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## Article

# Impact of Taqwa (Islamic piety) on employee happiness: A study of Pakistan's banking sector

Cogent Business & Management

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*Suggested Citation:* Maham, Raj; Bhatti, Omar Khalid (2019) : Impact of Taqwa (Islamic piety) on employee happiness: A study of Pakistan's banking sector, Cogent Business & Management, ISSN 2331-1975, Taylor & Francis, Abingdon, Vol. 6, pp. 1-22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2019.1678554>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/244740>

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To cite this article: Raj Maham & Omar Khalid Bhatti | (2019) Impact of Taqwa (Islamic piety) on employee happiness: A study of Pakistan's banking sector, Cogent Business & Management, 6:1, 1678554, DOI: [10.1080/23311975.2019.1678554](https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2019.1678554)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2019.1678554>



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Received: 26 May 2019  
Accepted: 06 October 2019  
First Published: 10 October 2019

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Reviewing editor:  
Md. Mahmudul Alam, Universiti  
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Additional information is available at  
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## MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Impact of Taqwa (Islamic piety) on employee happiness: A study of Pakistan's banking sector

Raj Maham<sup>1\*</sup> and Omar Khalid Bhatti<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The concept of “employee happiness” has received much research attention within the framework of Western values, but the equivalent concept has not been explored in the context of other cultures and religions, such as the Islamic context of Pakistan's banking sector. This study examines the concept of “happiness” in general and the Islamic practice of *Taqwa* (“God's consciousness”)—comprising Islamic spirituality (IS) and Islamic social responsibility (ISR)—specifically. This empirical study on Pakistan's banking sector attempts to enhance our understanding of how the practice of *Taqwa* influences employee happiness. The study uses survey data drawn from 500 employees working in nine of Pakistan's highest credit-rated banks. Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis of the main constructs (i.e., IS, ISR, and happiness) are conducted and regression analysis is performed to examine the relationship between *Taqwa* and employee happiness. The findings suggest that *Taqwa*, including the practice of IS and ISR, has a positive impact on employee happiness. This study should be useful to those engaged in educational, academic, or organizational management, including anyone pursuing training and human development or policymaking initiatives.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Raj Maham is a PhD candidate in Iqra University, Islamabad. Her PhD thesis titled “Impact of *Taqwa* (Islamic Piety) on Employee Happiness: A Study of Pakistan's Banking Sector” is presented in this paper. Ms. Maham's research focus is on human resource management.

Omar Khalid Bhatti is an Associate Professor of Management at School of Business – Istanbul Medipol University. He received his PhD in Business (specializing in Organizational Behavior) from IIU- Malaysia. Dr. Omar's work mostly falls under the umbrella of Organizational Behavior, Strategic management and Islamic Management. Dr. Omar is also a former Chief Researcher and a Consultant for Government of Pakistan on China Pakistan Economic Corridor. He has work published in *Journal of Management and Organization*, *Humanomics*, *Journal of Management and Research (JMR)*, *Al-Qalam*, *Science International*, *Asian Social Science*, *International Journal of Business and Management*, *International Journal of Finance & Economic Studies* and *Annals of Management Research*.

## PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Although employee happiness is a subject of increasing interest among organizations, few studies have investigated this concept in an Islamic society. To fill this gap, this study presents an account of how the practice of *Taqwa* (i.e. Islamic Piety or God's consciousness) influences employee happiness in a high stress environment such as the banking sector of Pakistan. The results show that *Taqwa* consisting of Islamic Spirituality and Islamic Social Responsibility has a positive impact on employee happiness. This study calls for more attention to the involvement of practices in societies and cultures where religion prevail as a way of life.

**Subjects:** Business, Management and Accounting; Corporate Social Responsibility & Business Ethics; Islam – Religion

**Keywords:** Taqwa; Islamic spirituality; Islamic social responsibility; happiness; God

**JEL classification:** I310; M140; Z12

## 1. Introduction

Happiness is not just an extra benefit. It is a prerequisite in any high-performing workplace (Fisher, 2010). Unhappiness causes the brain to disengage and reduces capacities for critical thinking, creativity, and a broad spectrum of other fundamental functions (Smallwood & Andrews-Hanna, 2013). Bank privatization has raised the industry's level of professionalism and service orientation. The banking sector is facing high levels of stress, which can cause employee unhappiness (Shahid, Latif, Sohail, & Ashraf, 2011). The sector's working standards have changed and are now characterized by lengthy working hours, growing customer demands, work burdens, cost-cutting policies, dynamic procedures, technology advances, high risks of deception and mistakes, and uneven and insecure public policies (Obikoya, 2008; Oginni, Afolabi, & Erigbe, 2013). Amid this environment, employees can achieve happiness by practicing *Taqwa*. The greater the *Taqwa* among employees, the happier they are, which improves performance and efficiency in the workforce.

*Taqwa* ("Islamic piety") is the major attribute of Islam and can be defined as "God's consciousness" (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007). Both Islamic spirituality (IS) and Islamic social responsibility (ISR) fall under the purview of *Taqwa*. Islamic spirituality consists of Islamic codes and rituals performed to come closer to God (Bhatti & Yumuşak, 2017; Khodayari-fard et al., 2008), and ISR is a value system and code of behavior (Bhatti, Alam, Hassan, & Sulaiman, 2016a; Bhatti, Aslam, Hassan, & Sulaiman, 2016b; Jariko, Børsen, & Jhatial, 2016). A number of studies have examined the impact of *Taqwa* on employee happiness.

## 2. Gap identification

One of the facets of "authentic happiness" is the "meaningful life," whereby the individual works for a greater objective, such as religion. This notion has received little research attention (Lamont, 2011). With a few exceptions, "happiness" has not been extensively employed as a term in academic research on employees' organizational experiences (Fisher, 2010). The research has instead focused on facets of unhappiness, such as depression, anxiety, stress, and emotional disorders (Tasnim & Hasnain, 2014). A number of empirical studies have examined the association between happiness and various economic indicators, but few studies have investigated how religion impacts happiness (Fidrmuc & Tunali, 2015). Most of the studies related to happiness are from a non-Islamic perspective, without any reflection of Islamic views or discussion of potential strategies for enhancing happiness (Campante & Yanagizawa-Drott, 2015).

The lack of studies examining the relationship between religion and happiness calls for further analysis of this complex relationship (Sillick & Cathcart, 2014). Western societies have drawn a clear demarcation between religious and secular activities. In Muslim societies, there is no such clear line between religion and other aspects of life since Islam is a complete way of life. Thus, the impact of religion is more profound and penetrating in Muslim societies (Sidani & Al Ariss, 2015). The relative position of individuals in society influences their well-being and happiness; these are major concerns in Islam but are not measured and operationalized at the individual level (Abde & Salih, 2015). Analyzing happiness in Eastern societies requires a broad view that includes ancient and modern perceptions of morality and the self, as well as the way these are influenced by how people construe themselves and the good life (Abu-Raiya & Pargament, 2011; Skinner, 2010). Given the major role of Islam in shaping the lives of Muslims (Abu-Raiya & Pargament, 2011), studying the context of Muslim society requires an ethnically informed investigation. This study focuses on Pakistan, where Islam is a way of life and the impact of religion on happiness is assumed to be great.

This study draws on the literature on employee happiness and Taqwa. The major happiness literature studies happiness theories, happiness at the workplace, and Western and Eastern perspectives on happiness. The Islamic science literature studies the major Islamic orthodox concept of Taqwa. Taqwa consists of two main dimensions: IS and ISR. The literature discusses the concept of Taqwa and the Islamic view of happiness in light of the Quran and the Sunnah, the Prophetic custom of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) as the key sources of knowledge from which Muslim societies derive their philosophies and guidance. This research also includes the works of modern researchers in the fields of Islamic education generally and Islamic management specifically. These studies provide insight into how workplace happiness can be enhanced. Increased happiness improves employee performance, efficiency, and results. This study seeks to raise awareness of employee happiness and increase the motivation to generate it.

### 3. Research questions

This study poses the following questions:

Q1. Does Taqwa affect employee happiness in the workplace?

Q1a. Does IS affect employee happiness in the workplace?

Q1b. Does ISR affect employee happiness in the workplace?

### 4. Literature review

Happiness is defined as “the frequency and degree of joy, satisfaction over a given period, and an absence of negative feelings” (Argyle, Martin, & Crossland, 1989). Since many people spend a significant amount of their time at work, it is imperative to gain a concrete understanding of the roles employment and the workplace play in influencing happiness (De Neve & Ward, 2017). What people are really referring to when they use the term “happy” is a state of well-being (Veenhoven, 2009). Furnham and Christoforou (2007) described well-being as a substitute for happiness. The authentic happiness (Seligman, 2002; Seligman & Royzman, 2003) theory posits that individuals seek to attain a meaningful life by spending their lives searching for meaning and alignment with a superior force such as religion. Allport (1961) states that meaning can be achieved by placing one’s existence into a larger framework of meaning, such as by leading a religious life. Religion is a social system of designated practices and behaviors. It can serve as a system of meaning and tends to be comparatively immune from disconfirmation (Emmons, 1999). When a person’s life objectives are pro-societal and based on a central value, the person’s life can be meaningful in the long term instead of self-focused and covetous (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Happiness at work has several positive ramifications (Scott, 2008). Wright, Cropanzano, and Meyer (2004) argued that “happiness is a valuable tool for maximizing both personal betterment and employee job performance” (p. 338). Happy employees are more productive and make quality decisions (Price & Hooijberg, 1992). Workplace happiness is a multidimensional phenomenon (Grant, Christianson, & Price, 2007; Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009) and includes elements such as work engagement, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, and negative and positive workplace emotions (Fisher, 2010).

The sub-sections below describe the six chief categories of difference between Western and Eastern views of happiness.

#### 4.1. Self-enhancement versus self-transcendence

Understanding how different societies interpret the notion of “self” is important for abstracting the concept of happiness. The Western perception of the self is grounded in archetypes of individualism. In Eastern societies, the self represents the lesser part of social collectives and the cosmos. In the West, the self is concerned with self-esteem, enhancing autonomy, independence, and a strong ego, which are considered the main ingredients of a good and respectable

life (Chen, 2006a; Markus & Hamedani, 2007). In Asian cultures, however, the self is deemphasized (Hwang, 2009). In Buddhism, for example, the self is considered an illusion. In Confucianism, the individual should seek to transcend personal wishes and desires for the sake of the group and family. In Hinduism and Sufism, a mature self forgoes individualism and is immersed in the transcendent. Autonomy, self-sufficiency, and choice are not seen as ethical or moral ideals in Eastern cultures, (Sundararajan, 2005). Western psychological measurement instruments and models emphasize self-determination, deliverance from convention, and resistance to enculturation, (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2008). Current Western measurement mechanisms neglect the societal side of happiness, focusing instead on its hidden and private aspects (Keyes, 1998). In Eastern cultures, personal factors are not good indicators of emotional welfare; instead, self-transcendence is seen as the cornerstone of emotional maturity.

#### **4.2. Hedonism versus eudaimonism**

The Western concept of mental well-being is expressed based on a hedonic way of happiness. Happiness in the hedonistic sense is in harmony with the norms and ethos of contemporary Western culture, which values hedonism, as well as romantic individualism and liberal modernity (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008; Joshanloo, 2013). The West believes that individuals have sovereignty over their own happiness (Eid & Larsen, 2008) and considers mood and affect equilibrium to be important features of a good and happy life (Christopher, 1999). In the West, human happiness is based on pleasure and positive emotions (Kahneman, 1999). Across-the-board multinational studies on happiness all use subjective happiness measures. In Eastern traditions, pleasure and positive emotions are considered temporary. Buddhism dismisses hedonism because it cultivates self-centeredness (Joshanloo, 2014). In Sufism, asceticism is considered an important method of purification and of the nurturing of the inner life (Joshanloo & Rastegar, 2013). Eastern thought endorses the control of desire, so that individuals do not pursue pleasure at the cost of virtue. Hedonism is not considered entirely immoral in the East; however, the concept of happiness is understood in terms of a eudaimonistic sense of well-being.

#### **4.3. Mastery vs. harmony**

According to the Western worldview, humanity is fortunate and intelligent, and it should “analyze, label, categorize, manipulate, control, or consume the things of the world” (Gilgen & Cho, 1979, p. 836). Environmental and mastery control are greatly valued in the West (Joshanloo, 2014), as is reflected in Western notions of the good style of living. A broadly used Western model (Ryff, 1989) posits that a completely functional individual is one who “has a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment; controls complex array of external activities; makes effective use of surrounding opportunities; [and is] able to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs and values” (Ryff & Singer, 2008, p. 25). By contrast, in the Eastern worldview, the human race is a small portion of the universe, and humans should be aware of their oneness with nature. Humans in the universe are like small stones; they can only comply with nature. They may be beneficial in a minor way, but they cannot create anything (Zhang & Veenhoven, 2008). In Eastern thought, all creatures are parts of a greater unity. Unlike the West, the East does not make a clear distinction between mankind and the rest of creation. This difference has important effects on the two definitions of positive mental and emotional states.

#### **4.4. Satisfaction versus contentment**

In Eastern thought, contentment involves satisfaction along with many other experience and abilities, and it is assumed to consist of an elusive balance between joyfulness and unhappiness that must be preserved in both cheerful and sad times (Shamasundar, 2008). Contentment is thought to result from the recognition of the transcendent self (Kumar, 2002). Hence, this concept is spiritually loaded in the East, and it implies a sense of being peaceful, accomplished through aggressive spiritual practices. The Eastern view is that neither success nor sorrow should affect a person's sense of balance and contentment. Chen (2006b) posited that contentment refers to “a state of mind in which the potential psychic energy known as libido in Western psychology is transformed to serve a higher purpose rather than actualized as a desire that needs to be gratified



or repressed.” Therefore, contentment is supplemented by a sense of fulfilment and abundance and is a religious obligation for a believer. Obtaining personal contentment is not sufficient in the East; everyone is expected to attain objective achievement, and satisfaction in life is not seen as a goal in itself. By contrast, satisfaction is considered a necessary mental state in the West regardless of its source; what has led to that personal fulfillment is usually not seen as important (Joshnanloo, 2014).

#### **4.5. Avoiding suffering versus valuing**

The West considers happiness to consist in part of a lack of negative emotions, which makes it hard to accept suffering, negativity, difficulties, and unhappiness as fundamental parts of a worthy life (Shamasundar, 2008). In the Eastern viewpoint, an individual should be able to deal with both negative and positive sides of life and tolerate negative experiences and feelings. The Western idea of happiness seems impractical to Easterners given that suffering, hardship, and agony are inevitable in life (Joshnanloo, 2014).

#### **4.6. Relative irrelevance of spirituality and religion versus relevance**

In Western culture, materialism and moral pluralism are prized, while spirituality and religion are considered useful for interpreting what happiness is but are not seen as important for formulating it. In the East, however, religion and spirituality are intertwined in people’s experiences and views of life. The Eastern concept of happiness is largely formulated based on metaphysical and religious views. Fulfilling religious obligations and practicing rituals are considered vital for happiness. Western thought occasionally dismisses spirituality as irrational and superstitious (Joshnanloo, 2014), and specific spiritual states are often seen as irrational by Western thinkers. Easterners condemn Western ideas of happiness as being devoid of morality (Sundararajan, 2005).

#### **4.7. Islam**

Zuckerman (2009) found that religious and spiritual people outperform the nonreligious in terms of happiness and life satisfaction. Many other studies report the positive effects of various measures of spiritual and religious participation on overall happiness (Ellison, Boardman, Williams, & Jackson, 2001). Happiness can be achieved through service to God and others, espousing spiritual beliefs, obeisance to ritual, and living with others calmly and peacefully (D’raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2014). These activities can bring about a state of peaceful tranquility that serve as an incentive for righteousness. The obligations of servitude call for a collectivist perspective from which individuals derive their sense of worth and social identity (Smither & Khorsandi, 2009).

In Muslim cultures, happiness is linked to religion (Abdel-Khalek, 2007; Abu-Ras, Gheith, & Cournos, 2008; Joshnanloo, 2013). According to Islam, every newborn is embedded with a natural belief (*fitrah*) in God and the right way to live. This inborn disposition is a source of regulation that informs people about the difference between right and wrong (Haque, 2004). This system pre-programs us to praise and worship God and follow His commandments. Human beings are obliged to re-discover their *fitrah* and monitor its direction. Islam affirms that humankind is created to serve and worship God, which is the *raison d’etre* of humankind, and that accomplishing this telos is at the heart of a happy and contented life. Hence, an Islamic notion of well-being promises the fulfillment of the person’s need for worship and happiness both in this life and the hereafter. God, humankind, and happiness are thus deeply intertwined in Islam.

#### **4.8. Human resource management (HRM), leadership and Taqwa**

In HRM, human resources are managed in order to achieve the organization’s objectives. This process has four fundamental functions: acquiring employees, developing the workforce, motivating staff, and maintaining human resources. In addition to these basic functions, HRM aims to provide sound working conditions, a productive environment, and peaceful labor relations. Effective HR practices provide the organization with a competitive advantage (Elrehail et al., 2019). As a support function, HRM allows an organization’s leadership to conduct relationships with employees in a mutually beneficial manner. Transformational leadership is an effective

leadership style that has supporting as well as demanding facets. It is focused on clarifying expectations, motivation, and support instead of causing cynicism and exhaustion. This style of leadership builds a physically and mentally healthy environment that increases employees' ability to perform and meet new challenges and demands (Kranabetter & Niessen, 2017). Poor management can be caused by a lack of accountability, personal spillover, personality problems, nepotism, and stress. Poor management is one of the main causes of employee stress, exhaustion, and turnover. A manager must not make decisions under stress or seek to meet organizational goals at the cost of the manager's ability to manage valuable human resources (Hight, Gajjar, & Okumus, 2019). Taqwa can be used by leaders, managers, and employees to address problems of accountability, nepotism, and unethical or inappropriate behavior, as well as to support HRM's four functions and maintain a motivated and healthy workforce. In this context, management is a moral, spiritual, and physical function that is not driven only by earthly objectives but also by rewards in the afterlife. Employment relationships go beyond the written and psychological contracts between an individual and an employer and take on a religious dimension. In the Islamic organizational context, the moral and spiritual dimensions are always the most important in decision making. In Western management thinking, however, technical and material objectives are usually the most important. Understanding Taqwa and its principles would enable the development of a blend of Western and Islamic management that could be implemented in both Islamic and non-Islamic countries and could help morally and spiritually based decisions override materially guided ones (Budhwar, Mellahi, Branine, & Pollard, 2010).

#### 4.9. Taqwa (Islamic piety)

Taqwa is the process of preventing God's punishment by avoiding what God has forgiven and following God's commands (Al-Sharawi, 2004). It is also an emotional awareness of God's presence and turning away from doing wrong by anticipating God's acceptance and possible punishment (Hawa, 2004). Wahab (2017) claimed that Taqwa prevents one from engaging in behavior that is inconsistent with God's commands. Al-Atrash (2002) argued that Taqwa is intrinsic since it lies in the heart and is reflected in behavior.

All definitions of Taqwa have the same underlying principle: God's commandments must be followed if one is to become a *Motaqeen* (one who performs Taqwa). Taqwa consists of two major components: IS and ISR (Kamil, 2012; Kamil, Ali Hussain, & Sulaiman, 2011; Kamil, Sulaiman, Osman-Gani, Israil, & Ahmad, 2012; Mohsen, 2007; Ramli & Osman-Gani, 2011). Islamic spirituality is the "responsibility between one's self and God" (Bhatti, Alkahtani, Hassan, & Sulaiman, 2015; Kamil et al., 2011; Kamil, Al-Kahtani, & Sulaiman, 2011b; Mohsen, 2007), and ISR is the "accountability to one's self and other humans and nature at large" (Bhatti et al., 2015; Kamil et al., 2011; Mohsen, 2007). Operationally, IS consists of the "duties that Muslims do at work and private spaces in accordance with Islamic wisdom and values, such that the individual continuously endeavours to pursue the pleasure of God and His Guidance," whereas ISR consists of "anything that Muslims do at work and in private spaces that brings mutual respect, mutual coexistence, and the development of humankind and the organization, with the persistent remembrance of God and in pursuing His pleasure" (Bhatti et al., 2015; Kamil, 2012; Kamil et al., 2011, 2012).

##### 4.9.1. IS

Islam affirms that a human comprises two parts: the body and the spirit. Al-Gazzali (2004) posited that there are four classes of living beings: animal, wild, evil, and spiritual classes. In Islam, spirituality is deep-rooted in faith (*iman*) validated by the Islamic rituals of prayer, fasting, *haji*, and *zakat*, which connect human actions to the ultimate purpose of life (Fernando & Jackson, 2006). Worshipping God is vital in an Islamic society (Al-Quran, 51:56). In addition, spirituality connects the doings of a specific person to the meaning of life. Islamic rituals include prayers, fasting, charity, and pilgrimage; these develop the Muslim's connection with God and people, whereas rituals help worshippers achieve the highest states of physical health and spirituality (Ibrahim, 1997). Hawa (2004) mentioned that one can achieve spirituality if all of the religious rituals are observed regularly. Rituals provide Muslims with sustenance and nourishment for their



inner soul, reinforce and renovate their beliefs, and purify their souls from sin, evil, and impurity (Grine, Fares, & Meguellati, 2015).

#### 4.9.2. ISR

Islamic social responsibility consists of ethical behavior such as regard for others and personal and social responsibilities that meet the societal expectations of a company's role in the economy (Haniffa, 2002). Islamic social responsibility emphasizes minority rights, employees, and social justice and is concerned with issues related to the betterment of society (Ullmann, 1985). Under the Taqwa paradigm, ISR in business means that the employee is not guided only by the profit principle but also by the quest for authentic happiness in the present life and the hereafter and acknowledges a moral and social responsibility for the welfare of all people. The harmonization of material well-being with moral/spiritual values is the key to attaining ultimate happiness in this world and in the Hereafter (Dusuki, 2008). Islamic social responsibility is exhibited in employees who demonstrate characteristics such as justice, emotional control, integrity, chastity, fulfilment of the covenant, love of family, and truthfulness in the workplace (Kamil et al., 2012). Those in leadership positions exhibit ISR by demonstrating slightly different characteristics, including integrity, forgiveness, justice, emotional control, chastity, love of family, and patience (Mohsen, 2007).

Taqwa is a complex concept (Kamil, Sulaiman, Gani, & Ahmad, 2015), and religiosity in general is a sensitive phenomenon (Hamjah & Arib, 2015). Taqwa is inherently subjective, which makes its application challenging and problematic. Both IS and ISR involve a belief in Islam, a concept of God, and a pursuit of social responsibility that demands a high degree of faith, dedication, and commitment; this makes the practice of Taqwa a difficult task. Taqwa, being an Islamic concept, can be applied only to Muslims. Therefore, the framework proposed in this study is applicable only in an Islamic context. Table 1 demonstrates the components of Taqwa based on characteristics of a Motaqeen.

### 5. Hypothesis development

#### 5.1. Taqwa and happiness

Taqwa stimulates God consciousness and fear in every single Muslim. Taqwa encompasses one's perception of one's duties and accountability before God (Beekun & Badawi, 1999). Kamil, Osman-Gani, Sulaiman, and Ahmad (2010) posited that "when people possess Taqwa, they will likely be

**Table 1. Components of Taqwa based on characteristics of Motaqeen (adopted from Kamil, 2012; Mohsen, 2007; Bhatti, 2015)**

<i>Taqwa (Islamic Piety)</i>	<p>Islamic Spirituality (IS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief (<i>Iman</i>)</li> <li>• Rituals (<i>Ibadat</i>): prayer, fasting, zakat, and hajj.</li> <li>• Repentance—seeking God's forgiveness</li> <li>• Remembrance of God</li> </ul>
	<p>Islamic Social Responsibility (ISR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patience</li> <li>• Emotional control</li> <li>• Forgiveness</li> <li>• <i>Sadaqah</i></li> <li>• Justice</li> <li>• Integrity</li> <li>• Fulfilment of the covenant</li> <li>• Truthfulness</li> <li>• Love of family</li> <li>• Guarding chastity</li> </ul>

ethical in their actions, both at home and at the workplace” (p. 6). We can achieve true peace of mind and body by submission and obedience to God (Sheikh & Bhatti, 2017). Consequently, Muslims will be cautious in preventing their thoughts, mind, tongue, and behavior from committing the disliked (*makruh*) or forbidden (*haram*) actions that can pollute and weaken the heart. Observant Muslims will be protected and blessed by God and protected from illnesses of the soul such as stress, anxiety, and depression, leading to a happy life (Radzi, Ramly, Sipon, & Othman, 2014). Taqwa is an effective religious coping strategy by which Muslims can deal with anxiety and stress and lead themselves to happiness. By practicing Taqwa, one fulfils what one has pledged to God; therefore God will give one a prodigious reward: happiness now and in Heaven. Accordingly, we hypothesize the following:

**H<sub>1</sub>** Taqwa has a positive impact on employee happiness.

### 5.2. IS and happiness

The practice of IS (e.g., belief, rituals, remembrance and forgiveness of God) develops an awareness of ethical issues. These can serve as effective strategies for coping with life stressors and role conflict. Thus, IS can lead to greater happiness and workplace satisfaction for Muslims.

Islamic rituals such as prayer, fasting, hajj, and zakat are the principal means by which Muslims nurture their link with God (Nasr, 2013). Prayer is the second and most important pillar of Islam, and also enhances social relationships (Al-Khalifah, 1994). The practice of Islamic prayer helps Muslims achieve satisfaction, increase their happiness, and reduce their stress (Achour, Grine, Nor, & Mohd Yusoff, 2015; Al-Gazzali, 2004). Praying in the organizational setting is necessary for happiness. Every Muslim must perform hajj in order to purify themselves and gain inner happiness, which is essential for personal and work life. People who fast are precious to God. Buitelaar (1991) asserted that fasting guarantees that sins will be forgiven, virtuous deeds will be multiplied, protection from the fires of hell will be provided, and happiness levels will be raised. Human happiness is an important output measure of achievement in the distribution of zakat (Al-Helali, 2000). Rituals purify a person’s soul, reducing negative emotions and offering happiness and peace (Fry, 2003); this brings Muslims nearer to the Creator (Nasr, 2013).

Belief in God provides one with solid support during crucial moments, as well as continuous hope and strength. Islam affirms that human happiness increases when an individual believes in God. Al-Ghazzali claimed that real happiness resides in the cognition of God (Qayoom & Husain, 2016), as there is no happiness or peace if one strays from God and His path (Hamadin, 2014). Belief may attract persons with a happy disposition and give them a purpose in life that fosters well-being.

Repentance is the act of asking for God’s forgiveness. Forgiveness in the workplace involves changing the wicked into the good (Al-Amar, 2008; Malik, Riaz, & Nazir, 2015). Repentance as a calming strategy provides a persistent and conscious foundation for relief, rest, and relaxation, and a way to deal with antagonistic and troublesome situations in the organization (Achour, Bensaid, & Nor, 2016).

Remembrance of God helps a person stay optimistic when encountering glitches such as worry, depression, stress, anxiety, and health problems (Yahya, 2004), which is useful in the workplace. The Quran states that “Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of God. For without doubt in the remembrance of God do hearts find satisfaction—*tatma’innu al-Qulub*.” (Al-Quran 13:28). Moral conduct will ultimately lead to alert-mindedness, which prevents wrongdoing (Johnson, 2016) and brings satisfaction and true happiness (Solovyov, 2005).

The practice of IS at the workplace commits an individual to waking in God’s path while attaining work objectives, increasing the employee’s chances of finding true meaning, purpose, and happiness at work. Accordingly, we hypothesize as follows:

H<sub>2</sub> Islamic spirituality has a positive impact on employee happiness.

### 5.3. *ISR and happiness*

Islamic social responsibility emphasizes minority rights, employees, and social justice, and is concerned with issues related to the betterment of society (Ullmann, 1985). In the business context, this implies that the employee is not guided only by the profit motive but recognizes a moral and social responsibility for the welfare of others (Dusuki, 2008). Social responsibility is based on a code of human behavior that defines right and wrong.

Patience increases focus, develops happiness, and offers hope for harmony (Bhatti, 2015; Uchtdorf, 2010). Muslims must have patience and perseverance, which are necessary for establishing smooth communication with others (Kashani, 1999). Patience is a suppressor of the toxic emotion of anger, which can lead to life-shortening illnesses (Kahn, 2006; Sapolsky, 1998). Patience allows people to deal with workplace complications.

Emotional control inhibits, maintains, enhances, and manages emotional arousal (Eisenberg & Moore, 1997). Emotional control includes the act of managing anger, contempt, disgust, fear, sadness, and surprise, as well as welcoming criticism and avoiding acting on impulse (Matsumoto, 2009). According to Bass (1997), a balanced composition of emotions makes the workplace a satisfactory one. Emotional control is an effective way to utilize emotional information when problem solving (Bhatti, 2015; Gardner & Stough, 2002), thus generating happiness.

Forgiveness is the act of excusing someone. This helps a person achieve spiritual, physical, and mental well-being (Worthington, 2007). Forgiveness suppresses the negative emotions of grudge, revenge, and unhappiness and gives rise to the positive emotions of love, benevolence, peace, empathy, sympathy, appreciation, modesty, gratitude, and hope (Bhatti, 2015; Macaskill, 2005). Forgiveness has a positive relation with problem solving (Hamidi, Makwand, & Hosseini, 2010), which can improvise relations at the workplace.

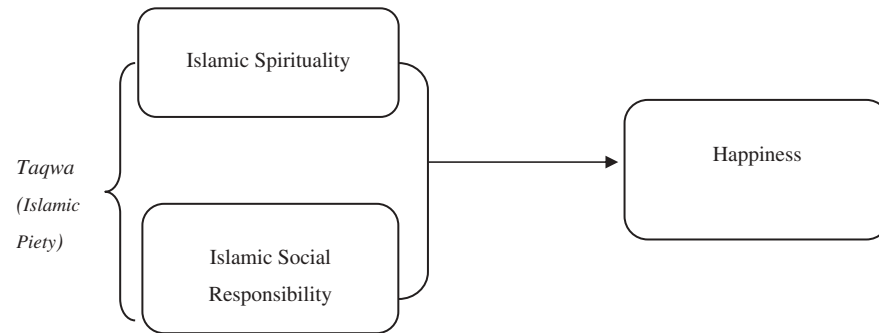
Justice is very important for ensuring that employees are happy and that rewards are based on merit and fairness. The Quran (4:135) states: "if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily God is well- acquainted with all that ye do." Promoting welfare regardless of people's color, race, or belief fosters socio-economic justice and helps one fulfill one's obligations to God and attain happiness (Haniffa & Hudaib, 2002). A sense of organizational justice can help one maintain high levels of morale and ethical standards (Bhatti, 2015; Choi, 2011).

Integrity requires wholeness, consistently being true to oneself, and following ethical behavior (Engelbrecht & Van Aswegen, 2009). A person of integrity is honest and of good character, and displays a steady and absolute commitment to ethical principles and obligations. Persons with integrity are well-liked and benefit from better relations with others and social support (Hodgins, Koestner, & Duncan, 1996; Robinson, Johnson, & Shields, 1995), which leads to happiness. An employee with integrity gains the trust of the organization, and, in return, the employee's behavior is positively influenced, enhancing job commitment, satisfaction, and engagement (Bhatti, 2015; Prottas, 2013), thus leading to a happier workforce.

Fulfillment of the covenant means honoring personal commitments and promises. God condemns those who do not fulfill their covenant with God in accordance with the purpose of their existence (Bin Syed Agil, Jasin, & Pawan, 2007). Covenants should be fulfilled frequently to ensure positive, respectful, and healthy relationships (Enright, 2009). If covenants are not fulfilled, employees will be stressed and have low morale, resulting in employee unhappiness.

Truthfulness and honesty are maintained by avoiding social and internal conflicts as well as self-contradiction. Islam teaches honesty, unity of behavior, and standards, as well as personal integrity (Bhatti, 2015). Muslims should be truthful and honest in their acts and words

**Figure 1. Hypothesized model.** *Hypothesized model*



(Ather, 2007). Honesty among workers leads to a trusting and happy organizational atmosphere (Hoque, Aktaruzzaman Khan, & Mowla, 2013). Dishonest people betray their anxiety when questioned about their lies. Honesty is crucial for well-being (MacIntyre, 1995).

Love of family is an important factor in happiness. Family well-being is fostered by love, mutual dependency, cooperation, loyalty, sacrifice, and compliance with expected roles and duties (Nanji, 2017). Frech and Williams (2007) found that marriage enhances psychological well-being and self-sufficiency. Family is an important aspect of every individual's happiness. Balancing between organizational wellness and individual wellness is important (Allen & Armstrong, 2006; Thomas & Ganster, 1995).

*Sadaqah* is the act of performing good deeds in order to please God. Every Muslim should perform good deeds, including *sadaqah*, to create inner peace and happiness (Bhatti, 2015; Kamaruddin & Ramli, 2015). As the Quran says, "whatever you do of good, indeed God is knowing of it" (Al-Quran 2:215). Helping and cooperating with others to accomplish tasks enhances overall organizational efficiency and productivity.

Guarding chastity creates an environment that is pleasant for everyone and can lead to happiness among employees. Immoral desires can lead to harmful and vicious pursuits, which can damage one's psyche and harm human relationships. May (2011) states that "it is chastity that regulates one's sexual desires, enabling one to explore the other necessary aspects of life that afford a fully human experience". Accordingly, we hypothesize as follows:

**H<sub>3</sub>** Islamic social responsibility has a positive impact on employee happiness.

The model of this study is depicted in Figure 1.

## 6. Methods

### 6.1. Sample and data collection

This study examined the relationship between Taqwa and employee happiness using a cross-sectional design. The target population was managerial (top-, middle-, and junior-level) bank employees in Pakistan. Out of 1,100 questionnaires received, 600 (more than 40%) had a considerable amount of missing data. This included situations when questionnaire items were unanswered or when the questionnaire included values that were not part of the original question sheet. Following the recommendation of Sekeran and Bougie (2010), these questionnaires were rejected; this left 500 usable questionnaires.

This study fulfilled the requirement of multivariate data analysis as explained by Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010), who suggest that the sample's size should be five times the number

of observed variables analyzed. A convenient sample distribution of 1,100 was chosen to represent Pakistan's banking sector in urban areas, including Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, and Quetta, to attain a sample size of 500. Convenient sampling is extremely quick, easy, readily available, and cost-effective, making it an attractive option for most researchers (Henry, 1990).

A sample of 500 is considered acceptable by Cohran (1963), Hair et al. (2010), and Kline (2015). Pakistan's top nine banks were chosen on the basis of their credit ratings. This study used a cross-sectional questionnaire survey for data collection. The initial contact with the target organizations was made by phone, in calls guided by a standard script. Other forms of communication were also used, including email, online chat, and meetings. The selected participants were sent an email with a letter of invitation, an informed consent form, and a questionnaire. The consent form assured the participants that their responses would be confidential and used for academic purposes only. The participants were also informed that the results of this research would be available to them upon request. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness, coded using the statistical package, captured, and uploaded onto the analysis package.

This study analyzed the data using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software for Windows version 21. Descriptive statistics were used to explain the demographics of the respondents. The validity and reliability of the measures were checked via Cronbach's alpha analysis. Factor analysis was used to categorize the underlying relationships between the measured variables and to uncover the underlying structure of the relatively large set of variables used in this study. Multiple regression analysis was used to observe the relationships between the independent and dependent variables and test the hypotheses.

Of the sample, 70.8% of the survey respondents were male and 29.2% were female. Moreover, 44% of the respondents were between 25 and 29 years old, 26% were between 30 and 34, 12.6% were between 35 and 39, 8.8% were between 20 and 24, and 8.6% were 40 and above. In addition, 51.2% of the respondents were married and 48.8% were unmarried. Regarding education, 14.6% of the respondents had an MS/MPhil, 59.8% had a master's degree, 24.2% had a bachelor's degree, and 1.4% had intermediate certificates. In terms of job categories, 54.8% of respondents were line managers, 33.2% were non-managerial staff, 11% were middle managers, and 1% were top managers. In terms of years of experience in their current position, 30.4% of respondents had less than one year, 60% had between one and five years, 7.8% had between six and 10 years, and 1.8% had more than 10 years. Regarding work experience in general, 14.2% had less than one year, 45.8% had between two and five years, and 40% had fewer than 10 years. In terms of company (bank branch) size, 31% of the firms had between one and 10 employees, 48.4% had between 11 and 20 employees, and 30.6% had more than 20 employees.

## 6.2. Measures

Taqwa was measured using a questionnaire (Mohsen, 2007) comprising 53 items, including 18 items measuring IS and 35 items measuring ISR. Happiness was assessed using the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills & Argyle, 2002) on a 29-item scale.

## 7. Data analysis

This study used exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to reveal the underlying structure of the comparatively large set of variables and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test and confirm the hypotheses. The reliability and validity of the measures were checked using Cronbach's alpha analysis.

In this study, there was no indication of multicollinearity, as the variance inflation factors (VIF) values for both independent variables (i.e., IS and ISR) were lower than the threshold value of 10 as recommended by Pallant (2007). The skewness and kurtosis values for all variables are below the threshold values of 3.0 and 10.0. Hair et al. (2010) explain that, when using a large sample, the

“researcher can be less concerned about non-normal variables” (p. 72). This study’s analysis was sound, as it had no normality issue. The average Cronbach’s alpha value was 0.68 out of 1, which is acceptable as indicated by Mallery and George (2003). The KMO test revealed a high measure of sampling adequacy, with all variables exceeding 0.5 except for emotional control, which had a value of 0.455; as this was close to 0.5, it was considered adequate.

Regarding the EFA outputs, three EFA factors were generated for the major domain of IS, and six EFA factors were generated for the major domain of ISR. Happiness was the third major domain. In the rotated component matrix for the IS domain, the factor 1 represented the sub-domain of belief (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  .80), factor 2 represented the sub-domain of remembrance of God (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  .75), and factor 3 represented the sub-domain of rituals, which was merged with repentance (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  .70). In the rotated component matrix for the ISR domain, factor 1 represented the sub-domain of sadaqah (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  0.66), factor 2 represented integrity (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  .80), factor 3 represented truthfulness (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  .70), factor 4 represented fulfilment of the covenant (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  .66), factor 5 represented patience (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  .70), and factor 6 represented emotional control (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  .45). The study’s Taqwa scale was adopted from Mohsen (2007), who tested it in the context of Malaysia. It was important to conduct EFA to explore the principal dimensions of Taqwa within the organizational context of Pakistan. Nine EFA indices were obtained for the sub-domains: three EFA indices for IS and six EFA indices for ISR. The CFA authenticated a factor structure of the set of observed variables and verified the association between the observed variables and their underlying latent constructs.

### 7.1. Model fit summary

Model fitness is checked using fit indices (McDonald & Ho, 2002), which reveal which suggested model has the best fit. A good model fit shows that the proposed model is credible. Chi-square, RMSEA, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Parsimony Fit Index (PCFI) tests are run to indicate how well a theory fits the data.

The chi-square value assesses overall model fit and “assesses the magnitude of discrepancy between the sample and fitted covariance matrices” (Hu & Bentler, 1999, p. 2). The chi-square was significant (507.637) in this study. The model fits perfectly ( $p$ -value > 0.05; Jafarzadeh, Esmaeeli-Nadimi, Nough, Nemati, & Rezayati, 2009). The RMSEA is another fit statistic that assesses a proposed model (Byrne, 2013). An RMSEA value below 0.08 indicates a good fit (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008; MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). The study’s RMSEA score was 0.068, which is considered a good fit. The AGFI corrects the GFI. A good model fit is generally indicated when the GFI and AGFI values range between 0 and 1, with a value of over 0.9 (Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996). The study’s GFI and AGFI scores were 0.884 and 0.84 respectively, which were close to 0.9 and thus indicated good model fit.

The CFI analyzes model fit by investigating the discrepancy between the data and the hypothesized model. A CFI value of .95 or higher indicates a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The CFI score for this analysis was 0.966, which is a good fit. According to Mulaik et al. (1989), it is possible to obtain PCFI values within the .50 region. The PCFI value for this study was 0.577, which is considered to indicate parsimonious fit following Mulaik et al. (1989).

### 7.2. Multiple regression analysis

Multiple regression is a statistical technique used to determine the best point estimates of the dependent variable (Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2014). Predictive accuracy is standardized by the magnitude of the  $R^2$  and the statistical significance of the complete model. Moreover, an individual predictor variable is inferred via multiple regression. The emphasis is on the regression coefficients’ size, their estimated standard errors, and associated t-test probabilities. These statistics are implemented to test assumptions about the impact of individual predictors on the dependent variable (Mason & Perreault, 1991).



Table 2. Coefficients: Multiple regression analysis (IS)						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.000	0.039		0.000	1.000
	Islamic Spirituality (Belief)	0.471	0.040	0.471	11.917	0.000
	(Constant)	0.000	0.037		0.000	1.000
2	Islamic Spirituality (Belief)	0.471	0.037	0.471	12.569	0.000
	Islamic Spirituality (Remembrance of God)	0.283	0.037	0.283	7.546	0.000
	(Constant)	0.000	0.035		0.000	1.000
3	Islamic Spirituality (Belief)	0.471	0.035	0.471	13.293	0.000
	Islamic Spirituality (Remembrance of God)	0.283	0.035	0.283	7.981	0.000
	Islamic Spirituality (Rituals)	0.274	0.035	0.274	7.745	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Happiness

**Table 3. Coefficients: Multiple regression analysis (ISR)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	0.000	0.038			0.000	1.000
	Islamic social responsibility ISR ( <i>Sadaqaah</i> )	0.533	0.038	0.533		14.076	0.000
	(Constant)	0.000	0.035			0.000	1.000
2	Islamic social responsibility ISR ( <i>Sadaqaah</i> )	0.533	0.035	0.533		15.272	0.000
	Islamic social responsibility ISR (Truthfulness)	0.330	0.035	0.330		9.445	0.000
	(Constant)	0.000	0.033			0.000	1.000
3	Islamic social responsibility ISR ( <i>Sadaqaah</i> )	0.533	0.033	0.533		16.156	0.000
	Islamic social responsibility ISR (Truthfulness)	0.330	0.033	0.330		9.992	0.000
	Islamic social responsibility ISR (Fulfillment of the covenant)	0.256	0.033	0.256		7.760	0.000
4	(Constant)	0.000	0.032			0.000	1.000
	Islamic social responsibility ISR ( <i>Sadaqaah</i> )	0.533	0.032	0.533		16.839	0.000
	Islamic social responsibility ISR (Truthfulness)	0.330	0.032	0.330		10.415	0.000
5	Islamic social responsibility ISR (Fulfillment of the covenant)	0.256	0.032	0.256		8.088	0.000
	Islamic social responsibility ISR (Emotional control)	0.210	0.032	0.210		6.623	0.000
	(Constant)	0.000	0.031			0.000	1.000
	Islamic social responsibility ISR ( <i>Sadaqaah</i> )	0.533	0.031	0.533		17.170	0.000
	Islamic social responsibility ISR (Truthfulness)	0.330	0.031	0.330		10.619	0.000
	Islamic social responsibility ISR (Fulfillment of the covenant)	0.256	0.031	0.256		8.247	0.000
	Islamic social responsibility ISR (Emotional control)	0.210	0.031	0.210		6.753	0.000
	Islamic social responsibility ISR (Patience)	0.141	0.031	0.141		4.541	0.000

**a. Dependent Variable: PCA Happiness**

**Table 4. Summary of main findings of study**

H(X)	Hypothesis	Beta values ( $\beta$ ) with p-value	Findings
H1	Taqwa has a positive impact on employee happiness.	$P < .001$	Supported
H1.1	Islamic spirituality has a positive impact on employee happiness.	$B = .47; P < .001$	Supported
H1.2	Islamic social responsibility has a positive impact on employee happiness.	$\beta = .53; P < .001$	Supported

The regression analysis revealed that Taqwa, including IS and ISR, has a positive impact on employee happiness in the banking sector of Pakistan. The study also demonstrated that ISR has a greater impact on employee happiness than IS. Within IS, belief in God has the greatest impact on employee happiness, with a score of 0.471. Within ISR, *sadaqah* has the greatest impact on employee happiness, with a score of 0.533. The excluded variables reveal that only the ISR EFA Integrity variable impacts happiness inversely when it is run independently or with EFA Patience. However, the inverse impact of this variable is not statistically significant. The main results of the study are summarized in Table 4.

## 8. Discussion

The table of coefficients for IS (see Table 2) shows the signs and significance levels in the highlighted cells, demonstrating that each IS set affects happiness positively and significantly. The EFA variable sets are indices; hence, the coefficients are elasticities. For EFA Belief, for example, an IS increase of 1% increases happiness by 0.471%; for EFA Remembrance of God, an IS increase of 1% increases happiness by 0.283%; for EFA Rituals, an IS increase of 1% increases happiness by 0.274%.

The table of coefficients for ISR (see Table 3) shows the signs and significance levels in the highlighted cells, demonstrating that each ISR set affects happiness positively and significantly. The EFA variable sets are indices; hence, the coefficients are elasticities. For EFA *sadaqah*, for example, an ISR increase of 1% increases happiness by 0.533%; for EFA Truthfulness, an ISR increase of 1% increases happiness by 0.330%; for EFA Fulfilment of the covenant, an ISR increase of 1% increases happiness by 0.256%; for EFA patience, an ISR increase of 1% increases happiness by 0.141%; for EFA Emotional control, an ISR increase of 1% increases happiness by 0.210%. An EFA was conducted by categorizing the three domains (i.e., IS, ISR, and happiness). The IS domain was further categorized into three sub-sets, and ISR was categorized into six sub-sets; happiness was given no sub-sets. The CFA tests confirmed the fitness of the model.

The regression analysis revealed that Taqwa, including IS and ISR, impacted bank employees' happiness positively. Within ISR, *sadaqah* had the greatest impact on employee happiness, with a score of 0.533; truthfulness had the second greatest impact, with a score of 0.330; fulfilment of covenant had the third greatest impact, with a score of 0.250; emotional control had the fourth greatest impact, with a score of 0.210; and patience had the fifth greatest impact, with a score of 0.141. The study also demonstrated that ISR had a greater impact on employee happiness than IS. Within IS, belief in God had the greatest impact on employee happiness, with a score of 0.471, while remembrance of God had a score of 0.238, and rituals and repentance had a score of 0.274. Within ISR, emotional control, justice, and integrity had negative impacts on employee happiness; however, this result was not statistically significant.

### 8.1. Relationship between Taqwa and employee happiness

The main objective of this study was to investigate the association between Taqwa and employee happiness. The hypothesized positive relationship between Taqwa and happiness was supported

by the theory of authentic happiness (Seligman, 2002; Seligman & Royzman, 2003), whereby living a meaningful life through religious faith leads to happiness. A structural model was created based on the relevant theories and the literature. It displayed good fit indices and supported the hypotheses. A domain-wise OLS linear regression analysis demonstrated a strong linear relationship, with an R square value of 0.545, further supporting the hypotheses.

### **8.2. Relationship between IS and employee happiness**

The hypothesized positive relationship between IS and happiness is supported in this study. The study hypothesized that IS has a positive impact on employee happiness. Multiple regression analysis regarding IS indicated that the model had a perfect fit for the data, as significance approached zero. Belief in God had the greatest impact on employee happiness, with a score of 0.471. Islamic rituals also had a positive impact on employee happiness, with a score of 0.274. Remembrance of God had a positive impact on employee happiness, with a score of 0.238. Thus, the hypothesis is supported.

### **8.3. Relationship between ISR and employee happiness**

The hypothesized positive relationship between ISR and happiness is supported in this study. The p-value for ISR approached zero, with a CR value of 3.433, which means that the relationship among the variables was significant. Hence, the hypothesis is supported. Patience had a positive impact on employee happiness, with a score of 0.141. Emotional control had a negative impact on employee happiness. Exercising emotional control takes effort and energy; thus, one may lose the strength required to maintain self-control and become unhappy. Regulating emotions can have negative impacts on the self, as continuously coping with stress and fighting for self-control can lead to exhaustion and psychological distress. At the same time, the ability to maintain constant self-control is likely to degrade over time, especially due to bad moods and weakness created by early self-control challenges (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). *Sadaqah* has a positive impact on employee happiness, with a score of 0.553. Integrity has a negative impact on employee happiness. Integrity is an extremely problematic component in the current environment of near-continuous organizational transformation. It is hard for employees and managers to preserve congruence between words and deeds and to guarantee that their fellow workers will recognize this congruence (Simons, 1999). Integrity appears to promote a divergence between words and actions, turning social integrity into a serious problem. Fulfilment of the covenant has a positive impact on employee happiness, with a score of 0.250. Regression analysis revealed that truthfulness had a positive impact on employee happiness, with a score of 0.141. The hypothesis is thus supported.

### **8.4. Implication of study**

This study has several key implications. Organizational leaders, including chief executive officers, general managers, heads of departments, and managers can enhance happiness in their workplace by implementing this study's model.

Human resource development professionals and specialists may utilize the findings of this study to plan, design, develop, and implement training and performance enhancement initiatives with the aim of improving *Taqwa* among Muslim employees. This will enhance employees' moral values and prevent undesirable behavior, therefore enhancing their happiness.

Non-Muslim employees can also benefit from these findings. They can gain new insight into their Muslim colleagues' values and potential. In today's fast-paced, innovative business world, a greater understanding of the values and organizational perspectives of individuals from different faiths can foster tolerance, empathy, and many other moral values among group members in dynamic business environments.

This study can also further an understanding of how *Taqwa* influences employees' approach and behavior. Business organizations should provide their employees the time and space they need to

cherish their beliefs. This study's research could be extended to other Muslim societies with dissimilar socio-cultural and moral values, and the influence of various other contextual variables could be examined. This is the first study on the link between religion and workplace happiness. Its findings may stimulate further research among scholars interested in this field. Future research could investigate the impact of Taqwa on employee perceptions, to determine whether conclusions similar to those in this study could be drawn. Another option would be to examine the application of Taqwa to employee activities other than those investigated in this study.

### **8.5. Conclusion**

Religiosity in the work setting boosts the meaningfulness of work, increases honesty, strengthens workplace relationships, and creates a workplace that enriches the experiences of every employee. Spirituality leads people to become deeply involved in their work, strive for perfection, and help their organizations prosper and be happy. Muslims' search for God's favor, while recognizing their faults, enables them to comprehend the meaning and purpose of their personal and professional lives. Obedience to God, along with the recognition of one's strengths and shortcomings and the need to appeal for God's help, provides every individual with contentment, intrinsic satisfaction, subjective happiness, and clear guidance on how to live. Taqwa brings fairness, objectivity, impartiality, and equality, which all make an individual feel warm toward everyone. Taqwa thus has great potential to infuse human existence with purpose and meaning.

This study examined the notion of employee happiness from the perspective of a *mutaqee*, one who values and practices Taqwa. The study explained a phenomenon that has rarely been discussed and provides new insight into employee happiness by linking Taqwa with increased performance and a happier workforce. The findings revealed a direct relationship between Taqwa and employee happiness. A *mutaqee*, by demonstrating and practicing the values of Taqwa, becomes a better worker and therefore a happier employee. The analysis of the survey respondent data revealed that a *mutaqee* performs better and achieves a higher state of happiness at the workplace.

In practicing Taqwa, one's daily communications and dealings are driven by the principles of love, honesty, truthfulness, decisiveness, fairness, emotional control, obedience to law, compassion, care, patience, lenience, and uprightness instead of dishonesty, arrogance, class consciousness, showiness, disobedience, viciousness and self-aggrandizement. These values should naturally be articulated in business transactions as well as in relationships with colleagues to promote positive emotions among employees, leading to a happy workforce. Taqwa in the workplace has various benefits for organizations that can incorporate it into their daily activities. It ensures organizational harmony via employees' greater commitment, which improves overall employee effort, job performance, workplace productivity, workplace creativity, and motivation.

The main conclusion of the study is that Taqwa's two exogenous components, IS and ISR, have positive impacts on employee happiness. Therefore, IS and ISR can enhance employee happiness. Given the clear nexus between Taqwa and employee happiness, Taqwa should be used to catalyze happiness in the workplace.

### **8.6. Limitation of study**

A survey in which respondents are required to address specific response categories limits the variety of possible answers; unlike in an interview, which allows respondents to ask for clarifications, survey participants typically rely on the text of the survey itself for directions about where and how to respond. Moreover, response bias can occur if respondents answer imprecisely or falsely to the questions. To address these limitations, qualitative research on this topic is recommended. Finally, future studies could examine how Taqwa affects specific individual characteristics such as achievement, creativity, and autonomy. Conducting parallel studies in different Islamic

states could also provide new insights into the variables studied, and supplementary findings may be produced if the conclusions matched across these countries.

#### Funding

The authors received no direct funding for this research.

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#### Citation information

Cite this article as: Impact of Taqwa (Islamic piety) on employee happiness: A study of Pakistan's banking sector, Raj Maham & Omar Khalid Bhatti, *Cogent Business & Management* (2019), 6: 1678554.

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