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**A Scoping Review of Research on Islamic Work Ethics**

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**Abstract:**

*Ethics has been a central issue in the study of leadership in general, and particularly Islamic work ethic (IWE). Despite the growing interest in the study of ethics in relation to leadership, only an insignificant number of publications about Islamic work ethics. Moreover, there are virtually low research publications in respect of religious aspects of ethics both Islamic and Christian. The purpose of this paper is scoping review of Islamic work ethic literature to map out (what is known from the existing literature about IWE) its conceptualizations and synthesize the findings. The methodology of this scoping review was conducted by searching the term Islamic work ethic in the largest social sciences database (Scopus), ranging from 1988 to 2018. All studies that have the term Islamic work ethic as one of their variables and only empirical articles and articles in the press were also considered for inclusion. The findings of previous studies and their suggestions for further studies were disseminated as well. The result shows that Islamic work ethics was found to be significant in ethical leadership research, but still, there is a very low research output on it. The peak research output on IWE was recorded in 2018 with 22 documents in the Scopus Database.*

**Keywords:** *Ethics Leadership, Islamic work ethic, scoping review, commitment*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Over the past few decades, organizations have been dealing with employees' immoral and irresponsible behaviors leading to a poor and stifling work environment in which others can work (Tufail, Ahmad, Ramayah, Jan, & Shah, 2017). Work ethics is viewed as a workplace-related group of values and behaviors that society feels are moral (Attahiru, Al-aidaros, & Yusuf, 2016; Sanders, 2004). General Awareness and understanding of work ethics have led researchers to think and define in spiritual and ethical terms new models of business practices (Tufail et al., 2017). Until the treatise on Protestant labor ethics by Max Weber, the issues of productivity and economic development and their relationship to religious beliefs have become increasingly popular. However, most of the discussion of these topics has been about Judeo-Christian ethics. Ali and Al-Owaihan (2008) argue that IWE is also seen as the orientation that influences and shapes the involvement of believers in the workplace and implies that a person needs work to strike a balance and social life (Ali & Owaihan, 2008). Kirkbesoglu and Sargu (2016), strengthened the idea that religion played a positive effect in impacting social relations and work responsibility (Kirkbesoglu & Selami, 2016).

Islamic work ethics is an ancient concept that began over 1400 years ago. It is evidently written in the Qur'an and by prophet Muhammad's actions and sayings (SAW) (Aldulaimi, 2016; Attahiru et al., 2016). Parboteeah et al. (2009) stressed that, several researches on religiosity recommended that religion impacts the inside conviction arrangement of an individual, and that it greatly affects the inborn and extraneous work estimations of that individual (Parboteeah, Paik, & Cullen, 2009; Tufail et al., 2017). Ethics of work has an association with organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and individual and organizational variables. Islamic work ethics has direct linkage with organizational commitment (Yusuf, 2001). In the same vein Ahmad & Owoyemi (2012), argue that Islamic work ethics are multi-dimensional and are associated with different facets of human life such as social, political and

economic (Ahmad & Owoyemi, 2012; Tufail et al., 2017). The concept of Islamic work ethics goes beyond hard work hence it is regarded as an act of worship to please the Lord and the Creator, they further argue that Islamic work ethics might be termed as an established values or a system of beliefs originated from Al-Qur'an and the Sunnah (Ahmad & Owoyemi, 2012). According to some researchers, Islamic work ethics provides Muslim employees with ethical guidance on how to perform the job ideally as required by Islam. It is one of the factors that affect Muslim employees and Islamic organizations enormously. Islamic work ethics is based on four main concepts, namely effort, competition, transparency, and morally responsible behavior, which are the cornerstones of Islamic work ethics (Mastura, 2017). According to Parboteeah et al. (2009), innumerable research on religiosity has suggested that religion influences a person's internal belief system and has a major impact on that person's intrinsic and extrinsic labor values. Religion's importance has highlighted the need for organizations to pay attention to different aspects of religious influences on employee behaviors relevant to work (Mario, Fernando and Jackson, 2006; Parboteeah et al., 2009).

## **Scoping review methodology and analysis**

The researcher decided to use the scoping review approach to map the concept of Islamic work ethics in terms of how it is operationalized and perceived in the study of ethical leadership, as well as information about its interpretation in previous studies. Because, despite its importance, there is an insignificant amount of research on the concept of Islamic work ethics, we consider a scoping review more appropriate than a systematic review. By clarifying definitions and conceptual boundaries, scoping can help to understand complex concepts. Furthermore, scoping will enable us to identify key concepts, literature gaps, and various kinds and sources of evidence to educate practice, policy-making, and research (Arksey & Malley, 2005; Stoffels, Peerdeman, Daelmans, Ket, & Kusurkar, 2019). In this regard, we will include studies with different designs to get a comprehensive picture of the existing research.

Guidelines for scoping reviews are still under development for preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analysis (PRISMA) (Arksey & Malley, 2005). The researcher had to use relevant PRISMA - P items in the drafting of this protocol, to ensure smooth conduct of the study.

At the first stage, the researcher needs to identify the research question. Since the goal is to understand the conceptualization of Islamic work ethics in the current literature regardless of research design and synthesize the results. Therefore, research question is: How Islamic work ethics have been conceptualized, and what are the findings from existing literature. Then the search for relevant studies, here we used the search term "Islamic Work Ethic" and restricted it to only English Language, we also limit the search to only empirical articles and articles in press ranging from 1988 to 2018 in the Scopus database being the largest database for social and management sciences research. However, only articles with the search term "Islamic Work Ethic" as one of their variables is selected. Then the data from the abstract, full text and conclusions were collated. Thus, discussion and dissemination being the last stage as well as a conclusion.

### **The concept of Islamic work ethic**

According to Husin and Kernain, (2019) the word akhlaq stressed in Islamic work ethics has a strong connection with the word Khaliq meaning Creator (Allah) and the word makhhluk (the creature) (Husin & Kernain, 2019). However, akhlaq refers to a good relationship between makhhluk (the creature) and the Creator (Allah) and makhhluk (the creature) and another makhhluk (creature). The logical consequence to this is the word khuluq as stated in the Holy Qur'an (Qur'an 68: p. 4); "and you (Prophet Muhammad) are on Exalted character standard" (Husin & Kernain, 2019). According to Al-Ghazali, a perfect akhlaq consist of four main attributes: wisdom, bravery, remorse, and fair-mindedness, which lead to a person perform his duties honestly and sincerely in order to obtain the blessings of Almighty (Husin & Kernain, 2019). He further argues that a decent Muslim must play out their obligation either as an employee or employer on the

principles of akhlaq, in order to maintain a strategic distance from unethical practices, for example, bribery and cheating.

Islamic work ethics referred to as established moral codes and good principles that discern right practices (work) from wrong in Islamic setting (Tufail et al., 2017). According to Hayati and Caniago (2012), Islamic work ethics includes expectations in one's working behavior, including dedication, effort, responsibility, cooperation, creativity, and social relationships (Hayati & Caniago, 2012, 2014) While Attahiru *et al* perceived Islamic work ethics as actively encouraging consultation and mutual trust, and it is viewed as a way to overcome problems and avoid mistakes in meeting one's life needs (Attahiru et al., 2016). In the light of Islamic principles and values, Islamic work ethics is also seen as the expectations of the relationship between individuals themselves and their attitudes at work (Attahiru et al., 2016; Usman, Shahzad, & Khan, 2015). Islamic work ethics could be inferred from the Quran and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him) on four attitudes. Namely; attitudes to livelihood, wealth, time and leisure (Ahmad & Owoyemi, 2012; Tufail et al., 2017). A belief system of an individual influences them to have a certain mentality towards things. For example, Ajzen, in 1980, figured a hypothesis of behaviors in which he portrayed that the conduct of the individual is supported by an attitude with an aim to do as such, and an attitude of an individual is to a great extent subordinate upon the belief about that conduct. Along these lines, in the event that an individual holds solid Islamic qualities, at that point, he/she will stick to positive and wanted work attitudes and practices(Tufail et al., 2017).

IWE is seen as the conduct of the traders on the basis of the fear of Allah, which includes justice, commitment, and cooperation in order to achieve Falah (success). IWE is similarly denoted as creative and work - oriented participation, as well as a virtue in the needs of the individual, as well as the need to strike a balance in his or her social and individual life(Ali, 1988, 1992), while at the same time fulfilling his or her duties towards Allah (SWT) (Ali & Al-Kazemi, 2007). According to

Ali, (1988) Islamic work ethics, however, denotes work as a compulsory activity and virtue in the light of man's needs and the need to strike a balance in one's individual and social life. Work allows a man to be independent, a source of self-respect, self - satisfaction, and fulfillment. The job's success and progress depend on hard work and commitment to one's job. Working commitment also involves a desire to improve the welfare of the community and society. If each person were committed to his work and avoided unethical methods of wealth accumulation, society would have fewer problems. In addition to being a source of happiness, creative work and cooperation are also considered noble deeds.

**Religiosity**

Religiosity is different from religion. The first is analogous with a specific religion or creed (such as Islam and Christianity, or more specific, e.g., Sunni and Catholicism), whereas the former describes the focus of religion in directing a person's life in accordance with religious role expectations (Cleveland, Laroche, & Hallab, 2013). From the Islamic point of view, religion is described as the state of divine origin that guides individuals with a sane mind to what is better for them in this life and then by their own decision. Religiosity is also committed to the fundamentals of Islamic religion through theoretical beliefs and practices, and by fulfilling the rights of Allah, following the orders of Allah, protecting other rights, avoiding wrongdoing, and worshiping ----''-'---'(Osman-Gani, Hashim, & Ismail, 2013). However, religion has been described as one of the most important social institutions expressively associated with

people's attitudes, behaviors, and values. Islam has governed all aspects of life as a comprehensive religion. The importance of religiosity in one's life can be determined by the identity or meaning that somebody in his life gives to religion (Hamza Khraim, 2010). Religiosity is one of the factors in determining the ethical behavior of a person because it was specified by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) that the main purpose of his mission to people is to develop their ethics. He underlined: "I was sent to complete good characters" (Al-bazaar: 8949). Likewise, the level of religious expression can directly impact consumers' daily lives behaviorally ----(Yousaf & Malik, 2013)

**Protestant work ethic (PWE) vs Islamic work ethic (IWE)**

The Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) and the Protestant Work Ethics (PWE) place considerable emphasis on diligent work, passion, and commitment to work, creativity in the workplace, avoidance of unethical methods of accumulation of wealth, cooperation and competitiveness. Unlike the PWE, however, the IWE focuses more on intention than results. It is, therefore, stressing more on intrinsic motivation, and this tends to encourage workers to be more committed as they hope to please the Almighty God. For example, Prophet Mohammed said '' acts are recorded on purpose, and man will be rewarded or punished accordingly. " It also emphasizes workplace social aspects and social obligations. Furthermore, the IWE highlights workplace justice and generosity and views engagement in economic activities as an obligation(Yusuf, 2001).

**Table 3.1 Findings from previous studies**

Year/location	Research Title	Findings	Author(s)
2018, Indonesia	The effect of IWE and motivation through organizational citizenship behavior and employee performance at Bank Aceh Syria	Islamic work ethic (IWE) and work motivation affect employee performance at mediated organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). behavior and employee performance at Bank Aceh Syria	<a href="#">Dharma, Y.</a> , <a href="#">Ikhsan, A.</a>



2018, Malaysia	The relationship between Islamic work ethic and workplace outcome: A partial least squares approach	IWE has both direct and indirect effects on attitudinal behavioral outcomes as well.	1. <a href="#">Mohammad, J.</a> et al
2018, Indonesia	The effect of Islamic work ethics, organizational culture, and TQM toward changes in organizational attitudes with organizational commitment as an intervening variable	The study has found that the variables of IWE, Organizational Culture, and TQM have a positive and significant effect on Organizational Commitments and Changes in Organizational Attitudes. On the contrary, it doesn't have a positive and significant influence on changes in organizational attitudes through organizational commitment	1. <a href="#">Adnan, A.</a> , 2. <a href="#">Rahayu, S.</a> , 3. <a href="#">Daulay, M.T.</a> , 4. <a href="#">Sebayang, S.A.M.</a> , 5. <a href="#">Wakhyuni, E.</a> , 6. <a href="#">Lubis, Y.R.</a> , 7. <a href="#">Surya, E.D.</a> , 8. <a href="#">Rusiadi</a> , 9. <a href="#">Rossanty, Y.</a> , 10. <a href="#">Nasution, M.D.T.P.</a>
2018, Pakistan	When and how abusive supervision leads to knowledge hiding behaviors: An Islamic work ethics perspective	The results reveal that abusive supervision is positively associated with knowledge hiding behavior. This relationship is mediated by perceptions of interpersonal justice and that Islamic work ethics (IWE) weaken the hypothesized relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding behaviors	1.Maria Khalid, 2.Sajid Bashir, 3.Abdul Karim Khan, 4.Nida Abbas,
2018, Indonesia	Islamic work ethic and organizational justice implementation in reaching accountants' job satisfaction	The results show that IWE positively influences the two dimensions of organizational justice, which are procedural and interactive justice, but not on distributive justice. Moreover, all dimensions of organizational justice and IWE were found to positively influence job satisfaction.	1. <a href="#">Amilin, A.</a> , 2. <a href="#">Ismail, T.</a> , 3. <a href="#">Astuti, S.</a> , 4. <a href="#">Reskinjo</a> , 5. <a href="#">Mulazid, A.S.</a>
2018, Pakistan	When is an Islamic work ethic more likely to spur helping behavior? The roles of despotic leadership and gender	Islamic work values relate positively to helping behaviors, and this relationship is stronger when employees experience despotic leadership because their values motivate them to protect their colleagues against the hardships created by such leadership. This triggering role of despotic leadership is particularly strong among female employees	1. <a href="#">De Clercq, D.</a> 2. <a href="#">Haq, I.</a> , 3. <a href="#">Raja</a> , 4. <a href="#">Azeem, M.</a> , 5. <a href="#">Mahmud, N.</a>
2017, Pakistan	Impact of Islamic Work Ethics on Organisational Citizenship Behaviours among Female Academic Staff: the	The findings suggest that IWE has a positive and significant impact on the citizenship behaviors of employees. The study also investigated the link between IWE and employee engagement and found a positive link between both of these	1.Uzma Tufail 2.Muhammad Shakil Ahmad 3.T.Ramayah 4.Farzand Ali Jan 5.Iqtidar Ali Shah

	Mediating Role of Employee Engagement	variables. The mediation role of employee engagement between IWE and OCBs was examined and found to be significant. Employee engagement (provided with organizational psychological support and physical resources) acts as a liaison between IWE and OCBs	
2017, Indonesia	Islamic work ethics and leadership style to improve the organizational commitment of teachers	The results indicated that only transformational leadership significantly influenced organizational commitment, while transactional leadership and IWE had no significant effect.	1. <a href="#">Herminingsih, A.</a> 2. <a href="#">Kusumastuti, M.</a>
2017, Pakistan	IWE innovative work behavior, and adaptive performance: the mediating mechanism and an interacting	Results indicate that IWE significantly predicts adaptive performance both directly and indirectly through IWB. In addition, results also confirm the moderating role of ethical leadership between IWE and IWB.	1. <a href="#">Javed, B.Email.</a> 2. <a href="#">Bashir, S.,</a> 3. <a href="#">Rawwas, M.Y.A.,</a> 4. <a href="#">Arjoon, S.</a>
2017, Pakistan	Explaining Helping Behavior in the Workplace: The Interactive Effect of Family-to work Conflict and IWE	The results indicate that perceptions of the negative interference of family obligations with work undermine employees' propensity to help their colleagues voluntarily, but this effect is mitigated when employees can draw on an Islamic work ethic. This personal resource makes employees more immune to the resource depletion that stems from strong family demands, and hence diminishes the likelihood that employees turn away from helping their co-workers	1. <a href="#">De Clercq, D.</a> 2. <a href="#">Rahman, Z.,</a> 3. <a href="#">Hag, I.U.</a>
2017, Indonesia	Islamic work ethic: An ultimate workplace spirituality and job satisfaction	The result proved that the faculty member Islamic work ethic was directly affected by workplace spirituality and job satisfaction in higher educations. In turn, directly affected by job satisfaction on workplace spirituality.	1. <a href="#">Mansyur,</a> 2. <a href="#">Noor, J.</a>

2017, Pakistan	Fostering work outcomes: The interactive effects of organizational justice and Islamic work ethics	The results indicate that the three dimensions of OJ (e.g., procedural, distributive and interactional justice) and IWE promote employees' OC and JS. In addition, results confirm the interactive effect of IWE between justice dimensions and work outcomes	1. <a href="#">Younas, A.</a> 2. <a href="#">Wang, D.</a> 3. <a href="#">Waheed, A</a>
2017, Malaysia	Investigating the nexus between personality traits and Islamic work ethics	The findings of the study revealed that the personality traits of openness-to-experience are a positive significant predictor of effort and competition dimensions of IWE, agreeableness is a significant positive predictor of effort dimension, while emotional instability is a negative predictor of effort dimension of IWE.	<a href="#">Ab. Wahab, M</a>
2017, Tunisia	Unraveling the link between creativity and individual entrepreneurial behavior: The moderating role of Islamic work ethics	Overall, the research findings herein shed light on a new channel of ethical and spiritual knowledge transfer, at least in the context of emerging markets, not investigated by prior research.	1. <a href="#">Omri, W.</a> 2. <a href="#">Becuwe, A.</a> 3. <a href="#">Randerson, K.</a>
2016, Malaysia	Extrinsic and intrinsic principles of Islamic work ethic: An analysis of Malay literature in Malaysia on Islamic work Ethic	The findings show that Protestant work ethic suggested by Weber with regard to Christianity have attained a similar place over the past decade in Islamic organizational networks. The concern of political power in religion leads to organizational networks being nourished by religious norms and creeds in many developing countries.	1.Erdem Kirkbesoglu 2.Ali Selami Sargut
2016, Malaysia	Extrinsic and intrinsic principles of Islamic work ethic: An analysis of Malay literature in Malaysia on Islamic work Ethic	The result shows that although some of these concepts and others were used in the Malay Muslim literature, nonetheless, they all still conform to these eight broad categories as taken from the Qur'an and Sunnah when critical analyzed, hence, the study concludes that these eight concepts of IWE are relevant in the work of the Malay Muslim writers on IWE and their division into extrinsic and intrinsic categories are justified as some of them are apparent on the work was done while others are inner motivators of work in an Islamic way.	1. <a href="#">Ahmad, S.</a> 2. <a href="#">Rofie, M.K.</a> 3. <a href="#">Owoyemi, M.Y.</a> 4. <a href="#">Yatiban, A.B.</a>

2012, Pakistan	Islamic Work Ethic: How it affects organizational learning, innovation, and performance	The results of this study support the argument that following the IWE in a business organization boosts learning, innovation and eventually organizational performance. The findings of this study provide a way forward to other Pakistani organizations to incorporate IWE into their culture for better organizational outcomes.	1. <a href="#">Abbasi, A.S.</a> 2. <a href="#">Mir, G.M.</a> 3. <a href="#">Hussain, M.</a>
2011, Indonesia	An examination of the mediating effect of IWE on the relationships between transformational leadership and work outcomes	The results indicate that transformational leadership has a positive significant impact on IWE. The findings also noted that IWE directly and positively affects both organizational commitment and job satisfaction on the one hand, and negatively influences turnover intention on the other. Overall the model supported that IWE has a significant role to mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and work outcomes.	1. <a href="#">Rokhman, W.</a> 2. <a href="#">Rivai, H.A.</a> 3. <a href="#">Adewale, A.</a>
2009, Isreal	Islamic work ethic among Arab college students in Israel	Findings – There was a strong and highly significant correlation between the IWE and individualism scales. Academic college students scored significantly higher than technical college students on both scales. There were significant interactions between gender and marital status, and college type and year of studies, on the scales. Practical implications – Within the multi-cultural context of Arab college students in Israel, the IWE and individualism scales emerged as reliable, practical measures for understanding the work-related values of Arab college students in Israel.	1. <a href="#">Khalil, M.</a> 2. <a href="#">Abu-Saad, I.</a>
2000, United Arabian Emirate	Organizational commitment as a mediator of the relationship between IWE and attitudes toward	The results of path analysis indicate that the IWE directly and positively influences various dimensions of both attitudes toward organizational change and organizational commitment. Furthermore, affective commitment mediates the influences of the IWE on both affective and behavioral tendency dimensions of attitudes toward organizational change. On the other hand, continuance and normative commitments	<a href="#">Yousef, D.A.</a>

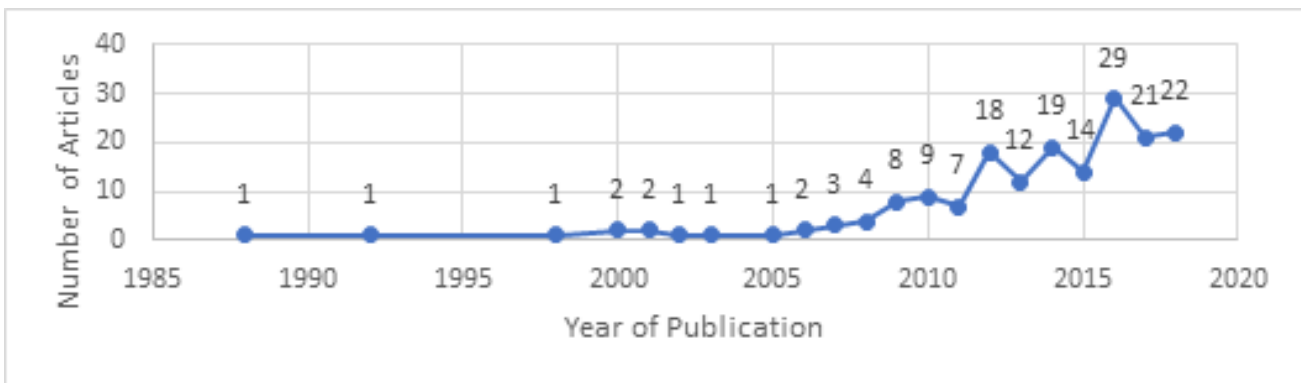
		<p>mediate the influences of the IWE on the cognitive dimension of attitudes toward change, while continuance commitment mediates the influences of the IWE on the behavioral tendency dimension of attitudes toward change.</p>	
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**Discussion, Dissemination, and conclusion**

Ethics of work has an association with organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and individual and organizational variables. Islamic work ethics has direct linkage with organizational commitment (Yusuf, 2001). innumerable research on religiosity has suggested that religion influences a person's internal belief system and has a major impact on that person's intrinsic and extrinsic labor value (Parboteeah et al., 2009). From the foregoing discussion, we can see that

Islamic work ethic is significant in influencing employees in an organization, ensuring organizational commitment, job satisfaction, etc.

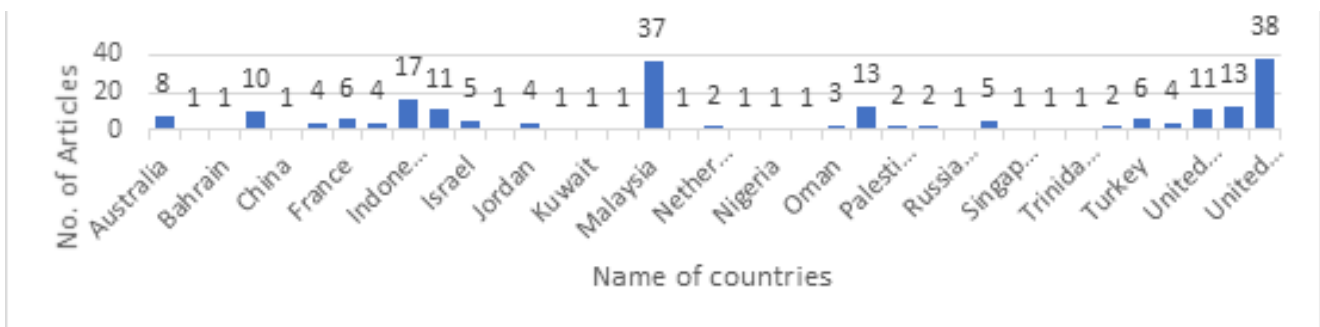
However, based on this study there was very low research output on Islamic work ethic despite its importance, as it is only 178 articles returned based on the search term and restrictions earlier mentioned. The highest turnout was in the year 2018 with Only 22 articles as can be seen in figure 1. Below



With Abba Ali being virtually pioneer in the field, and going by country of research also, despite the US has the highest number of

publications as can be seen in figure 2 below, but still, the output is very limited compared to others.

No of Articles by countries



Notwithstanding both Islamic work ethics and protestant work ethics have a significant influence on the study of ethical leadership, therefore, there is need to intensify research in those areas in order to enrich the concepts and explore the concept of work ethics beyond western cultures.

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