

PRIMARY RESEARCH

The Dark Side of Leadership: The Impact of Despotic Leadership on Job Performance and Vigor with the Moderating Role of Islamic Work Ethics

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Keywords

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Abstract.

Purpose: This study examines the interactive effects of despotic leadership and Islamic work ethic (IWE) on the job outcomes of employees, that is, job performance and vigor.

Methodology: Using a time lag design, we collected data from 201 regular faculty members of a medium-sized private university in Pakistan.

Findings: The analysis revealed that despotic leadership relates significantly to the employee job performance but not vigor. IWE showed a significant effect on vigor, but not on job performance. In addition, the results also confirmed that IWE moderates the relationship between despotic leadership and vigor but not for job performance.

Significance: This study added value to the body of knowledge by examining the moderating role of IWE between despotic leadership, vigor, and job performance.

Limitations: Limitations and future directions for research have also been discussed.

Practical Implications: Employees who work under the supervision of despotic leaders must be given proper training to minimize the fear of such leaders. The findings of the study also provide some important possibilities for the part of IWE in increasing the positive energies (i.e. vigor) at work.

KAUJIE Classification: M84, H54

JEL Classification: J62, J64

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is commonly described as one's ability to influence the followers to achieve any objective (Naseer et al., 2016). The leaders are strongly expected to be the role models of ethical behavior and protagonists of cultural norms for their followers. The absence of these ethical behaviors from leaders is known to be very costly for the organizations (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008). Mega scandals like WorldCom, Lehman Brothers, Enron, etc., primarily caused by ethical failure of the leaders, have brought the dark side of leadership

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under sharp focus (Naseer et al., 2016). The negative traits of the leaders are a matter of great concern for organizations, and further research is needed on how these negative aspects impact subordinate's behaviors (Collins & Jackson, 2015). Consequently, the dominion of the dark side of leadership has been expanded to include destructive leadership, unethical leadership (Eisenbei & Brodbeck, 2014), and despotic leadership (Nauman et al., 2018).

A despotic leader is considered to be selfish; aspiring to exercise full control, demanding more, misusing power, and neglecting others' ideas (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008). Moreover, a despotic leader is a self-centered leader who requires unquestioned compliance from the followers and focuses on pursuing personal gains instead of the follower's interests in the workplace (De Clercq et al., 2019).

Previously, despotic leadership has been studied with many outcomes, e.g. organizational performance, turnover intentions, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Naseer et al., 2016; Nauman et al., 2018; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Despite all these proofs, negative aspects of leadership, i.e. despotic leadership needs to be further explored due to its harmful effects on employees' attitudes and behaviors (Nauman et al., 2018). Furthermore, despotic leadership has a detrimental effect on the employees which not only affects the quality of employees but also the organizational functioning (De Clercq et al., 2018). Thus, regardless of its long-standing presence in the literature of political leadership, as well as its intuitive appeal, research related to business management and applied psychology literature is still in its infancy (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2018). Especially, research on despotic leadership requires more attention particularly in developing countries like Pakistan because it is important to explore how different concepts broadcasted in the developed countries are showing their effects in the developing countries (Raja et al., 2019). To address these research gaps, the current study investigates the impact of despotic leadership on two key employees' job outcomes, i.e. job performance and vigor in Pakistan.

There are several reasons for focusing on these two outcomes for the current research. We believe that job performance and vigor play a vital role in an employee's tasks in any organization. Job performance is more of a direct behavior based on the achievement of organizational goals, which relates to organizational performance (Naseer et al., 2016). The objective of job performance is to keep the focus of employees on their primary tasks and how well they perform those tasks (Brown, 1996). On the other hand, vigor is a positive emotional state (hysterical and mood state) of any employee (Shirom, 2004; Shirom, 2007, Shirom et al., 2008), which increases his level of energy, physical strength, and cognitive vivacity. In addition, vigor also refers to the self-efficacy that helps an employee in achieving his goals and accomplishing his tasks (Reisenzein, 1994; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). This differs from the optimistic and negative affectivity with respect to individual predispositions that are constructive or unfavorable to work (Watson & Clark, 1992).

Vigor works as a positive resource that drives positive and negative behaviors of employees at the workplace (Little et al., 2011). According to these researchers, vigor gives physical strength, resulting in high energy in carrying out daily tasks but still it can be affected due to dispositional and contextual factors at the workplace. Thus, the despotic leadership style may affect not only the work performance of individuals but also their positive work-

related affectivity. In recent years, researchers have paid attention to the dark sides of leadership, but the contextual factors that may play an imperative role in influencing the dark side of leadership and job outcomes relationship are largely ignored (Naseer et al., 2016). Considering the religious dimension of workplace ethics, many questions remain unanswered which future researchers need to take into account (Javed et al., 2017). In line with the empirical evidence, most of the work concerning ethics has been done in the West with an emphasis on Weber's (1958) Protestant Work Ethics (PWE). Thus, there is a dire need to extend the prior research on IWE in Muslim majority countries. As a majority of multinational companies hire Muslim managers and invest in Muslim countries, which make it critical to explore how IWE affects the work-related behaviors of employees of the Islamic faith (Raja et al., 2019). The current study addresses this gap by exploring the moderating role of IWE in relationship with despotic leadership and job outcomes i.e., job performance and vigor.

IWE is extracted from the primary sources of Islamic literature i.e., The Holy Qur'ān and *sunnah* which later got prominence and emerged as a separate discipline in the late eighties in the past century (Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008). For many years, IWE has been gaining importance in the workplace, due to which it has become an area of attention for researchers; thus, it is important to address the gap in the literature for a better understanding of IWE at the workplace (Muhammad et al., 2015). Focusing on the different leadership styles and ethical value systems, it is important to see their effects on job outcomes (Raja et al., 2019) because research on 'how despotic leadership and IWE can affect job outcomes?' is still uncertain and has controversial findings. Previously, some studies suggested that IWE has direct and moderating effects on organizational justice, organizational commitment, and turnover (Yousef, 2001; Khan et al., 2015).

Some authors have proved the direct impact of IWE on OCB and knowledge sharing behaviors (Murtaza, et al., 2016). Javed et al. (2017) suggested that IWE may work as a moderator in the relationship between workplace stressors (i.e., despotic leadership) and job consequences (performance and vigor). Employees who have IWE, show an ethical compulsion to achieve organizational goals with constructive optimistic behaviors and evade undesirable behaviors, even though their leader does not show any positive behavior (Ahmad & Owoyemi, 2012). In addition, when people believe that there is a reward for them in the hereafter for their good deeds, they do not respond negatively to their bad leaders and focus on good deeds (Javed et al., 2019).

Thus, in the current study, we intend to examine the impact of despotic leadership on job performance and vigor. We also propose that in organizational settings, the employees' intensity to respond to despotic leadership will be relatively low where employees possess high IWE.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Despotic Leadership and Job Outcomes

According to Stogdill (1974), the concept of leadership has gone beyond the perspective of a leader and his personality dimensions. In the past, important studies have been conducted on

the behavioral and cultural impact on the leader's conduct (Avolio et al., 2009). For a decade, researchers and academicians have been interested in ethical leadership and its impact on enterprise performance (Brown & Trevin, 2006), as the personal values of key leaders, lay the foundation for the ethics of an organization (Sims & Brinkman, 2002). Previous studies valued the ethics-based practices in leaders' activities to minimize the damage of the current business paradigm (Mayer et al., 2009). However, in recent years, the focus of academicians and researchers has shifted towards the dark side of leadership, especially, despotic leadership on ethical grounds (Padilla et al., 2007). As organizations have faced several challenges, the dark side of leadership has now appeared as the foremost menace for constructive behaviors of employees in organizational settings (Naseer et al., 2016).

Despotic leadership is undoubtedly one of the unethical leadership styles (Howell & Avolio, 1992). It resembles an authoritative ideology, sometimes interpreted as Totalitarianism based approach in which leaders are self-centered, neglect the followers, and are selfish (Brown & Mitchell, 2010; Schilling, 2009). These leaders tend to dominate and exploit their powers (Aronson, 2001). They are arrogant, unforgiving, mean, demanding, and lack integrity (House & Howell, 1992, Naseer et al., 2016). Their main goal is to achieve personal goals with a materialistic approach to achieve the desired goals. Their activities are harmful to society by involving the company in fraudulent activities (Aronson, 2001; Schilling, 2009). As despotic leaders who focus solely on their personal goals, they cannot engage their subordinates in decision-making that may be detrimental to their interests, and thereby may affect the performance of their tasks. Consistent with previous research, the despotic leadership style has a negative impact on an employee's declining performance (Naseer et al., 2016). It also harms the company's social image in the market and influences the decisions of job seekers (Morgeson & Hofmann, 1999, Strobel et al., 2010). Due to the unforgiving nature of despotic leaders, employees may feel a fear to interact with them because the despotic leader may perceive it as an offense and eventually employees may be getting extra work from their leader as a punishment (Kanungo, 2001). An employee in such an environment may feel unsafe, unworthy, and stressed which will ultimately decline the job performance of employee (Naseer et al., 2016).

Despotic leaders can also directly affect the vigor of the employee, that is, an energetic and behavioral component style (Shirom, 2007). Vigor refers to the high energy level and mental resilience of an individual, his willingness to make efforts in his work and to remain determined in the face of difficulties (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Vigor is also known as the positive affective state of an individual related to their work (Shirom et al. 2008) and this positive affective state causes an increase in energy level, physical vigor, and cognitive liveliness. Leaders who feel lively and energetic are likely to motivate their followers (Brief & Weiss, 2002), while despotic leaders who are mean, dominating, and focused solely on their interests can be a serious threat to an organization in terms of success. Unethical leaders can put the organization at risk and cause ethical problems (Sims & Brinkman, 2002). Organizations that are unable to identify despotic leaders have exhausted and emotionally dissatisfied employees (Nauman et al., 2018). We believe that such leaders have a negative impact on employees' positive work-related affectivity, which reduces their positive experiences, depletes their

energy levels and their dynamism. Based on the above arguments, we expect detrimental effects of despotic leadership on job outcomes (job performance and vigor) and therefore hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1a: Despotic Leadership is negatively related to job performance.

Hypothesis 1b: Despotic Leadership is negatively related to vigor.

IWE and Job Outcomes

Ethics are the guidelines for human beings to avoid unwanted and morally inappropriate actions and to practice ones that are legitimate under moral principles (Javed et al., 2017). Islam, as a way of life (religion), provides a complete system that has its roots based on ethics that cover every aspect of life together with economic and social activities (Rice, 1999). Therefore, Muslims must follow the code approved by The Sharia.

IWE has its root in Qur'ān and *sunnah* (Yousef, 2001). IWE advocates the importance of performing right for the pleasure of Allah (Aldulaimi, 2016). The Qur'ān states, "For all, there are ranks according to their doings; and Allah is not unaware of what they do" (6:132). Similarly, "There is nothing for a man but what he strives for" (53:39).

Life without work has no meaning (Yousef, 2001). Therefore, Islam puts great emphasis on hard work and shuns being lethargic and wasting time by involving in fruitless activities (Yousef, 2001). As Qur'ān states "He who created death and life to test which of you is best in deeds" (67:2) as well as "And he who does righteous deeds and he is a believer, he will have neither fear of injustice nor deprivation" (20:112). Likewise, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that "no food is better than that one eats out of his work" and "Allah will be pleased with those who do their work in a perfect way" (Aldulaimi, 2016).

IWE renders work as a basis of satisfaction and achievement (Zahrah et al., 2016). According to Prophet (PBUH) best amongst people are those who are helpful to others (Murtaza et al., 2016). We believe that a person can only be beneficial to others when he is energetic and this energy helps to invest efforts in work. When individuals are high on IWE, they exhibit more intrinsic motivation at their job (Hayati & Caniago, 2012). This motivation may lead them towards vigor.

Vigor is a positive affective response of an employee with a job (Abu Bakar et al., 2016). They further said that religiosity works as an important driver for work engagement. When people have faith at work, as well as they are religious, they focus more on positive matters. Religious awareness helps individuals to avoid unethical behavior (Zahrah et al., 2016). Based on the above discussion, the below-mentioned hypotheses have been developed:

Hypothesis 2a: IWE is positively related to job performance.

Hypothesis 2b: IWE is positively related to vigor.

IWE as a Moderator

Employees working under despotic leaders may feel fear to exhibit job performance and vigor in their work activities. In this situation, we believe that the presence of contextual factors may play a significant role in mitigating the impact of despotic leadership on job

outcomes (Khan et al., 2015; Naseer et al., 2016). Many other researchers have emphasized the importance of contextual factors and have consistently called on future researchers to take these factors into account in management and organizational behavior research (De Clercq et al. 2017; Javed et al., 2017).

The Islamic ethical values of employees, that is IWE, are important contextual factors, and employees who possess these values can eventually find the solutions to the problems of adverse working conditions (Haq et al., 2017). IWE helps the believers to get involved in job duties and not to participate in unethical behaviors (Ali & Owaihan, 2008; Khan et al., 2015; Murtaza et al., 2016). Particularly, when leaders are highly despotic, individuals with IWE may not bother about these types of leaders.

As previously stated, when employees work under the supervision of despotic leaders, their job performance decreases and they may not exert positive energy any further in their work. However, individuals displaying higher IWE may be less expected to retort to their despotic leaders because employees with IWE have a sense of hope and provision and they are better able to manage the circumstances to make them favorable rather than behaving negatively (Javed et al., 2019).

According to researchers, religion plays an important role in solving workplace problems because of its very strong impact on the intrinsic and extrinsic labor values of an individual (Parboteeah et al., 2009). The Qur'an says, "Good and bad deeds are not equal. Answer evil with that which is best, and you will see that he, between whom and you there was enmity (will become) as if he were a devoted friend"(41:34). In addition, Qur'an states, "if you are patient and fear Allah, their plot will not hurt you. Indeed, Allah understands what they do "(3: 120). Based on the above verses of the Qur'an, IWE emphasizes that labor is an obligatory activity, a quality in the light of human essentials (Ali & Owaihan, 2008). In addition, IWE is a personal quality, and employees who have a strong IWE face the challenges of adverse working conditions and find solutions to them (De Clercq et al., 2017). The work environment, where employees work under the supervision of a despotic leader, they may lower their job performance and vigor because the supervisor's negative behavior develops a perception in employees that they are not being treated well and consequently employees react to this mistreatment negatively; this negative reaction can be lessened when employees have strong IWE (Murtaza et al., 2016). Therefore, people with high levels of IWE are less likely to reduce their performance and vigor at work, even in the presence of a despotic leader. Based on this, we propose that: Hypothesis 3a: IWE moderates the negative relationship between despotic leadership and job performance such that the relationship is weaker when IWE is high.

Hypothesis 3b: IWE moderates the negative relationship between despotic leadership and vigor such that the relationship is weaker when IWE is high.

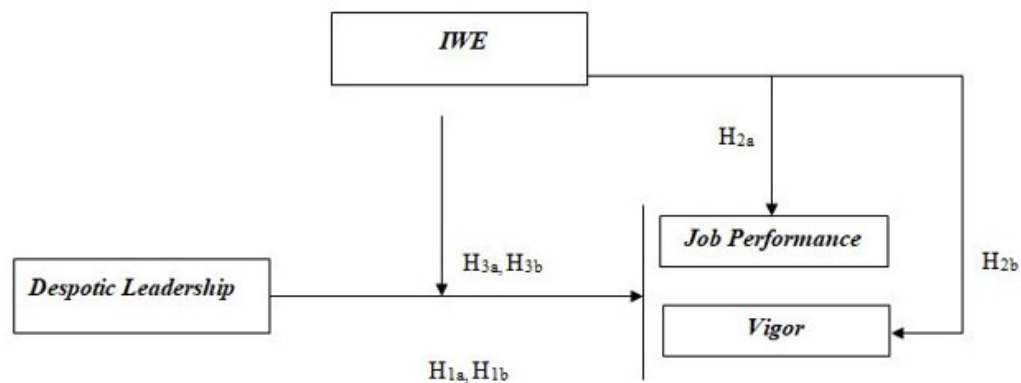


FIGURE 1. Theoretical Framework

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection Procedures

The current study, using a time lag design, was conducted amongst academic faculty (medical doctors and non-medical faculty members) of a medium-sized private university in two waves with a gap of six weeks. Data on despotic Leadership, IWE, and vigor were collected through self-reported questionnaires in wave-I; while to avoid the common method bias, data on job performance was collected through supervisor-reported questionnaires in wave-II. During wave-I, survey forms, for acquiring self-reported data, were distributed to 327 members of the university's faculties. After 3 days, 236 completed forms were collected out of which 217 were found useable.

A separate questionnaire was prepared for collecting supervisor-reported data on job performance. The names of the respondents of questionnaires collected in wave-I were written on this questionnaire. These forms were segregated in accordance with the reporting channels of the respondents and six weeks after the completion of wave-I they were handed over to their respective supervisors (e.g., Dean, department head, and heads of office). Supervisors returned 201 completed and useable forms which were attached with forms received in wave-I.

Of the 327 distributed questionnaires, the researchers received 217 usable self-reported and 201 supervisor-reported questionnaires. Therefore, the final response rate for usable 201 paired responses was 61%. The demographic results revealed that 46.3% were males and 53.7% were females. The respondent's age on average was 32 ($SD = 7.45$), the average tenure and years were 4 ($SD = 3.65$) years. To avoid method bias, we collected data on despotic leadership and IWE in the first round while job performance and vigor at time 2 (i.e. after 6 weeks).

Measures

All concepts were measured using self-assessment tools, except for job performance, as they

were measured using supervisory ratings to avoid method bias issues. Responses for all variables were accessed using a five-point Likert scale with anchors i.e. 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

Despotic Leadership

It was measured, using a 06 item scale established by De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008). Sample item includes: "Is vengeful; seeks revenge when wronged". The coefficient alpha reliability was 0.81.

IWE We used a 17-items scale for IWE developed by (Ali, 1992). An example of an item includes "Good work benefits both one's self and others". The alpha reliability of this variable was 0.82.

Job performance

We measured supervisory rated job performance of employees by using a 5-items scale established by Williams and Anderson (1991). One of the items includes "Meets formal performance requirements of the job". Cronbach's alpha reliability for this measure was 0.84.

Vigor

Vigor was measured by taking into account the five items from the measure developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002). A sample item is "At my work, I feel bursting with energy". The alpha reliability of this scale was 0.72.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics, alpha reliabilities and bivariate correlations. Correlation results show that relationship of despotic leadership is significant and in expected direction for performance ($r = -0.15$, $p < 0.05$) but isn't significant for vigor ($r = 0.01$, $n.s.$). Correlations of IWE are significant and in the expected directions for vigor ($r = 0.46$, $p < 0.01$) but not for job performance ($r = 0.11$, $n.s.$).

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1 Despotic leadership	2.34	0.72	-0.81			
2 IWE	4.05	0.44	-0.11	-0.82		
3 Performance	4.18	0.55	-0.15*	0.11	-0.84	
4 Vigor	3.67	0.63	0.01	0.46**	-0.02	-0.72

N = 201; Cronbach's alpha shown in brackets; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Regression Analyses

Table 2 displays the regression analysis for key effects of despotic leadership, IWE, job performance, and vigor. We checked the possible effects of demographic variables on the outcomes by using one-way ANOVA but none of them showed any significant effects, so demographics were not controlled in the first step of regression analysis. All independent

variables were taken in the first step to show the main effects. Results show that despotic leadership has a significant effect on performance ($b = -0.14$, $p < 0.05$) but no effect on vigor ($b = 0.06$, $n.s.$). These results support hypothesis 1a but do not support hypothesis 1b. Similarly results of table 2 indicate that IWE significantly and positively predict vigor ($b = 0.47$, $p < 0.001$) but not performance ($b = -0.10$, $n.s.$). These results render support hypothesis 2b but do not support hypothesis 2a.

Moderated regression analysis was opted to test Hypotheses 3a and 3b. During step 1, independent and moderating variables were entered to conduct the moderated regression analysis, and product terms of independent and moderating variables (despotic leadership x IWE) were taken in the second turn which confirmed moderation if significant. Table 2 shows that the interaction term of despotic leadership and IWE was significant for performance ($b = -0.16$, $p < 0.05$) as well as for vigor ($b = -0.11$, $p < 0.10$). These results provide support for hypotheses 3a and 3b.

TABLE 2
Results of Regressions Analysis

	Performance		Vigor	
	β	δR^2	β	δR^2
Step 1				
Despotic	-0.14*		0.06	
IWE	0.1	0.03*	0.47***	0.22***
Step 2				
Despotic x IWE	-0.16*	0.03*	-0.11†	0.01†

$N = 201$; † $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$

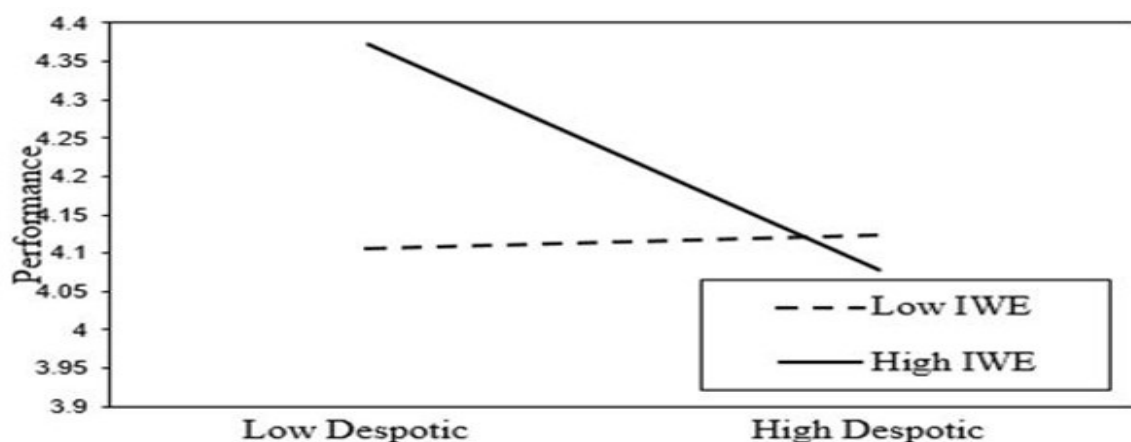


FIGURE 2. Interactive Effects of Despotic Leadership and IWE on Performance

Furthermore, graphs of significant interactions for the high and low (mean \pm SD) values of moderator were plotted. Figure 2 indicates that the despotic leadership and performance relationship was positive when the IWE was low, and negative for a high value of IWE.

Simple slope test showed that positive slope indicating low levels of IWE was not significant ($b = 0.01, n.s.$), but negative slope indicating high levels of IWE was significant ($b = -0.20, p = 0.01$). These outcomes do not support hypothesis 3a, as persons who exhibit low IWE are not affected by the presence of despotic leadership. Whereas, contrary to our expectations, a negative despotic leadership-performance relationship was stronger with high IWE depicting that individuals having high IWE lower their job performance in the presence of despotic leaders.

Figure 3 shows that the relationship between despotic leadership and vigor was positive when IWE was low and negative for IWE being high. Slope test further shows, positive slope being significant ($b = 0.15, p < 0.05$) for low levels of IWE whereas negative slope was not significant ($b = -0.03, n.s.$) for high levels of IWE. The obtained results partially support hypothesis 3b proposing that individuals who have low IWE are more likely to show extra vigor in their tasks when despotic leadership is high. On the other hand, individuals who have high IWE are not affected by the presence or absence of despotic leadership.

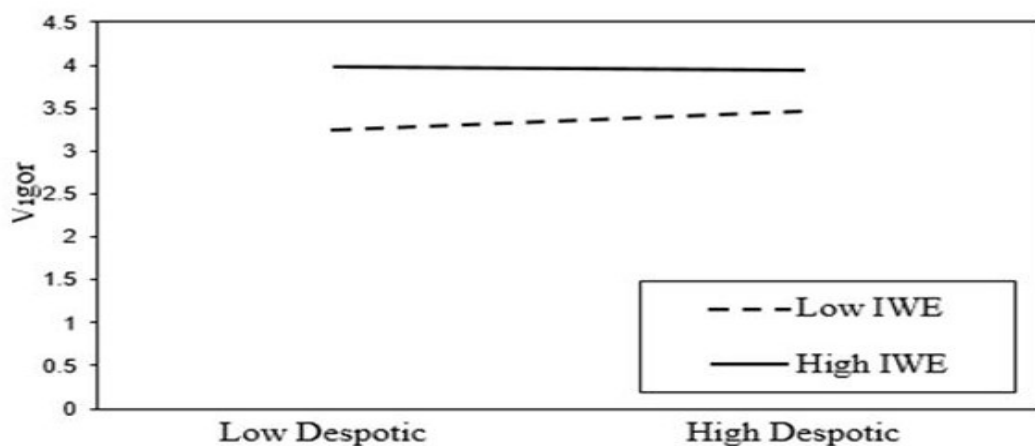


FIGURE 3. Interactive effects of Despotic Leadership and Islamic Work Ethic on vigor

Discussion

The study shows the significant variations on outcomes of IWE and despotic leadership i.e. job performance and vigor. Our findings show that when employees see that there is despotic leadership in their workplace, they lower their performance but despotic leadership shows no effect on vigor. The findings for job performance are in accordance with the earlier findings (Naseer et al., 2016) suggesting that the presence of despotic leaders in the workplace lowers the employee's job performance. In this case, employees may feel that their boss only focuses on his personal goals and has selfish nature (Bass, 1990), thus they should not work properly and they must lower their job performance. On the other hand, contrary to our hypothesis; despotic leadership showed no significant effect on the vigor. It can be due to the fact that vigor is a positive affective state of an individual related to his/her work (Shirom, 2007; Shirom et al. 2008), so when people have this positive energy they may not get affected under the supervision of despotic leader because vigor provides positive resources to employees to handle the job demands in their workplace (Little et al., 2011).

The findings of our study also support the assertion that IWE has a positive effect on vigor. IWE helps the employees to bring positive energies to their job because people with a religious orientation are more positive-minded and ready to face the challenges of the workplace (Abu Bakar et al., 2016). Contrary to our prediction, IWE did not show any effect on the job performance of the employees. It can be due to the reason that employees with high IWE may have a belief that work is an obligatory activity (Ali & Owaihan, 2008) but they behave differently and may not show high performance in their work. In this case, the intentions of the employees may be different from reality.

We also found support for the moderating effects of IWE on a despotic leadership-outcomes relationship. Moderating results were interesting but contrary to our expectations as there existed a strong negative relationship between performance and despotic leadership when IWE are high. It can be due to the reason that individuals with high IWE may feel very uncomfortable in the presence of despotic leaders and as a result, their job performance might decrease. Islamic ethical values work as a catalyst, and employees with high IWE may respond negatively to the destructive boss (Raja et al., 2019). In this case, individuals with high IWE may take revenge from such types of leaders by decreasing their job performance.

Furthermore, the moderating effects of vigor and despotic leadership are in the expected direction. A negative relationship between vigor and despotic leadership was stronger when IWE was low. Individuals low on IWE may feel afraid of their despotic boss and in return show their interest in their work. It is also possible that such types of individuals may be lazy and do not work hard (Khan et al., 2015). Thus, such individuals may work vigorously under the supervision of an authoritative boss. Data for the current study is based on Pakistani organizations, so cultural factors can be relevant. Pakistan is one of the high power distance countries (Hofstede, 1983), where leaders have unequal distribution of power. In such cultures, subordinates having low IWE accept power inequalities and they do what they are expected to do due to a psychological fear of boss in their minds. Thus, they go the extra mile to avoid punishment from their despotic boss.

Managerial Implications

The findings of this research have many inferences for faculty members. First, despotic leadership has detrimental effects on employees' job performance in the workplace. In this case, universities or other academic institutions should be very careful during the hiring process and should not appoint such leaders/ faculty members/ administrative staff (Nauman et al., 2018). To avoid this problem, universities or other academic institutions should have more focus on the behavioral aspects of individuals being hired.

Second, employees who work under the supervision of despotic leaders must be given proper training to minimize the fear of such leaders. In addition, subordinates must be counseled that they should not lower their performance even in the presence of despotic leaders and should also report to higher authorities about the despotic behavior of their bosses without any fear (Nauman et al., 2018).

Third, the findings of the study provide some important possibilities for the part of IWE in increasing the positive energies (i.e. vigor) at work. As ethics are the key component in the

core values of any organization (Rice, 1999), the managers can become moral champions by supporting IWE at the workplace (Khan et al., 2015).

Study Limitations and Future Research Directions

The current study is not without limitations. First, data collection was limited to the academic faculty of one organization only. Future research should examine the additional occupations to get more generalized results (Nauman et al., 2018). In addition, employees from multiple organizations could be chosen as a sample of the study.

Second, we have considered only one variable for buffering effects, whereas, in the future, other buffering variables like psychological capital, perceived organizational support, ethical leadership, whistle-blowing, and personality dimensions including dark triad should be considered in these relationships. Third, though many studies have explored the effects of despotic leadership on a variety of job outcomes, future researchers can focus on some other important job outcomes including innovative work behaviors, creative performance, adaptive performance, and workplace deviant behaviors. Fourth, in this study, the sample was based on a Pakistani organization only, which limits the possibility of generalizing the results. In the future, a sample of other Asian and Western countries should be created to reinforce the validity and generalizability of the results (Javed et al., 2017).

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