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# Moral Identity Centrality and Employee Engagement: Job Satisfaction Acting as Mediator

**Dr. Sahrish Saba**, UIMS, University of Arid Agriculture Rawalpindi, Pakistan

**Dr. Afsheen Fatima**, UIMS, University of Arid Agriculture Rawalpindi, Pakistan

**Dr. Saba Farooq**, Data Analyst, Creative Business & Social Research (CBSR), Pakistan

**Malik Manan Zafar**, Junior Engineer Instruments in OGDCL, Pakistan

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**Abstract-** Moral identity centrality supports the engagement level of the employees at their workplace. Researchers of moral identity centrality examined the nine characteristics. The importance of moral identity and characteristics has become a wide research topic as it impacts the employee engagement. The objective of this study was to explore the effect of job satisfaction as mediator between the two variables i.e. moral identity centrality and employee engagement in perspective of banking employees in Pakistan. The sample size covered 200 employees of banking sector of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Total 22 questions were asked from the banking sector respondents. SPSS software was used for statistical analysis for the required data analysis. Hayes Process was used to test the hypotheses. The results of research show significant and positive relationship between moral identity centrality and employee engagement and job satisfaction mediates the relationship between moral identity and employee engagement.

**Key words:** Moral identity centrality, Employee Engagement and Job satisfaction.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Moral identity centrality helps in the moral functioning aspects and can be explored by theory and research also. Moral identity is defined as an individual's extent of showing that being moral is central or it's just a characteristic of some one's sense of self (Blasi, 1984). The moral characteristics in the form of moral actions are related to the moral identity directly and to maintain the objective of being a moral individual. This was further explored to show the social-cognitive concept of moral identity which focus on processes of social identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Aquino & Freeman, 2009). In this way, it has been shown that an individual may have less or more accessibility in his/her own self-concept and it can be varied from one person to another.

Moral identity centrality is known for as the predictor of moral commitments and actions and it is considered as vital source of moral motivation (Damon & Hart, 1992). This process focuses on the conceptualization and self-consistency of moral identity (Blasi, 2004), moral processes (e.g. Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004), self-characteristics (e.g. Reimer, 2003) and objectives importance (e.g. Colby & Damon, 1992).

Employees having strong moral identity can show virtuous characteristics for example helpful, caring, kind, generous, hardworking etc (Aquino & Reed, 2002). It is considered as a strong identity of an employee which affects their behaviors (e.g. McFerran, Aquino, & Duffy, 2010; Skarlicki, Van, & Walker, 2008; Shao, Aquino & Freeman, 2008; Trevino, Weaver & Reynolds, 2006). These characteristics are related to the moral identity which is helpful in enhancing job attitudes. It enables the individuals to work more hard to increase their efficiency as well as the productivity of their organization. Moral identity is positively related to the employees' behaviors at their workplace (McFerran et al, 2010). The management having strong moral identity also enables the employees to behave morally and allow raising their voice.

The effect of moral identity on EE has been shown by two foundations of engagement, i.e. psychological meaningfulness and availability (Kahn, 1990). Individuals having high level of engagement at their workplace are more active in taking initiatives at work and work hard for the success of the organization

(Hakanen, Perhoniemi & Tanner, 2008). It also enhances the foundations of the organization and increases efficiency of themselves (Avery, Mckay & Wilson, 2007 and Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002).

The management of any organization focuses on the motivation of the employees to perform duties (Avery et al, 2007 and Cole et al, 2010, 2012). In a public pole in United States of America, it was shown that 33% employees re engaged in their jobs and the rest are either not engaged or actively disengaged. Similarly in UK, it has been studied that only 30% employees have engagement level active with their job (Truss, Soane, Edwards, Wisdom, Croll, & Burnett, 2006) and hence it was also shown that UK has very low engagement level of the employees (Macleod and Clarke, 2009). This lack of engagement level challenges the organizational researchers to improve the employee engagement which further impacts the performance and outcomes of an organization (Harter et al, 2002). This research has shown the level of employee engagement in relation to moral identity centrality in the Pakistani organizations.

Now the professional world is focusing on high performance, effectivity of the organizations and management of these organizations grant high level of job satisfaction to the employees. There are different dimensions of job satisfaction which have been studied by different schools of thoughts and researchers. Job satisfaction is defined as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976). This is also considered as state of mind which is based on the different experiences of job having favored and unfavored responses. Employees having greater level of job satisfaction are significant for the managers who consider that “organizations should focus on the providing of challenging jobs which are intrinsically rewarded to the employees” (Robbins, 2001).

The current research has focused on the relationship of moral identity and employee engagement while job satisfaction acting as a mediator. It is related to the attitude and behavior of the employees in the organizations. Therefore the reason behind conducting this research is to explore that how the moral aspects influence the bank sector in Pakistan.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Moral identity centrality is referred to an extent to which an individual give importance to be a moral person. There are many aspects on processes and structure of moral identity. The model suggested by Blasi (1983; 2004) is based on the moral practices and judgement relationship. A moral judgment is referred to the judgment of responsibility in which not only action should be moral but a sense of responsibility of doing that action, this leads to moral action then. This sense of moral responsibility varies from individual to another that is being moral is for someone is central and for someone it is essential. Identity of an individual is consistent with ones self-sense, which also served as moral motivation. Moral behaviors are predicted by moral judgments which are based on ones’ identity and it leads to moral actions and self-consistency.

Moral identity is also considered as the composite of moral and self-processes (Colby & Damon, 1992). The sense of morality and personal goals differentiates the highly moral people from others. This was also supported by a reconciliation model of morality (Frimer & Walker, 2009), in which moral identity is referred to the self-interest and communion rather than competing with each other. This association of moral and personal goals is considered as strong resource of moral commitment and motivation (Frimer & Walker, 2009).

In few studies, moral identity is proposed to be stable across some situations like personality traits which would improve with time (Blasi, 2004; Colby & Damon, 1992; Moshman, 2005). Later, research has shown the approaches towards moral identity about this view. It showed that the morality to an individuals’ identity will be either stable or to some extent it may be enhanced over the period of time (Monin & Jordan, 2009). This would vary in the different situations (Aquino et al., 2009).

Moral identity can also regulate the behaviors of individuals in various contexts e.g. it enhances social volunteering (Aquino & Reed, 2002), general ethical behavior (Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007) and charitable donations and requirement of goods (Aquino et al, 2009). Similarly, people who have strong moral grounds having moral characteristics are considered to less cheat (Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007).

In recent studies, employee engagement has been explored as a popular and mostly used variable (Robinson, Perryman & Hayday, 2004). It has been explained as an action rather than a theory or empirical research. It has also been observed that in the last decade there was very rare research and empirical studies on employee engagement (Robinson et al., 2004). Later, focusing on this it was explored as old wine in a new bottle. Employee engagement is said to be commitment level in the organization (Baumark, 2004; Richman & Shaw, 2005). It is also referred as the degree of effort which the individuals have shown in their organizations (Frank, Finnegan & Taylor, 2004). It is also explained as a state in which two aspects are involved i.e. attention and absorption (Rothbard, 2001).

Employee engagement is related with simultaneous investment of emotional, cognitive and physical energy at a workplace while performing the job as of self-expression (Kahn, 1990, 1992). This is considered as a vital predictor of an employees' performance at work both in role and extra role performance (Christian et al., 2011 and Rich et al., 2010). This engagement level differentiates from one person to other, also depending on the job performance, i.e. employee engagement affects the performance at a workplace significantly. Employees having greater level of job satisfaction are significant for the managers who consider that "organizations should focus on the providing of challenging jobs which are intrinsically rewarded to the employees" (Robbins, 2001). There is significant association between job satisfaction and employee behavior (Edwards & Bell, 2008). Some other study showed that managers can enhance the engagement of the employees by applying the strategies to increase the job satisfaction (Springer, 2011). Different dimensions of job satisfaction (pay, coworker, supervision and work itself) have positive effect on the organizational commitment which increases the employee engagement level (Fu, Deshpande & Zhao, 2011). Hira and Waqas (2012) have studied the positive effects of job satisfaction on the employees who work in middle level of banking sector.

Earlier studies show that the behaviors of the employees are enhanced through job satisfaction (Qureshi & Hamid, 2011; Malik, Nawab, Naeem & Danish, 2010; Samad & Selangor, 2005). Job satisfaction is found to be more concerned attitude instead of behavior and hence the management focuses on the satisfaction level of employees. Researchers have also studied that job satisfaction has a mediation function also, influencing the engagement level in the employees (Fu et al, 2011), and also the organizational variables of learning orientation and enhancing behaviors in the employees. When employees feel satisfied with their jobs, it will enhance their engagement level in their organization.

### III. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK



**Figure 01: Theoretical Framework**

#### Research Hypothesis

**H1:** Moral Identity Centrality has positive impact on Employee Engagement.

**H2:** Moral Identity centrality is positively related to Job satisfaction.

**H3:** Job satisfaction is positively associated to Employee engagement.

**H4:** Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between moral identity and employee engagement.

#### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quantitative methodology is adopted for the research, whereas method utilized is the survey through a structured and close ended questionnaire. The main reason for the use of survey research is the successful application of survey research in business study. This research resolve is an empirical analysis to see the effects of moral identity on employee engagement in the banking sector of Pakistan. The objective of selecting the bank sector is because having great potential and little research work has been done in this sector. The mediating role of job satisfaction was also analyzed. Five point Likert scale has been used ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A total of 22 items are used to analyze the moral identity centrality, job satisfaction and employee engagement.

Moral Identity scale has been used to measure the moral characteristics and consisting of five items by Aquino and Reed (2002), employee engagement scale consists of eleven items (Rich, Lepine & Crawford, 2010) and scale of job satisfaction consists of six items (Agho, Price & Mueller, 1992).

#### Sample and Data Collection

This study aimed to explore the impact of moral identity centrality on employee engagement: the mediating role of job satisfaction. The total number of 280 questionnaires was distributed among the employees in whom 255 were returned and 10 are eliminated due to excess missing data and 05 were not filled correctly. Therefore, for the current study the size of sample become 240 for hypothesis testing. The research is cross-sectional because the data has been collected randomly from various banks in Rawalpindi/Islamabad at one point of time.

#### Data Analysis

SPSS was used for the processing of data and their results as output.

#### Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics is known as the representation of whole or the sample of the population of the research. Mean and standard deviation values for all the variables have also been observed. The standard deviation is said to be the summary measure of the differences from the mean of each observation. Following table shows the descriptive statistics i.e. mean and standard deviation for all the variables of the study.

Descriptive Statistics			
Variables	N	Mean	Std. deviation
MIC	240	3.723	.833
JS	240	3.670	.809
EE	240	3.442	.752

The above table shows the mean, minimum and maximum values of the instruments. It also shows the standard deviation values, which depicts that all are in the acceptable range between 0.752 to 0.833.

#### Reliability Statistics:

The value of Cronbach's alpha is known as the reliability statistics of each dimension of a variable. The acceptable value comes in the range of 0.7, considered as acceptable. The values above 0.8 are considered as

good (Sekaran, 2003). If the value is closer to 1, it shows the surety of reliability having high level of internal consistency (multicollinearity) among data.

In the following tables, reliability results are shown which was performed separately for each variable in the study. All values are in the acceptable range. The total number of respondents was 240.

Reliability Statistics		
Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha value
MIC	05	.744
JS	06	.757
EE	11	.783

### Correlation Analysis:

Correlation is known as the statistical measure of the association between two variables. This degree of relation or association is examined by correlation coefficient denoted by *b*. It is also known as Cronbach's alpha value. The value varies from +1 to -1. If the value increases towards +1, it shows the positive relation between two variables. Similarly, negative value shows the negative relationship i.e. if value of one variable decreases, other increases. The value will be 0 if there is no association among variables.

The table below shows the correlation among variables of the study.

Correlations			
	MIC	JS	EE
MIC	1		
JS	.279**	1	
EE	.233**	.389**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

The above table is showing the correlation values among the variables. All values are significant at the 0.05 level. It shows that moral identity centrality has positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction i.e.  $b = 0.279$ ,  $p = 0.000$  and employee engagement i.e.  $b = 0.233$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . the findings of the above table also shows that one unit change (positive) in moral identity centrality will bring 27.9% change (increase) in job satisfaction and 23.3% change (increase) in employee engagement. In the same way, one unit change in (increase) in job satisfaction will bring 38.9% change (increase) in employee engagement ( $b = 0.389$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

### Mediation Analysis (PROCESS)

Mediation analysis has been done in SPSS 21 with the help of PROCESS. In this process, moral identity centrality has been entered as dependent variable, employee engagement as dependent variable and job satisfaction as mediator. Model 4 was selected at 95 percent confidence interval and bootstrapping sample number 5000. The results of this PROCESS are as follows;

**Table: Mediation Analysis**

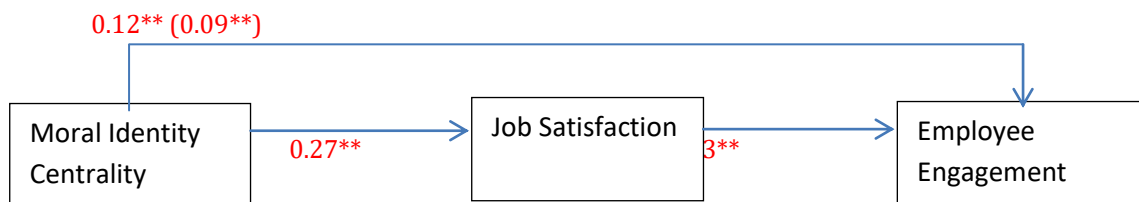
Mediator: JS and MIC: EE
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	$\beta$	S.E	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
MIC→JS	0.27	0.06	4.48	0.000	0.15	0.39
JS→EE	0.33	0.05	5.69	0.000	0.21	0.44
MIC→EE	0.12	0.06	2.18	0.031	0.01	0.23
<b>Indirect Effect</b>						
	$\beta$	S.E	LLCI	ULCI		
MIC→JS→EE	0.09	0.03	0.03	0.17		
<b>Normal Theory Test for Indirect Effect</b>						
	Effect	S.E	Z	p		
	0.09	0.03	3.49	0.000		

Note:  $p < .000$ , DV= employee engagement, IV= moral identity centrality and Mediator= Job satisfaction

The positive association between ( $\beta=0.27$ ,  $t=24.48$ ,  $p<0.000$ ), association between moral identity centrality and job satisfaction, job satisfaction and employee engagement ( $\beta=0.33$ ,  $t=5.69$ ,  $p<0.000$ ), association between moral identity centrality and employee engagement ( $\beta=0.12$ ,  $t=2.18$ ,  $p<0.000$ ), association is proved by the results, and it is proposed that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between moral identity centrality and employee engagement showing the results as ( $\beta=0.09$ ,  $z=3.49$ ,  $p<0.000$ ).

The following figure is showing the association of moral identity centrality with job satisfaction and employee engagement. These are known as standardized paths of the proposed relationships in the hypotheses.



Note. Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between moral identity centrality and employee engagement. The value in the parenthesis shows the standard coefficient value after adding the mediator in the model.  $**p < 0.05$

**FIGURE 02. Conceptual model**

It shows the mediation (partial) between moral identity centrality and employee engagement. The value is decreased by adding the mediator among two by 0.12 to 0.09 which shows the significant effect. It also shows that moral identity has positive and significant relation with employee engagement i.e.  $b= 0.12$ ,  $p=0.000$ , thus supporting the hypothesis number 1. Moral identity centrality is related to job satisfaction and has significant results ( $b= 0.27$ ,  $p<0.000$ ), supporting Hypothesis 2. Job satisfaction is significantly related to employee engagement ( $b= 0.33$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), hence supporting Hypothesis 3. Finally the mediation effect has been tested, which shows the partial mediation of job satisfaction between moral identity centrality and employee engagement ( $b= 0.09$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), supporting the final hypothesis 4.

## V. DISCUSSION

Findings show that moral identity centrality may improve the process of moral personality development (Hardy & Carlo, 2011). Hence it is clear that MIC is considered as predictive of individual behaviors. Moral actions are affected by the attitudes and behaviors of the individuals. Hence, the primary objective of this research was to find whether and how moral identity centrality would interact with the attitude (job satisfaction) in predicting behaviors i.e. employee engagement. Moral identity centrality formulates the relation with employee engagement in association with social cognitive moral identity model (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Moral identifiers should focus more on the concerns for the needs and interests of out-groups and

individuals in the organizations. Moral characteristics may affect the performance of the employees at their workplace, which helps in the productivity of the organization. Attitudes and behaviors of the employees are important aspect of the output of the organizations.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study can assist the management of banks for enhancing the association between moral identity centrality and employee engagement at workplace. As a result, it has been proved that there is a positive impact of moral identity centrality on employee engagement and mediating effect of job satisfaction between them. There is need of further work in exploring the mediating and moderating processes in the prediction of moral identity and requires more conceptual models and research. High moral identifiers are more likely to feel more job satisfaction and moral obligation to engage in their work at their workplace to show concern for the needs and interests of the organization.

Employees are the key source for every organization. Employee behavior affects from the moral identity of them at workplace. In order to investigate in the banking sector, in general, these behaviors should be promoted. This is important to see the effect of employees' job satisfaction on the management and organization as well. On the basis of the analysis, these recommendations are made.

The finding of the research has shown the importance of moral characteristics as identity to enhance their engagement level; to develop an environment of trust and believe in themselves. It also helps in the development of moral identity centrality in banking sector and the management should make their employees believe that they all are valuable for the banking sector. The sample was only collected from the banking sector employees and their management; the data were only collected through questionnaire and no interview and discussion were made and the results provide additional support for several other types of research from different countries.

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