance for sensitive jobs that are associated with ethical issues (28). In a similar vein, Yakinah (2009) demonstrated that there is no relationship between personality traits, such as flexibility and emotional stability, and unethical behaviors. Nevertheless, organizational ethics is recognized as the most important component in the relationship between these two variables.

In other words, the organization plays a major role in the observance of ethical principles by the provision of ethical components (29). A study carried out in Serbia found that among the common personality traits, flexibility was the best predictor of ethical foundations (30).

The results of the mentioned study can be justified on the ground that one of the important components for moral development is personality traits which seemingly determine how individuals cope with situations (31). Therefore, we can observe the influence of certain personality traits, such as flexibility, on Islamic work ethic.

Flexible people are curious about both the inner world and outer world, and their lives are rich in experience since they like and embrace new experiences. They tend to accept new ideas and unconventional values and are eager to welcome new ideas and concepts (32). Therefore, McCrae et al. (2011) believe that flexible people have a higher level of moral reasoning and less risk for the development of antisocial behaviors (33).

Moreover, in terms of the relationship between resilience and Islamic work ethic, the results of the current study are in accordance with the findings of studies performed by Husin & Kernain (2019), Darvishzadeh & Dasht Bozorgi (2016) and Krautscheid et al. (2020) (12,13,34). Rees et al. (2015) also state that resilience is one of the variables predicting

job performance, organizational commitment, and other work outcomes (35). According to the theoretical model of Job Demand-Control-Support' model (Karasek, and Theorell, 1990), if employees feel qualified, job demands exert positive effects on their mental health. In other words, positive psychology components, such as resilience, are good predictors of efficient and effective work (36).

Resilience consists of such components as the perception of personal competence, trust in one's instincts, tolerance of negative effects, positive acceptance of change and secure relationships, control and spiritual influences. Accordingly, a cursory look at the theoretical underpinnings of some of these components highlights the role of resilience in Islamic work ethic. For instance, the tolerance of negative effects as a behavioral variable is the extent of one's sense of frustration, anger, irritability, and neurosis (37).

Based on studies, people with less negative and higher positive emotions have better job performance and benefit the most from ethical methods in their work (38). Another component of resilience is spiritual influences, and it seems that holding a spiritual and humanitarian view on workplace relationships leads to the use of ethical principles in individuals. Therefore, it seems that some personality and behavioral characteristics, such as high levels of flexibility and resilience, pave the way for ethical work, especially Islamic work ethic in Muslim countries.

One of the limitations of the present study was the available sampling method, which makes the sampling biased. Moreover, some colleagues completed the questionnaire during the shift, despite the emphasis on completion in the counseling room. Therefore, apart from random sampling, the completion of questionnaires in a better environment and the control of influencing factors are suggested in future studies. Moreover, modeling the impacts of resilience and flexibility on Islamic work ethics is recommended.

Conclusion

The present study assessed the predictive role of resilience and flexibility in Islamic work

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ethics. As evidenced by the obtained results, resilience and flexibility can successfully predict Islamic work ethics. In other words, people who demonstrate high flexibility at the workplace and can adapt to the new situations and have high resilience and patience in the face of events highly likely adhere to the principles of Islamic ethics and follow the principles of Islamic ethics in working conditions.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the publication of the current article.

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