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Manuscript Number: AJBE-D-22-00183

Title: Organizational Politics and Affective Commitment of Expatriates: Moderating Role of Islamic Work Ethics

Abstract: This study attempted to investigate the impact of organizational politics on the affective commitment of expatriate employees in the Sultanate of Oman. A diverse sample of 146 employees was taken to examine the relationships between the perception of politics (POP) to affective commitment (AC) and also Islamic work ethics (IWE) to affective commitment. The moderating role of Islamic work ethics was also examined in the POP-AC relationship. All hypotheses were substantiated. Results confirmed the positive relationship between Islamic work ethics to affective commitment and negative relationship between perception of politics to affective commitment. Moreover, the negative relationship of perception of politics with affective commitment was weaker when Islamic work ethics was high. Practical implications of the study are presented based on the results.

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Manuscript Number:	AJBE-D-22-00183
Full Title:	Organizational Politics and Affective Commitment of Expatriates: Moderating Role of Islamic Work Ethics
Article Type:	Original Research
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Keywords: Perception of Politics, Islamic Work Ethics, Affective Commitment, Expatriates, Oman

Introduction

Organizational commitment refers to loyalty aspect whereby employees show their deep concern for the wellbeing and success of the organization (Northcraft & Neale, 1996). Organizational commitment has been an area of interest of many scholars and among the widely researched constructs across various samples due to its broad significance for the organizations (Miller, Rutherford, & Kolodinsky, 2008). However, the commitment of expatriates with their respective organizations around the world still poses a question (Shadid N Bhuian, Al- Shammari, & Jefri, 1996; Shahid N Bhuian & Mengue, 2002). Within the context of the Middle East, a vast majority of expatriates are working in different capacities vise skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled employees from developing countries due visible pay gap between home market and gulf region (Al-Meer, 1989; Shadid N Bhuian et al., 1996). In contrast to other diversity tolerant societies, countries belonging to gulf region barely offer nationalities to immigrants. Employees have limited stake over there and spend time to achieve their saving targets. Majority of expatriates come from South Asian and Levant countries. Expatriates are welcomed being better skilled as compared to local inhabitants (Naithani & Jha, 2009). The recent drift towards workforce localization has also negatively affected the loyalty concerns of foreign laborers (Al-Asfour & Khan, 2014; Naithani & Jha, 2009; Scurry, Rodriguez, & Bailouni, 2013; Swailes, Al Said, & Al Fahdi, 2012) . Some of the previous studies have also highlighted the low commitment of expatriates and recommended more in-depth exploration (Shahid N Bhuian & Mengue, 2002; Kuehn & Al- Busaidi, 2002)

Extant research shows organizational commitment as a key predecessor to critical organizational outcomes (Ahmad, Shahzad, Rehman, Khan, & Shad, 2010; Ladebo, 2003; Riketta, 2002; Steyrer, Schiffinger, & Lang, 2008). Therefore, various efforts have been made to know the parsimonious factors explaining organizational commitment in different settings. Organizational politics is among the key predictors towards organizational commitment (Vigoda, 2000; Witt, 1998).Working environments with diverse workforce may invite more politics since employees try to develop small groups and coalitions to protect their interests on regional or other basis (Ferris et al., 1996). On

the other hand, the existing relationships between organizational politics measured through perception of organizational politics (POP) scale with organizational commitment are inconsistent across different (Miller et al., 2008). These inconsistencies invite examining specific moderators causing change in the strength and direction of relationship.

From the last few years, Islamic work ethics (IWE) has emerged as a key explanatory and moderating variable. It appeared to counter the fallaciously conception which associate the work life issues of Muslims with Islamic work values (Darwish A Yousef, 2000; Danvish A Yousef, 2000; Yousef, 2001). Islam is a complete way of life. It guides behavior of individuals in organization, society, educational institutes, family relationships and likewise. The teachings of Islam are universal, lasting and would be valid irrespective rising modernity. The current conceptualization of Islamic work ethics is derived from the Quran and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (A. Ali, 1988; A. J. Ali, 1992).

Islam makes an obligation work and appreciates sincerity, loyalty, hard work, dedication, creativity, cooperation, goal achievement, equality, generosity, brotherhood, discipline and above all performing duties in good faith. Intentions are the key differentiating feature between IWE and other competing work ethics who emphasize on positive behavior. Islamic work ethics put forward a framework to balance between individual and societal life. One could assume that, the current organizational issues might not be prevalent with same intensity, if Islamic work ethics would have been exercised in true spirit. The proponents of Islamic work ethics accentuate to incorporate Islamic teachings in their lives to reflect the true picture of Islam (A. Ali, 1988; Darwish A Yousef, 2000)

Previously IWE has moderated various relationships (A. S. Khan & Rasheed, 2015; K. Khan, Abbas, Gul, & Raja, 2015; Yousef, 2001). Islamic work ethics constitute belief system which may help them to deal with different stressors like perceived politics which is generally characterized as "hindrance-related stressor" (LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005). Therefore, this study examines the moderating role of IWE in POP-commitment relationship for Muslim expatriates working in different organizations of Oman. In nutshell, this study adds to the existing literature in following ways:

Although the antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment has been researched many times but the commitment of expatriates and guest workers present a unique challenge as well as a research question, considering the recent swift towards Omanization policy on official directives. Also Al-Meer (1989) recommended analyzing specifically organizational commitment of different Arab and Asian nationals. (Shahid N Bhuian & Mengue, 2002; Suliman & Iles, 2000) also encouraged to study organizational commitment of diverse workforce to better understand the loyalties of different workgroups.

This study would also examine equivocality about the established building block of POP to organizational commitment by evaluating the role of IWE as moderator. Miller et al. (2008) specifically recommended exploring the reasons behind varying magnitude and inconsistent directionality between POP and organizational commitment. Hochwarter, Perrewé, Ferris, and Guercio (1999) also highlighted the need to understand the key factors that not only strengthen the employee-organization bond but also the factors that weaken this relationship. Recently, Abbas, Raja, Darr, and Bouckenooghe (2014) recommended to examine contextual moderators in the POP-outcomes relationships.

Lastly the proposed model would be tested in Salalah Oman. Various authors have contended that theories / findings reported from one culture should be generalized carefully because of the varying cultural dimensions and parameters (Drory & Vigoda-Gadot, 2010; Hofstede, 1993; Tsui, Nifadkar, & Ou, 2007). Oman is a key member of gulf region and offers unique cultural characteristics as compared to western countries. As a whole all countries belonged to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are ranked high at power distance and uncertainty avoidance as compared to western countries which are commonly high at individualism and masculinity. Most of the foreign workers employed in Oman come from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan who are also relatively high at power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Research contribution from different cultural settings would help to refine the theory of organizational politics (Drory & Vigoda-Gadot, 2010; Poon, 2006) as well as of organizational commitment (Awamleh, 1996; Dappa, Bhatti, & Aljarah, 2019; Nurhayatia, Thoyib, & Noermijati, 2017).

Literature Review

Perception of Politics

Organizational politics is a common aspect of every occupational life (Buchanan, 2012; Samuel, 2010). Organizational politics was initially explored during 1950s and the following decade with the work of Martin and Sims (Martin & Sims, 1956). Later theoretical and empirical contributions were made by different scholars (Burns, 1961; March, 1962; Mayes & Allen, 1977; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1974). The most convincing developments were made by (Gandz & Murray, 1980) by characterizing organizational politics as a perceptual construct. According to the author, organizational politics prevails when the incumbents have the perception that employees of the organization are mere pursuing their self-interest at the cost of others' and organizational goals. Perception of politics was conceived to be detrimental for organizational effectiveness. Perception of politics was later accepted as the key construct with the (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991) model of organizational politics perceptions.

Extent literature reveals three simultaneous approaches to analyze politics in organization. A vast majority of researches have examined politics in terms of political behavior like use of power, authority and other influence tactics (Ferris, Harris, Russell, & Maher, 2018; Liu, Horsley, & Levenshus, 2010; McConnell & Blacker, 2011)

Another stream of research concentrate at investigating political skills possessed by different individuals at workplace (Dulebohn & Ferris, 1999; Ferris, Harrell-Cook, & Dulebohn, 2000; Hochwarter et al., 2020).On the other hand, the widely accepted approach to examine organizational politics in the work environment is through perception of politics held by employees (Abbas & Raja, 2014; Harris, Harris, & Harvey, 2007; O'connor & Morrison, 2001). Various attempts have been made in recent past to know the causes and consequences of perception of politics in different environments (N. A. Khan, Khan, & Gul, 2019; Poon, 2006; Vigoda, 2000).

Islamic Work Ethics

Ethics is an individual's personal belief regarding what is right and wrong or good and bad (Babin, Boles, & Griffin, 1999). In a similar vein, work ethics implies the beliefs of employees about what is right and wrong (Beekun, 1997). Islamic work ethics (IWE) highlight the moral standards from Islamic perspectives and signify work as a virtue in human's lives (Rizk, 2008).

Work ethics gained the attention with the seminal work of (Weber, 1958) who highlighted the key facets of Protestant work ethics. He associated the business success of Protestants to their religious belief. Weber (1958)further established a causal relationship between the Protestant work ethics and the development of capitalism in Western society which according to the author, lacked in Muslim societies. He put forward some controversial arguments about Islamic values and held responsible for their underdevelopment. Though most of the ethical values and work attributes of protestant work ethics and Islamic work ethics are same like cooperation, dedication to work, loyalty and earning utilizing unfair means (K. Khan et al., 2015). However, the differentiation lies with "intentions vs behavior". Islam emphasized intentions above behavior. Anything performed in good faith would be rewarded according to Islamic teachings (A. Ali, 1988). The work of Ali (1988) is always appreciated because of the development of comprehensive and reliable measures for Islamic work ethics. Later, (A. J. Ali, 1992) provided a precise version of IWE scale which has helped various researchers to know the Islamic work values exercised in different settings and its possible outcomes. IWE has been found as a significant predictor towards organizational change (Yousef 2000), job satisfaction (Haroon, Zaman, & Rehman, 2012; Rokhman, 2010), job involvement (Tufail, Ahmad, Ramayah, Jan, & Shah, 2017), organizational citizenship behaviors (Romi, Ahman, Suryadi, & Riswanto, 2020), knowledge-sharing behaviors (Khalid, Bashir, Khan, & Abbas, 2018), turnover intentions (K. Khan et al., 2015), and innovation capability (Kumar & Rose, 2012).

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment refers to the congruence of individuals' values and organizational goals. Committed employees expends keen efforts to pursue organizational objectives (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). Organizational commitment has a long history being desirable attitude of employees for all types of organizations. Initially it was conceived as unidimensional concept taken as side-bet. Becker (1960) contended that individuals are committed with anything when they have something on stake. Side-bets refer to the all valued investments that an individual makes during their course of employment which assumingly be lost by leaving the organization. Becker (1960) further stated that commitments come into being when a person, by making a side-bet, links extraneous interests with a consistent line of activity. Later, Ritzer and Trice (1969) took commitment as psychological state that emerges when employees value something. Alutto, Hrebiniak, and Alonso (1973) again operationalized the concept aligned with Becker (1960) contention and emphasized to understand the underlying "side-bets" philosophy. Mowday et al. (1979) provided nearly same arguments and defined the term as an emotional attachment and identification with the organization. According to Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974), an employee is committed when (1) he has a belief in and accepts the goals and values, (b) willing to exert efforts on behalf of the organization and (c) has a definite desire to maintain membership.

The most influential and accepted contribution in the field of organizational commitment was made by (Meyer & Allen, 1991) by defining organizational commitment as a multidimensional psychological state that characterizes a person's relationship in accepting the goals of the organization and willingness to exert considerable efforts to achieve those goals (Meyer & Allen, 1991). According to the authors, organizational commitment comprises of three distinguishable components i.e. affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment

(AC) implies the emotional attachment and deep association with the organization and its goals. Continuance organizational commitment (CC) implies the costs both social and financial which employee has to incur by leaving the organization (Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994). Normative commitment (NC) posits the moral obligation to stay with the organization when the organization has consistently imparted something to value for the employee (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Affective Commitment as Organizational Loyalty

According to Adler and Adler (1988), organizational loyalty explicates a feeling of belongingness, attachment and to be a part of something. It offers trust, ready to contribute one's self, accepting organizational leadership and policies as well as aligning oneself with the group goals. (McCarthy, 1997) attributed employees' loyalty as an employee's emotional attachment and willingness to exert extra efforts for the betterment of the organization. In nutshell, one can easily find similarities between organizational loyalty and affective component of organizational commitment prescribed by (Meyer & Allen, 1991). According to some experts, affective commitment can be an authentic measure to gauge organizational loyalty (Conte, 2005; Klehe, Zikic, Van Vianen, & De Pater, 2011). Since the author wished to investigate the loyalty concerns of expatriates in Oman region therefore, affective commitment was solely deemed best option as criterion variable.

Perception of Politics and Organizational Commitment

Previously, organizational commitment has been found as a key predictor towards turnover intentions, counterproductive behavior, absenteeism, employee performance ((Jaramillo, Mulki, & Marshall, 2005; Ladebo, 2003; Riketta, 2002) and organizational performance as a whole (Steyrer et al., 2008). These high value concerns motivated researchers to know the factors causing organizational commitment. Commonly organizational culture, job autonomy, workloads, satisfaction with work life, working conditions, inequitable compensation and peer support help to enhance organizational commitment (Al-Hussami, Hammad, & Alsoleihat, 2018; AL- HUSSAMI, Saleh, Abdalkader, & Mahadeen, 2011). Organizational politics has also been confirmed as the key explanatory variable towards organizational commitment (Dappa et al., 2019; Malik et al., 2019; Vigoda, 2000). Various authors have confirmed the significant negative relationship between organizational politics and organizational commitment (Nye & Witt, 1993; Rong & Cao, 2015; Vigoda, 2000). Extant literature further shows that some researchers examined the relationship between perception of politics (POP) and affective component of organizational commitment in different parts of the world and found inverse relationship (Bouckenooghe, 2012; Hochwarter et al., 1999). This helped to develop the following hypothesis:

H₁: Perception of politics will be negatively related to affective commitment.

Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) to OC

Various studies have confirmed the positive link between different conceptualizations of work ethics with commitment (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Morrow & Goetz Jr, 1988; Putti, Aryee, & Liang, 1989). Protestant work ethics has also been found positively related with various types of commitment (Cohen, 1999; D. M. Randall & Cote, 1991). Specifically considering Islamic work ethics, a positive relationship has been reported by (Yousef,

2001) by examining the responses of 425 Muslims working in different organizations across UAE. (Rokhman, 2010) also found a significant positive association between IWE and organizational commitment.

Rehman et al. (2013) and Haroon et al. (2012) stated that individuals with strong Islamic work ethics generally feel a sense of attachment to the organization. Islam emphasizes hard work, dedication and sincerity. Work is obligation and one has to work best of his abilities. Islam categorically discourages any kind of workplace deviation which is harmful for the organizational affairs. Devotion to work is a virtue (A. Ali, 1988; A. J. Ali, 1992). On the basis of these arguments following hypothesis is developed;

H₂: Islamic work ethics will be positively related to affective commitment.

IWE as Moderator between Perception of Politics and Organizational Commitment

Literature further shows that the existing relationships between organizational politics and organizational commitment are inconsistent across different samples. In some of the settings, the relationship is significantly inverse as expected (Vigoda, 2000; Vigoda & Cohen, 2002) but few studies showed insignificant results in this regard (Vigoda- Gadot, Vinarski- Peretz, & Ben- Zion, 2003). Vigoda (2000) and Nye and Witt (1993) found strong negative relationship between perception of politics and continuance commitment whereas the study of Randall et al. (1999) failed to establish any relationship between perception of politics and continuance commitment. Extant literature further shows that most of the researchers examined the relationship between perception of politics (POP) and affective component of organizational commitment in different settings (Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, & Toth, 1997; Hochwarter et al., 2020). In few environments, the reported relationships are positive (Cropanzano et al., 1997)and somewhere significantly negative (Nye & Witt, 1993). Highly varying nature of this relationship was also reported by Witt (1998) across different samples (r = -0.25 to - 0.56) in one study. Vigoda- Gadot et al. (2003) also found variations in two different studies (r=-0.22 and r=-0.13). These inconsistencies invited examining specific moderators causing change in the strength and direction of relationship as recommended by (Miller et al., 2008) in a meta-analytic view.

Owing to the fact, IWE is a part of an individual's belief system which emphasizes human dignity, loyalty, hard work, cooperation, sincerity, perseverance and creativity (A. J. Ali, 1992; Danvish A Yousef, 2000). Therefore, it can be reasonably argued that individuals high at IWE, would be able to buffer the detrimental effects of POPs on affective commitment. According to Parboteeah, Paik, and Cullen (2009), religion has strong bearing on work values. Since Islam guides Muslims in all directions of life and Muslims are generally driven by the Islamic teachings specifically granted to guide behavior in organizational life, therefore if employees are adhering to the principles of Islam may not lose their loyalties with their organizations despite working under adverse circumstances.

Previously IWE has moderated the relationship between organizational commitment to job satisfaction (Yousef, 2001). Recently it has also been analyzed as a moderator between various types of justices to turnover intentions, job satisfaction and job involvement relationship (Khan et al., 2013) as well as key HR practices and project success (K. Khan et al., 2015). IWE explicates employees' firm believes which may help them to cope better with these stressors. Perceived politics in the organization is also treated as a type of stressor and generally characterized as "hindrance-related stressor" (LePine et al., 2005). Therefore, reasonable theoretical support exists to treat IWE as a

moderator in the relationship between perception of politics and affective commitment. Consequently, we propose that;

H3: Islamic work ethics will moderate the negative relationship of perception of politics and affective commitment such that the relationships will be weaker when IWE is high.

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection Procedure

In view of the nature of study, the data was collected from Muslim expatriates belonging to different nationalities in Oman. Pay and perks are encouraging in all gulf regions to attract individuals from nearly all developing countries. Data was collected through self-administered questionnaire. Loyalty with organization, perceptions about work ethics and politics can be held by anyone therefore, employees belonging to various hierarchical levels were targeted provided good English reading skills. All the respondents were ensured about the academic significance of the research and confidentiality measures taken in this regard. An utmost effort was taken to collect as much responses to come at reasonable conclusion. Where required, the help of focal persons were also taken.

Of the 350 distributed questionnaires, total 146 responses were received back. This indicated the initial response rate as 42%. Some of the questionnaires were not attempted in true spirit and excluded from the final analysis. Ultimately 146 usable questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS 20.0.

Demographic results showed that the majority of respondents (90%) were male with ages more than 36 or above (77%). The sample belonged to various nationalities comprising 16% Pakistani, 64%Indians, 6% Egyptians, 4% Sudanese, 7% Iraqis and 3% other nationalities. About 3% had less than 1 year experience, 76% had 1 to 15 years, and 21% had experience above 11 years. About 2% respondents were under-graduates, 23% were graduates and 75% had post-graduate or above degree. Majority of the respondents indicated their monthly income between 600 RO to 1500 RO. Since the data was collected irrespective of organizational type therefore, 49% responses were obtained from pure government sector, 16% from semi-government and 36% from private organizations.

Measures

All constructs were adopted from the well tested sources. 5-point Likert-type scale was used to tap responses with anchors 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

Organizational Politics

Organizational politics in this study refers to perception of politics held by employees in organization.We used shorter version of perceptions of organizational politics scale (POPs) comprising 12 items to measure organizational politics from the study of (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). The scale has been used in various settings and proved reliable by (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997) (α = 0.87) and (Vigoda & Cohen, 2002) (α = 0.77). Sample items include, "Favoritism rather than merit determines who gets ahead around here," "People here usually don't speak up for fear of retaliation by others," and "People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by crossing others."

IWE

IWE was measured using 17-items developed by (A. Ali, 1988). Sample items include, "Work enables mankind to control nature," "Work gives one the chance to be independent," and "One should constantly work hard to meet responsibilities." Recently K. Khan et al. (2015)reported the reliability as 0.81.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment was measured by five measures of affective commitment (AC) developed by (Allen & Meyer, 1996) which were considered appropriate for international researches. Examples of items include, "I do not feel emotionally attached to this organization (reverse coded)," and "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own." Wasti and Can (2008) reported α reliability as 0.69.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations and the Cronbach's alpha reliabilities. Consistent with the previous studies, the overall mean of the commitment is low showing relatively low loyalty of expatriates working in Oman (Al-Meer, 1989; Ben-Bakr, Al-Shammari, Jefri, & Prasad, 1994; Danvish A Yousef, 2000). Correlation of POP with AC (r = -0.52, p<0.01) was significant and in expected directions. Correlations of IWE with AC(r = 0.32, p<0.01) was also significant and as proposed.

Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities

		M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Age	5.14	0.88	1									
2	Gender	1.10	0.3	0.03	1								
3	Highest Level of Education	2.73	0.49	.28**	.18*	1							
4	Years working in Oman	2.77	0.81	.57**	-20*	-0.05	1						
5	Monthly Income	2.75	1.00	.39**	-25**	-0.01	.70**	1					
6	Nationality	2.35	1.37	.18*	.49**	.20*	0.02	-0.07	1				
7	Sector	1.87	0.91	-20*	-31**	-.54**	.28**	.43**	-.31**	1			
8	Perception of Politics	3.26	0.76	0.06	-0.01	0.03	0.09	0.02	0.01	-0.02	(.85)		
9	Islamic Work Ethics	4.06	0.56	0.02	0.10	0.17	0.01	-.06	0.09	-.16	0.13	(.95)	
10	Affective Commitment	3.33	1.03	0.05	0.03	0.07	-.10	-.10	0.10	-.12	-.52**	.32**	(.86)

Note. N = 146; Reliability estimates in parentheses.

*p<0.01; **p<0.05; ***p<0.001

Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the Hypotheses 1and 2. In the first step, all the demographical variables were entered followed by POP and IWE in the second step. Results indicated that POP had a significant negative relationship AC (β= -0.78, p<0.001). It supported Hypothesis 1. Similarly, IWE significantly predicted AC (β= 0.73, p<0.001) and provided support to Hypothesis 2.

Table 2 Results for Main Effects and Moderated Regression Analyses

	Affective Commitment (AC)	
	β	ΔR^2
Step 1		
Age	.17	
Gender	-.23	
Highest Level of Education	.02	
Years working in Oman	-.21	
Monthly Income	-.05	
Nationality	.07	
Sector	-.01	.27***
Step 2		
Age	.22**	
Gender	-.32	
Highest Level of Education	-.06	
Years working in Oman	-.19	
Monthly Income	-.06	
Nationality	.07	
Sector	.02	
POP	-.78***	
IWE	.73***	.15***
Step 3		
Age	.02	
Gender	-.25	
Highest Level of Education	-.06	
Years working in Oman	-.16	
Monthly Income	-.08	
Nationality	.05	
Sector	.00	
POP	-2.25**	
IWE	-.38	
POP x IWE	.34*	.05*

Note. N = 146. POP = Perceived Organizational Politics; IWE = Islamic Work Ethics; AC = Affective Commitment.
* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Moderated Multiple Regression Analyses

Moderated regression analysis (Cohen et al. 2003) was used to know the buffering effects of IWE on the relationship between POP and AC. To test hypothesis 3, all the demographical variables were entered in the first step. Independent variable and moderator were entered in the second step. The interaction term of independent and moderating variable (POP x IWE) was entered in the third step, which if significant, confirmed moderation.

Results of moderated analysis with respect to hypothesis 3 are presented in Table 2, which shows that by controlling the effects of IWE and POP, the product term of IWE x POP had significant relationship with affective commitment ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < .05$; $\Delta R2 = .05$, $p < .05$).

The interaction term further explained 5 percent variance. Although the additional variance is small but statistically it is significant. The moderate increase in the variance typically falls within the range of non-experimental field

investigations. Marginal increase of the variance in empirical studies is due to the limited operationalization of construct (Chaplin, 1991; Perryer, Jordan, Firns, & Travaglione, 2010). To further confirm the moderating effect of IWE in POP-AC relationship, the plot was drawn for significant interactions for high and low (mean ± SD) values of the moderator. Figure 1 shows that POP-AC relationship was negative when IWE was low which was weakened when IWE was high. It rendered support to hypothesis 3 suggesting that individuals, who are high on IWE, may not lose their loyalties with their respective organization when the politics in their organizations is high.
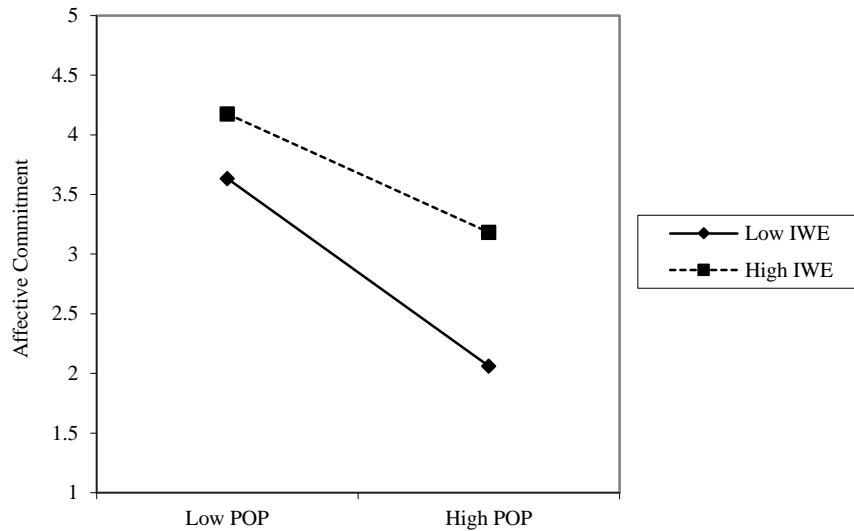

Fig. 1 Interactive Effects of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) and Perceived Organizational Politics (POP) on Affective Commitment

Discussion

In an effort to refine the theory of organizational politics, this study empirically validated the negative relationship between organizational politics and organizational commitment from the viewpoint of expatriates working in Middle East Countries. The findings confirm the aversive nature of perceived politics among employees in the international environment. Consistent with the previous studies, the overall mean of the commitment is low showing relatively low loyalty of expatriates working in Oman (Apergis & Apergis, 2022; Singh et al., 2022). Individuals' high compliance of Islamic work ethic is also nearly same as concluded in past researches (A. J. Ali & Al- Kazemi, 2007; Murtaza et al., 2016). Similar to the findings of (Darwish A Yousef, 2000), the study also endorsed the positive link between Islamic work ethics and affective commitment. Majority of expatriate workers in gulf region are attracted because of high pay and perks. Any better opportunity may induce them to switch their jobs (Shadid N Bhuian et al., 1996). Further the study confirmed the ameliorating effects of IWE on POP-affective commitment relationship.

As discussed earlier, the existing literature reveals inconsistent findings about the perception of politics (POP) to organizational commitment (OC) relationship. The strength, magnitude as well as the direction of POP-OC relationship differs across various settings (Vigoda- Gadot et al., 2003). Particularly considering affective commitment component, the variation exists in the extant literature (Boehman, 2007; Kimura, 2013). Generally our findings confirm the deleterious effects of organizational politics on affective commitment. Moreover, IWE helped

to control the negative effects of politics on commitment. Our results support the contention about organizational politics being harmful towards individuals' attitude and behavior. However the buffering effects of IWE may cope with the situation. Employees high on IWE are least likely to lose their loyalties with their organizations in case of prevailing politics. Islam emphasizes to engage in economic activities and take work as obligation. Key facets of Islamic work ethics are dedication, hard work, cooperation, consultation and creativity. It encourages relations and brotherhood both on workplace and in social life (A. J. Ali & Al- Owaihan, 2008; bin Salahudin, binti Baharuddin, Abdullah, & Osman, 2016; Yousef, 2001). Any illegitimate and unsanctioned activity may have least impact on individuals who are following principles of dedication, hard work, cooperation and consultation religiously. It helps to sustain the commitment with the work as well as with the organization.

The results further confirmed the strong and significant relationships previously reported from western world particularly USA (marked low at power distance and uncertainty avoidance). The population of the study was unique in nature as most of the respondent's belonged to South Asian countries which were marked high at power distance including Oman. Results supported the generalizability of previous studies revealed inverse relationship between POP-AC. The correlation coefficient calculated in this study for POP–AC ($r = -0.52$, $p<0.01$) is nearly same as found by (Witt, 1998), ($r = -0.56$, $p<0.05$) (Nye & Witt, 1993), and ($r = -0.58$, $p<0.01$) (M. L. Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999). Further the zero-order correlations of the South Asian sample was also compared with the meta-analytic uncorrected correlations of western samples concluded by Miller et al. (2008). With respect to organizational politics and organizational commitment, it appears that our obtained relationship ($r = -.52$) is almost same to the found for Miller et al.'s ($r = -.55$) for ethnic minority.

Managerial Implications

The study has some key implications. Managers especially responsible to supervise expatriates in Middle East countries should be careful about the deleterious effects of perceived politics which may weaken the employee-employer bond. Open communication, clear roles and responsibilities, justice and participatory approaches may go long way to control perception of politics among employees. The role of manager/supervisor is crucial to discourage political tendencies. Results of present study confirm the diluting nature of Islamic work ethics on politics to loyalty relationship therefore, managers may induct employees who score high at Islamic work ethics scale. This would help them to diffuse the perception of organizational politics. Ethical codes and principles prescribed by Islam may also be inculcated to existing employees through counseling and training interventions.

Study Limitations

- The data was collected from the sultanate of Oman only. It may not represent the complete picture of Middle East Region.
- Since no other authentic instrument was available to tap the postulated constructs therefore, self-reported measures were used which may sometimes raise the concerns of reviewers.

- We only considered the affective commitment component of organizational commitment. Other types of commitment may also be analyzed particularly the continuance commitment which may have strong relationship due to social and financial cost an employee may incur, in case of switching the organization.

Future Research Directions

- Since the study sample was comprised expatriates only, therefore future studies may be extended to know the variations among local inhabitants of Middle East Arab region.
- Longitudinal studies are required to know the moderating role of IWE between various stressors-outcomes relationships. Other competing work ethics may also be considered in such situations under different settings.
- The moderating role of IWE may also be examined to know the buffering effects in different kinds of aversive situations. Such as the neutralizing effects of IWE between organizational cynicism, psychological contract breach and workplace bullying to favorable outcomes, may be analyzed.

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