

## ISLAMIC WORK ETHICS, EMPLOYEE RESPONSE, AND JOB SATISFACTION: AN EXPLORATION OF INDONESIAN ISLAMIC BANKING EMPLOYEES

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**ABSTRACT:** This quantitative study investigates the impact of Islamic work ethics on employee response and job satisfaction within the Indonesian Islamic banking sector. It contributes to the academic literature by examining the nuanced relationships among these variables, shedding light on organizational dynamics specific to Islamic banking contexts. This study investigates survey responses from 120 Islamic banking employees by employing partial-least-square structural-equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Our findings indicate a significant positive influence of Islamic work ethics on both employee response and job satisfaction. We uncover the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between Islamic work ethics and employee response, providing valuable insights for human resource management practices in Islamic banking environments.

**Keywords:** Islamic Work Ethics; Employee Response; Job Satisfaction; Islamic Bank; Indonesia

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## INTRODUCTION

Islamic work ethics emphasize sincerity, honesty, justice, and social responsibility, infusing spiritual values into professional conduct (Al-Shamali et al., 2021). The term ethics refers to mores, manners, social justice and virtues practiced by a community (Husin, 2012). Approaching work with the right intentions and ethical conduct is viewed as a form of worship in Islam, encouraging Muslims to perform their tasks diligently to seek the pleasure of Allah. These principles, rooted in the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, advocate for fair treatment, equitable resource distribution, and positive societal contributions (Kamri et al., 2014). Any work conflicting with these values is discouraged, as adherence to Islamic work ethics enables believers to lead fulfilling lives and contribute positively to both earthly existence and the Hereafter.

Scholars like Weber and Calvin have extensively studied work ethics, particularly in the Western world, focusing on the influence of religion, notably Protestantism, on the ethics of religious adherents. Weber, in "The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism," suggests that Protestantism facilitated the rise of a universal value emphasizing continuous achievement (Kalberg, 2016). However, he finds it challenging for the Islamic world to establish a capitalist society due to a lack of rational-humanist laws, civil society independence, regional autonomy, and political stability (Eyasu, 2016). Weber perceives Islam as a religion associated with the "warrior class," governed theocratically and centralized, fostering a conservative work ethics due to significant theocratic-political influence, which he believes inhibits its evolution over time.

Islamic economists have developed the Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) in recent decades, drawing from religious doctrines found in the Qur'an and hadith. This framework underscores the significance of work in Muslim societies, shaping views and engagement within the Ummah (Pholen & Londe, 1998). Understanding employee job satisfaction is vital for companies as it directly impacts productivity and motivation. Job satisfaction, influenced by the alignment between expectations and reality, is subjective (Atmojo, 2012). IWE supports organizational change, business, and employee welfare, aiming to enhance performance through principles such as honesty, integrity, diligence, and fairness, fostering mutual respect and cooperation in the workplace.

Despite the rich theoretical and theological foundations of IWE, empirical research on its implications in organizational contexts, particularly within the Indonesian Islamic banking sector, remains limited. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the relationship between Islamic work ethics, employee response, and job satisfaction among Indonesian Islamic bank employees. By delving into the Islamic perspective on work ethics and its impact on employee attitudes and behaviors, this research aims to deepen understanding of organizational dynamics within Islamic banking, enrich academic discourse, and inform practical strategies for promoting ethical work practices and enhancing employee well-being.

In today's global economy, aligning organizational practices with cultural and religious values is increasingly crucial. In the context of Indonesia's growing Islamic banking sector, understanding the implications of Islamic work ethics on employee behavior and organizational performance is paramount (Alwi et al.,

2021). Despite the growing importance of this topic, empirical research focusing on the dynamics of Islamic work ethics within Indonesian Islamic banks remains scarce (Widana, 2015). This study aims to address this shortage by investigating the relationship between IWE and constructs representing employee responses to change in Indonesian Islamic banks (Islam & Rahman, 2017), contributing to both theoretical discourse and practical implications within Islamic banking environment.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### *Islamic Work Ethics*

Theoretical insights into Islamic work ethics (IWE) provide a foundation for understanding their relationship with employee response and job satisfaction, as evidenced by empirical research findings (Al-Shamali et al., 2021). Adherence to IWE, characterized by sincerity, honesty, and social responsibility, has been shown to positively influence employee attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. IWE is a multidimensional concept. It links an organization's prosperity and continuity to societal welfare. Its four elements effort, competition, transparency and morally responsible conduct have the promise to strengthen commerce and economic progress in today's world (Mohammad et al., 2018).

Studies have indicated that employees who internalize Islamic work ethics tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction. This is attributed to a sense of purpose and fulfillment derived from aligning their professional conduct with religious values. When employees perceive their work as a form of worship, approached with sincerity and dedication, they are more likely to find meaning and satisfaction in their job roles (Saban et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the emphasis on honesty, justice, and fairness within Islamic work ethics fosters a positive work environment characterized by mutual respect and cooperation (Ibrahim, 2018). Employees who adhere to these principles are more likely to engage in ethical behavior and exhibit a strong sense of organizational commitment, contributing to a conducive workplace atmosphere.

Research has also highlighted the association between Islamic work ethics and organizational commitment across affective, normative, and continuance dimensions. Employees who embody IWE principles are more likely to feel emotionally attached to their organization, adhere to its norms and values, and perceive a sense of obligation to remain with the organization.

Islamic Work ethics variables assess 4 indicators including: hard work, commitment and dedication to work, avoidance of unethical methods and competitiveness in the workplace (Mohammad et al., 2018). In summary, empirical findings corroborate the theoretical framework of Islamic work ethics by demonstrating their positive impact on employee response and job satisfaction. By integrating religious principles into professional conduct, IWE fosters a conducive work environment characterized by ethical behavior, organizational commitment, and enhanced job satisfaction among employees.

*H1. Islamic work ethics has a positive impact on employee response*

### *Employee Response*

Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) underscores the significance of values such as sincerity, honesty, and social responsibility, which profoundly shape employees' perceptions and responses within organizational settings. Employees who internalize Islamic work ethics are inclined to exhibit positive response characteristics, including heightened job satisfaction, commitment to organizational goals, and ethical behavior. This alignment between religious teachings and professional conduct underscores the notion that work is regarded as a form of worship and service to others.

Islamic teachings stress the importance of performing tasks diligently and ethically, seeking the pleasure of Allah. Consequently, employees who adhere to IWE principles demonstrate a strong sense of purpose and fulfillment in their work, thereby experiencing higher levels of job satisfaction and engagement. Moreover, the emphasis on honesty, integrity, and fairness fosters a conducive work environment characterized by mutual respect and cooperation (Nwibere, 2024). Employees embodying these values tend to cultivate positive relationships with colleagues, thereby enhancing teamwork and collaboration.

Research suggests that adherence to Islamic work ethics positively influences organizational commitment among employees. When employees perceive their organization as upholding ethical principles aligned with religious teachings, they are more likely to feel emotionally attached to the organization, exhibiting greater loyalty and dedication (Abbas Ali, 2010). Integrating religious values into organizational culture is emphasized as crucial for fostering a supportive work environment and enhancing employee well-being.

Framework delineates four employee responses categorized along two dimensions: constructive/destructive and active/passive (Robins & John, 1997). These responses include Exit (leaving the organization), Voice (actively expressing dissatisfaction and seeking improvement), Loyalty (passively waiting for conditions to improve), and Neglect ((Jhonson, 2008). Recognizing these responses is essential for companies seeking to maintain superior performance amidst competition. It underscores the importance of nurturing not only the skills but also the mindset of employees to optimize their performance and contribute effectively to organizational success

*H2. Islamic work ethics has a positive effect on Job Satisfaction*

### *Job Satisfaction*

Job satisfaction is a critical aspect of organizational psychology, as it directly impacts employees' attitudes, behaviors, and performance in the workplace. Various scholars have contributed to the understanding of job satisfaction, offering insights into its definition, measurement, and influencing factors.

According to (Hamidi & Eivazi, 2010), job satisfaction can be broadly defined as an individual's general attitude towards their job. This attitude manifests as either positive or negative emotions towards work-related aspects. Handoko further elaborates that job satisfaction is the emotional state with which

employees perceive their work, indicating a pleasant or unpleasant feeling about their job. Similarly, (Odagiri et al., 2017) emphasizes that job satisfaction arises from employees' assessment of their work situation, indicating a positive attitude towards work based on the perceived value derived from their job.

The factors influencing job satisfaction are multifaceted, as highlighted by various researchers. (Wargo-Sugleris et al., 2018) identifies several key factors, including challenging work, appropriate rewards, supportive work environment conditions, and interpersonal relationships. Challenging work that aligns with employees' skills and abilities, while providing feedback and variety, contributes to job satisfaction. Additionally, fair and adequate compensation, along with a supportive work environment, enhance job satisfaction. Interpersonal relationships, especially the behavior of supervisors, play a significant role in fostering job satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect, loyalty, and open communication in maintaining positive work relationships.

(Taplo et al., 2024) further expands on the factors affecting job satisfaction, emphasizing fair compensation, appropriate job placement, work conditions, equipment, and leadership attitude. These factors collectively contribute to employees' perception of their work environment and their level of satisfaction. Job satisfaction indicators, including the nature of work, wages, supervisor, and coworkers (Untari et al., 2021), further underscore the multifaceted nature of job satisfaction (Desky, 2023). The content of work, adequacy of pay, quality of supervision, and interactions with coworkers all influence employees' job satisfaction levels as for the hypothesis construction.

*H3. Islamic work ethics has a positive effect on Job Satisfaction*

*H4. Job Response mediates the Islamic work ethics and job satisfaction*

Islamic work ethics exerts a stronger influence on intrinsic motivation and organizational commitment compared to its impact on job satisfaction and performance (Hayati & Caniago, 2012). Moreover, empirical findings suggest that job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation play a moderating role in this relationship. This is corroborated by (Al-Shamali et al., 2021), who investigated the effects of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) on 398 employees' responses to organizational change and information deviation. Their study revealed a positive influence of IWE on adapting to change, albeit with a negative impact on responding to organizational deviation. Recently, there has been significant attention given to Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), particularly within the literature on organizational change. However, the precise nature of this relationship remains ambiguous. (Rai et al., 2023) underscore the importance of enhancing our comprehension of ethical value congruence as a crucial precursor to meaningful work. Their research further confirms the motivational potency of meaningful work in fostering ethical behavior among employees, thus curbing unethical conduct through task and ownership mechanisms.

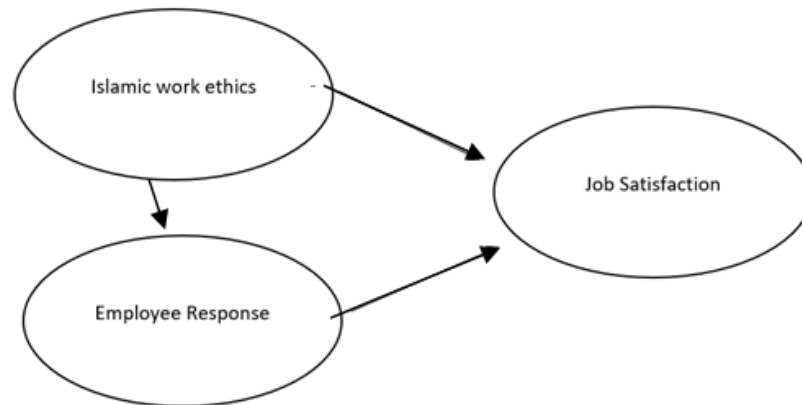


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## METHODOLOGY

### *Area of Study*

The study area for this research focuses on Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI), one of the prominent Islamic banks in Indonesia formed through the merger of three major banks. Bank Syariah Indonesia stands out as a significant object of study due to its substantial market capital following the merger. This robust financial backing enables the bank to have considerable capacity for development and growth, thereby enhancing its ability to uphold Islamic ethics and foster employee job satisfaction.

The merger of the three large banks has not only consolidated resources but also provided Bank Syariah Indonesia with a solid foundation to expand its operations and influence within the Islamic banking sector (Miftah & Wibowo, 2017). With its strong corporate capital, the bank is well-positioned to implement ethical principles in its organizational culture (La Rosa et al., 2017) and practices, contributing to the overall satisfaction and well-being of its employees.

### *Data Collecting*

Quantitative data collection utilized online surveys to facilitate the sampling process. Prior to data collection, the researchers conducted a questionnaire pilot test with experts to validate the instrument. Subsequently, the researchers assessed the instrument's validity by administering the questionnaire to ten respondents who were employees of Bank Syariah Indonesia. The questionnaire results indicated the instrument's suitability for further distribution to the research sample. Additionally, an online survey was conducted using Google Forms, distributed via widely-used messaging apps in Indonesia, namely WhatsApp and Telegram, to reach diverse and willing participants. Over the course of two months (January-March 2024), a total of 135 questionnaires were collected, undergoing standard quality checks by the authors. After removing incomplete or unusable surveys, 120 valid responses were retained for analysis (See Table 1 for the demographic information).

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Measure	Demographic Cues	n	%
Gender	Male	44	36,7
	Female	76	63,3
Age	<30 years	89	74,2
	31-40 years	23	19,1
	>40 years	8	0,7
Last Education	S1	81	67,5
	S2	37	30,8
	S3	2	1,7

### *Measurement*

After consulting with experts in the field of instruments and Islamic marketing, this study employs three variables with 12 indicators, comprising several indicators. The Islamic work ethics variable assesses four indicators, including hard work, commitment and dedication to work, avoidance of unethical methods, and competitiveness in the workplace. The employee response variable assesses four indicators with indicators: Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect (Jhonson, 2008). Meanwhile, the job satisfaction variable consists of four indicators: Work, Wages, Supervisors, and Coworkers (Untari et al., 2021). Initially, 16 indicator options were considered, which were gradually narrowed down to 12 indicators through successive elimination rounds. The survey employs a Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," each representing different levels of agreement. This research adopts the PLS (Partial Least Squares) method, and implement the SmartPLS 3 software to utilize, and assess primary reliabilities, validity indices, and both direct and indirect effects.

## **RESULTS**

### *Demographic Profile*

Table 1 provides a descriptive overview of the collected data, indicating that males contribute 36.7% of the sample and females 63.3%. Approximately 74.2% of the respondents fall into the young adult age group (below 30 years old), which represents the highest distribution, while 19.1% are adults (aged 31-40 years) and 0.7% are above 40 years old. The majority of respondents (67.5%) are employees with a Bachelor's degree (S1), 30.8% hold a Master's degree (S2), and the remaining 1.7% have attained a Doctoral degree (S3).

### *Validity and Reliability*

The assessment of internal consistency of the research instruments is necessary in employing PLS-SEM. The threshold for Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficients, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) indices was set at 0.7, which was used to evaluate the scale reliability (Cheung et al., 2023). All CR and AVE estimates exceeded their respective thresholds, indicating satisfactory scale reliability. Convergent validity of the scales was assessed by

examining the factor loadings of each scale item on its underlying variables. None of the items fell below the required minimum value of 0.7 (Arasinah, 2021). Furthermore, the discriminant validity of the research scales was evaluated using the Fornell and Larcker criteria (Oliver et al., 2010). The statistical analysis reveals the data is within the acceptable room for discriminant validity, as the corresponded score for each construct is higher than the other variables. The square root of AVE values was found to be greater than the corresponding correlations in all constructs, confirming both convergent and discriminant validity. Table 2 summarizes the validity and reliability test, while Table 3 provides the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Table 2. The Inner Model Quality

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Loadings</b>	<b>R</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>	<b>AVE</b>
<i>Islamic Work Ethics</i>				
I always complete my work on time.	0.843			
I am highly committed to achieving the company's vision	0.885	0.903	0.932	0.774
I will always complete my duties and responsibilities for the company.	0.841			
I continue to try not to commit ethical violations	0.797			
<i>Employee Response</i>				
I am always given the choice to leave or continue my work/contract in the company.	0.897			
The company provides space for feedback and suggestions	0.898	0.869	0,907	0.709
I will remain loyal to the company	0.889			
I will ignore something that does not support company improvement	0.832			
<i>Job Satisfaction</i>				
I feel happy with the results of my work so far	0.817			
BSI always compensates employees on performance results	0.896	0.887	0.920	0.742
The company constantly monitors employee performance	0.841			
I feel I have harmonious coworkers	0.888			

Source: Adapted Smartpls3 Output

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion Result

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Employee Response</b>	<b>Islamic Work Ethics</b>	<b>Job Satisfaction</b>
Employee Response	0,880		
Islamic Work Ethics	0,799	0,842	
Job Satisfaction	0,865	0,814	0,861

Source: Adapted Smartpls3 Output

### *Hypothesis Testing*

This study performs both bootstrapping and path analysis. These procedures will allow it to obtain the significance and relevance information. Table 4 posits the statistical finding from the PLS-SEM output.



Table 4. Path Coefficient Results

Instrument	$\beta$	St. Dev.	t-value	P- value
Employee Response -> Job Satisfaction	0,667	0,093	7,297	0,000
Islamic Work Ethics -> Employee Response	0,802	0,041	19,426	0,000
Islamic Work Ethics -> Job Satisfaction	0,287	0,093	2,948	0,003
Islamic Work Ethics -> Emp. Response -> Job Satisf.	0,541	0,073	7,461	0,000

Source: Adapted Smartpls3 Output

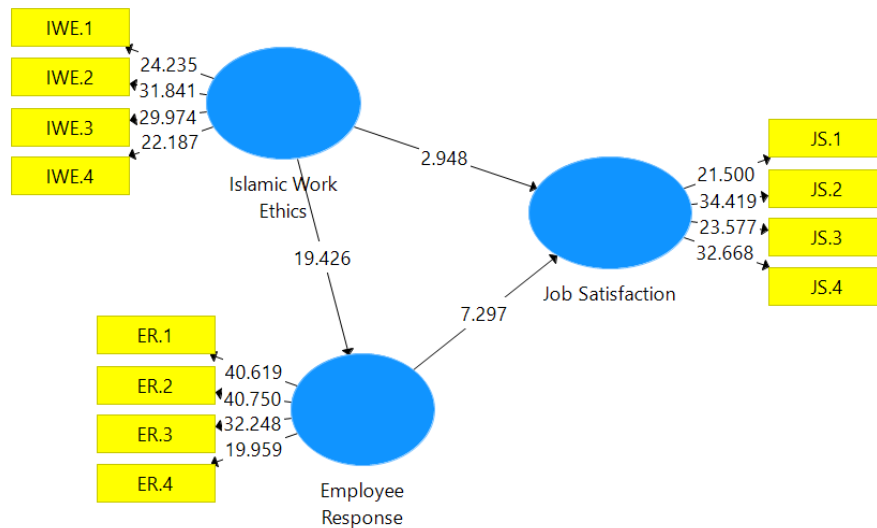


Figure 2. Bootstrapping Result  
 Source: Smartpls3 Path Output

## DISCUSSION

This study offers a comprehensive perspective on the Islamic banking industry by suggesting and testing Islamic work ethics in various contexts. These findings are achieved by confirming hypotheses regarding how Islamic work ethics influence employee response and job satisfaction. Do Islamic work ethics make employees more professional in their work? The correlation patterns reflect that Islamic work ethics have a greater direct impact on employee response compared to job satisfaction. In this research, employees have the opportunity to provide feedback and criticism to the company through internal communication channels such as WhatsApp groups, etc. This step demonstrates the commitment of Indonesian Shariah banks to involve employees in the process of improvement and development. By providing consultation spaces, the bank offers a platform for employees to share ideas, suggestions, or feedback on various operational aspects and company policies. This enables employees to feel heard and appreciated, thereby enhancing their engagement and job satisfaction. Several studies have shown that through this process, banks can gain valuable insights from an internal point of view that can help in making better decisions and improve the overall performance of the company (Al-Shamali et al., 2021; Mohammad et al., 2018) .

The study reinforces the finding that Indonesian Shariah banks practice a compensation system closely related to employee performance. This approach

provides incentives for employees to achieve the best results in their work, as they will be rewarded according to their contributions to the company's success. It also helps motivate employees to continuously improve their performance.

It is crucial to note that among all the instruments shared, the statement regarding consistency in adhering to applicable ethics occupies a less prominent response compared to other questions. This indicates that there may be some employees who do not fully understand the expected ethical standards or the consequences of violating these standards. Therefore, without clear communication and training on ethical guidelines, employees may inadvertently engage in unethical behavior.

The culture within an organization plays a significant role in shaping employee behavior. If the organizational culture implicitly or explicitly accepts unethical behavior or prioritizes short-term gains over long-term ethical considerations, employees may find it challenging to uphold ethical principles.

To address these challenges, a diverse approach is required, including clear communication about ethical expectations, providing support and resources for ethical decision-making, fostering a culture of accountability, and aligning organizational practices with ethical principles. Education, training, and continuous reinforcement of ethical norms can also help build a work environment where ethical behavior is valued and practiced by all employees.

Understanding the influence of Islamic work ethics on employee responses at BSI can provide several benefits in enhancing employee performance. Employees who align with Islamic work ethics tend to demonstrate higher levels of dedication, integrity, and professionalism in their work, leading to improved organizational performance overall. Emphasizing Islamic work ethics can contribute to fostering a positive organizational culture characterized by trust, respect, and fairness, which in turn can enhance employee satisfaction and commitment. Moreover, Islamic work ethics prioritize principles such as honesty, transparency, and accountability, which can guide employees in making ethical decisions, thus reducing the likelihood of unethical behavior or mistakes within the organization.

Islamic work ethics have a significant impact on the level of job satisfaction. Islam encourages individuals to perform their work to the best of their abilities (*ihsan*). When individuals feel that their work is of high quality and beneficial to others, it can increase their sense of achievement and job satisfaction. Islam also teaches the importance of maintaining a balance between work and personal life. (Abbas Ali, 2010) When companies or organizations respect their employees' time and personal needs, it can increase job satisfaction because employees feel valued as individuals with needs beyond work. Furthermore, Islamic work ethics encourage individuals to fully commit to their work as a form of worship. When employees feel that their work has noble and beneficial purposes, it can increase job satisfaction because they feel that they are doing something more than just earning a living. Several studies have applying the values of Islamic work ethics in the workplace, organizations can enhance the job satisfaction of their employees, which in turn can contribute to the overall performance and success of the company (Hayati & Caniago, 2012; Salahudin et al., 2016; Untari et al., 2021).

The research findings also suggest that Islamic work ethics indirectly influence job satisfaction through employee responses, meaning that when the values of Islamic work ethics are emphasized within an organization, they can shape a positive organizational culture. A culture rooted in values such as fairness, integrity, and commitment can create a supportive work environment where employees feel valued and supported. This can enhance job satisfaction as employees feel comfortable and appreciated in their workplace. Islamic work ethics promote solidarity and collaboration among members of the organization. When employees feel supported by their peers and can work together to achieve common goals, it can boost job satisfaction because employees perceive that they have social support and cooperation in their workplace.

Thus, employees' responses to the implementation of Islamic work ethics within the organization can indirectly influence their level of job satisfaction through the formation of a positive organizational culture, increased trust and engagement, enhanced motivation and commitment, as well as improved interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

#### **FURTHER STUDY**

This research certainly has limitations that require further investigation. Limitations in scope because this research only focuses on Islamic work ethics, employee response and job satisfaction. This research still has limitations, such as taking respondents in the Islamic banking sector, so it is necessary to generalize the results of this study by conducting research in other fields. In this study, the data collection is also still self-report using a questionnaire. Future research can combine with official reports from companies related to Islamic work ethics, job satisfaction and employee responses shown by their employees. Thus, the description of these variables is more objective.

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