

# The role of transformational leadership in enhancing Islamic work ethic and employee engagement

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study investigates the relationship between Islamic work ethic, job satisfaction, and employee engagement, with transformational leadership as a moderating variable. It aims to assess whether job satisfaction mediates the impact of Islamic work ethic on engagement and if transformational leadership enhances these effects. The research offers insights into how ethical values and leadership styles influence employee engagement at Brangkal Printing. **Method** – A quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design was used, involving all 75 employees at Brangkal Printing through total sampling. Data were gathered using a likert-scale questionnaire to measure Islamic work ethic, job satisfaction, transformational leadership, and employee engagement. The data analysis technique used in this study is partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). **Findings** – The results reveal that the Islamic work ethic does not directly influence employee engagement but positively impacts job satisfaction, which enhances engagement, confirming the mediating role of job satisfaction. Transformational leadership directly affects engagement but does not significantly moderate the relationships examined. **Implications** – This research highlights the significance of the Islamic work ethic in improving job satisfaction and engagement while highlighting the context-dependent nature of transformational leadership. It extends existing theories by emphasizing the influence of cultural and ethical values on workplace behavior. Organizations should enhance job satisfaction through a supportive work environment, fair compensation, and career development. Integrating Islamic values into leadership strategies can optimize employee motivation, commitment, and engagement, leading to better performance.

**Keywords:** Islamic work ethic, job satisfaction, employee engagement, transformational leadership.

## Introduction

Employee engagement is vital to human resource management, directly influencing organizational productivity, employee loyalty, and overall performance. Emotionally and professionally engaged employees tend to demonstrate strong dedication and a willingness to go beyond their formal job duties (Schaufeli 2017). In organizations that uphold ethical



values, engagement is shaped by material incentives and the alignment between personal and organizational values. In Muslim-majority contexts, the Islamic work ethic is a prominent ethical framework, underscoring principles such as honesty, accountability, fairness, and the perception of work as an act of worship (A. Ibrahim 2018). These values can foster a deeper spiritual meaning in work and enhance employees' motivation to contribute. However, the influence of the Islamic work ethic on employee engagement appears to vary, as studies suggest that elements such as leadership style, job satisfaction, and the alignment between spiritual values and practical job requirements also significantly contribute (Raj et al. 2023). In organizations, where honesty, responsibility, and fairness are core principles, employee engagement reflects the extent to which individuals are committed to their roles, feel a sense of belonging to the organization, and are willing to exceed their formal responsibilities (Gözükarar and Şimşek 2015). These principles are also applied in Brangkal Printing. However, maintaining high levels of engagement in such workplaces presents unique challenges and opportunities. Employees may find deeper meaning in their work when aligned with ethical and spiritual values, but they may also experience conflicts between personal expectations and organizational demands.

Leadership, workplace culture, and the balance between ethical obligations and practical work expectations are crucial in shaping employee engagement (Madanchian et al. 2024). Given these dynamics, several key research problems arise, such as understanding the influence of Islamic ethics on motivation, identifying factors that enhance or hinder employee engagement, and exploring strategies to sustain commitment in faith-based organizations. Addressing these issues can help organizations develop practical approaches to fostering employee engagement while remaining aligned with Islamic ethical principles. Despite the recognized importance of employee engagement, numerous organizations struggle to maintain high levels of engagement, particularly in environments where ethical and religious principles play a dominant role (Müller and Kubátová 2025). Previous studies have shown that Islamic work ethics positively influence job satisfaction and employee engagement (Ahmad, Nawab, and Shafi 2021; Niswaty et al. 2021).

However, inconsistencies in research findings suggest that this relationship is not always direct or significant. Some studies report a strong positive correlation (Ali and Al-Owaidan 2008), while others find weak or negligible effects (Hashemizadeh et al. 2023). These variations prompt further inquiry into whether variables like job satisfaction mediate the relationship between the Islamic work ethic and employee engagement. Furthermore, the role of transformational leadership in enhancing employee engagement in ethically driven workplaces remains insufficiently explored. Some researchers argue that transformational leadership strengthens the positive impact of the Islamic work ethic on employee engagement by inspiring employees and fostering an ethical work environment (Qalati et al. 2022; Din et al. 2025). However, other studies suggest that in industrial sectors, the influence of leadership on employee engagement is often overlooked (He et al. 2020). Additionally, job satisfaction is frequently linked to higher employee engagement (Judge and Bono 2001). Some studies indicate that its role as a mediator is weak or context-dependent (Smadi et al. 2023). Furthermore, most studies examining the Islamic work ethic, job satisfaction, and employee engagement have predominantly concentrated on large corporations or the formal sector, with limited attention given to small and medium-sized enterprises (Halbusi et al. 2022). Therefore, this study is important in filling the existing research gap by exploring the reciprocal relationship between Islamic work ethics, job satisfaction, employee engagement, and transformational leadership in small-scale companies.

This study's novelty stems from its integrative approach, which explores transformational leadership as a moderating factor and job satisfaction as a mediating factor in the relationship between the Islamic work ethic and employee engagement. Departing from

earlier studies, specific research indicates that the Islamic work ethic can enhance job satisfaction by instilling a sense of purpose and moral accountability (Ali and Al-Owaihian 2008; Niswaty et al. 2021). While others indicate that this relationship is weak or negligible in context-specific organizational environments (Smadi et al. 2023). Similarly, research examining the relationship between the Islamic work ethic and employee engagement has produced inconsistent findings. At the same time, some scholars argue that adherence to ethical values enhances motivation and engagement (Ahmad, Nawab, and Shafi 2021). Others highlight that excessive work-related responsibilities associated with Islamic ethical principles can lead to stress, potentially reducing engagement (Hashemizadeh et al. 2023). The role of job satisfaction as a mediator in this relationship remains debated, as some studies confirm its strong influence on engagement (Judge and Bono 2001). Others suggest its mediating role is context-dependent (Smadi et al. 2023). Furthermore, transformational leadership is often seen as a driver of employee engagement by fostering an ethical and inspiring work environment (Qalati et al. 2022; Din et al. 2025). However, some findings indicate its effect is limited or even overlooked in industrial settings (He et al. 2020). In contrast to prior studies that have concentrated exclusively on direct relationships, this research adopts a more holistic framework by investigating job satisfaction as a mediator and transformational leadership as a moderator in the connection between the Islamic work ethic and employee engagement.

This study aims to investigate the direct impact of the Islamic work ethic on employee engagement, assess the moderating influence of transformational leadership within this relationship, and explore the role of job satisfaction as a mediator connecting the two. Additionally, it aims to assess the combined influence of these three factors on employee engagement within small and medium-sized enterprises. This study offers notable originality by providing fresh perspectives on employee engagement within organizations that are based on Islamic ethical principles, especially in the context of small and medium-sized enterprises. The study incorporates job satisfaction as a mediating variable and transformational leadership as a moderate variable. This framework aims to explore more deeply how these factors interact and jointly influence employee engagement. The focus on small and medium-sized enterprises adds important value, as most previous research has been concentrated on large corporations and formal sectors, whereas smaller businesses—despite their distinct organizational dynamic remain underrepresented in academic discourse.

## Literature review

### *Islamic deontological ethics theory and Herzberg's two-factor theory*

Islamic deontological ethics theory emphasizes that work, from an Islamic perspective, is not merely an economic activity but also a form of worship and a moral obligation that must be carried out with integrity and responsibility. Working in Islam is considered a trust (*amanah*) and a means of devotion to Allah, which requires individuals to work honestly, with discipline, and full dedication (Al-Bar and Chamsi-Pasha 2015). Islamic work ethics are rooted in values such as hard work, justice, honesty, and social responsibility, all derived from the Qur'an and Hadith (Ali and Al-Owaihian 2008). In line with this, Beekun and Badawi (2005) state that Islamic work ethics reflect both transcendental and moral dimensions, where work is viewed as a way to attain Allah's pleasure and contribute positively to society. Thus, Islamic deontological ethics theory encourages individuals to work not solely for material gains but also driven by moral and spiritual motivations grounded in religious teachings.

Herzberg's two-factor theory classifies the factors influencing job satisfaction and dissatisfaction into motivator (intrinsic) factors and hygiene (extrinsic) factors. Motivator factors, including achievement, recognition, responsibility, and meaningful work, increase job



satisfaction and encourage employees to perform at higher levels. In contrast, hygiene factors, such as salary, working conditions, and interpersonal relationships, do not directly foster satisfaction; however, their absence can lead to dissatisfaction (Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl, and Maude 2017). Robbins and Judge (2018) emphasize that these two dimensions are not on a single continuum; thus, improving one does not automatically improve the other. Additionally, this theory is essential for developing human resource management strategies, especially in cultivating a work environment that promotes intrinsic motivation among employees (Miner 2003). As such, Herzberg's two-factor theory offers a valuable framework for understanding how organizations can establish conditions that effectively enhance employee satisfaction and engagement.

#### *The charismatic leadership theory and the job demands-resources (JD-R) model*

Charismatic leadership theory explains that leaders with a strong vision, practical communication skills, and personal charm can inspire and motivate their followers to demonstrate high commitment and dedication at work. Mhatre and Riggio (2014) state that charismatic leaders can form emotional connections with their subordinates through trust, enthusiasm, and the compelling articulation of their vision. One of the key figures in this theory describes charismatic leaders as individuals with high self-confidence, strong conviction in their values, and the ability to communicate high expectations to their followers. Charismatic leaders tend to influence their subordinates' behavior through personal power rather than formal authority, often serving as a source of inspiration in facing work challenges (Yukl 1993). Gözükarar and Şimşek (2015) also emphasize that charismatic leadership can enhance employee self-confidence and loyalty, ultimately having a positive impact on their engagement and performance. Therefore, this theory emphasizes the significance of a leader's personality and communication approach in influencing employee morale and work engagement.

The job demand-resources (JD-R) model is a theoretical framework that outlines the impact of job-related factors on employee well-being and engagement. The model divides work conditions into two primary components: job demands and job resources (Bakker and Demerouti 2013). Job demands encompass aspects of the job that require significant physical and psychological effort, such as heavy workloads, time constraints, and role conflicts, which, if inadequately managed, can lead to burnout. Conversely, job resources include factors like supervisor support, autonomy, opportunities for development, and role clarity, all of which are crucial in enhancing motivation and employee engagement (Gözükarar and Şimşek 2015). Job resources assist employees in managing job demands and directly enhance engagement by cultivating a sense of purpose, enthusiasm, and commitment at work. Consequently, the JD-R model offers a comprehensive perspective, suggesting that balancing job demands and resources is crucial for fostering a healthy and productive work environment.

#### *Employee engagement*

Employee engagement is a complex concept that includes emotional, cognitive, and behavioral involvement in work (Ababneh 2021). Engaged employees demonstrate strong motivation, a sense of connection to the organization, and a readiness to exceed their formal duties. Employee engagement is described as a positive and rewarding mental state related to work, marked by energy, commitment, and deep involvement (Gözükarar and Şimşek 2015). Prudenzi et al. (2024) proposed that employee engagement involves fully utilizing oneself in a work role, where individuals express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally while performing their roles.



### *Islamic work ethics*

Islamic work ethics constitute a set of moral principles that shape individual behavior in the workplace, including values such as honesty, hard work, responsibility, discipline, and the intention to work considered a spiritual practice (Ali and Al-Owaihan 2008). From the Islamic deontological ethics theory perspective, an individual's actions at work should be based on moral obligations established in Islamic teachings. Work is seen as an economic activity, worship, and a responsibility to Allah (Al-Bar and Chamsi-Pasha 2015). Therefore, individuals who adhere to Islamic work ethics tend to perform their work with integrity, responsibility, and dedication, as they believe that every action will be accountable before (Hashemizadeh et al. 2023).

### *Transformational leadership*

Transformational leadership is a leadership approach that emphasizes inspiring, motivating, and empowering employees (Gözükara and Şimşek 2015). Leaders with this style create a supportive work environment, provide a clear vision, and serve as role models in implementing Islamic work ethics (Suryani and Triyono 2022). Leaders who possess personal appeal, a strong vision, and effective communication skills can inspire employees to work with higher dedication (Mhatre and Riggio 2014). This theory is relevant to transformational leadership as charismatic leaders can build closer relationships with employees, instil ethical work values, and create a more harmonious work environment (Tajpour, Hosseini, and Mohiuddin 2023).

### *Job satisfaction*

Job satisfaction represents an individual's contentment with their job, including the work environment, social interactions, and financial and non-financial rewards (Zebon, Sattar, and Ahamed 2025). Employees who experience job satisfaction are generally more motivated and engaged. According to Herzberg's two-factor theory, job satisfaction is shaped by two types of factors: motivators (intrinsic factors) like achievement, recognition, and responsibility, and hygiene factors (extrinsic factors) such as working conditions, company policies, and interpersonal relationships (Suthatorn and Charoensukmongkol 2023). This theory highlights that job satisfaction is not exclusively determined by financial rewards, but also by psychological factors that contribute to the sense of purpose in work (Tower et al. 2024).

### *Hypotheses development*

Islamic deontological ethics theory emphasizes that individuals should work based on moral obligations established in Islamic teachings, viewing work not merely as an economic activity but also as an act of worship and a moral responsibility (Al-Bar and Chamsi-Pasha 2015). In the context of employee engagement, the JD-R model states that engagement increases when individuals have access to job resources that support their motivation, such as intrinsic values and a value-based work environment (Gözükara and Şimşek 2015). Islamic work ethics serve as an intrinsic job resource by providing more profound meaning to work, leading employees to be more dedicated, disciplined, and responsible in fulfilling their duties (Ali and Al-Owaihan 2008). Previous research has supported the positive relationship between Islamic work ethics and employee engagement. It was found that employees who possess a strong Islamic work ethic demonstrate higher levels of engagement, viewing work as both a form of worship and a moral responsibility (Tufail et al. 2017; Muthuswamy and Umarani 2023). Other studies have highlighted that values such as honesty, hard work, and responsibility significantly contribute to greater employee engagement (Ahmad, Nawab, and Shafi 2021; Hashemizadeh et al. 2023). Additionally, research confirms that organizations

implementing Islamic work ethics foster a value-driven work culture, which enhances employee engagement by instilling a sense of belonging and purpose in work (Prudenzi et al. 2024).

H1: Islamic work ethics positively affect employee engagement.

Islamic deontological ethics theory emphasizes that work is not merely an economic activity but also a form of worship and a moral obligation, which leads employees to perform their duties with integrity, responsibility, and dedication (Al-Bar and Chamsi-Pasha 2015). This viewpoint is consistent with Herzberg's two-factor theory, which posits that job satisfaction is shaped by intrinsic motivators, including achievement, recognition, and meaningful work (Suthatorn and Charoensukmongkol 2023). Islamic work ethics emphasize values like honesty, diligence, and fairness, which offer employees a sense of purpose and satisfaction, ultimately enhancing their job satisfaction (Ali and Al-Owaihian 2008). Employees who view their work as a moral responsibility and a societal contribution are more likely to experience greater satisfaction, as they derive both spiritual and psychological rewards from their work. Empirical studies confirm the positive relationship between Islamic work ethics and job satisfaction. Aflah et al. (2021) observed that employees in organizations implementing Islamic work ethics tend to have higher job satisfaction levels, as they view their work as an act of worship and a means of contributing to society. Similarly, Ali and Al-Owaihian (2008); Niswaty et al. (2021), confirmed that employees with a strong Islamic work ethic experience greater workplace satisfaction, as they value fairness, responsibility, and ethical work practices. Hashemizadeh et al. (2023) further highlighted that employees who integrate Islamic ethical principles into their work report higher job fulfilment and overall well-being. Halbusi et al. (2022) also emphasized that Islamic work ethics foster positive workplace relationships and organizational commitment, leading to enhanced job satisfaction.

H2: Islamic work ethics positively affect job satisfaction.

According to Herzberg's theory, job satisfaction is driven by intrinsic motivators such as achievement, recognition, and meaningful work, as well as extrinsic hygiene factors like salary and work environment (Suthatorn and Charoensukmongkol 2023). Employees who derive satisfaction from intrinsic motivators tend to experience higher engagement, as they feel valued and motivated in their roles. The JD-R model explains that engagement is strengthened when employees have sufficient job resources, such as a supportive work environment and personal motivation (Gözükara and Şimşek 2015). Job satisfaction is a crucial job resource that strengthens employee engagement by promoting a sense of inclusion, emotional attachment, and enthusiasm toward work. Empirical studies affirm the positive association between job satisfaction and employee engagement. Faeni et al. (2025) found that employees who experience higher job satisfaction exhibit greater engagement, as they perceive their work as meaningful and fulfilling. Similarly, Ibrahim and Hussein (2024) confirmed that job satisfaction significantly contributes to employee engagement, particularly when employees feel supported in their work environment. Judge and Bono (2001) also demonstrated that employees who report satisfaction with significant facets of their job responsibilities, such as recognition and career growth, tend to have higher motivation and commitment to their organizations. Moreover, Halbusi et al. (2022) found that satisfied employees are more proactive in decision-making and innovation, reinforcing their engagement. Organizations fostering job satisfaction often experience increased employee engagement, as employees feel appreciated and dedicated to their responsibilities (Prudenzi et al. 2024).

H3: job satisfaction positively affects employee engagement.

Charismatic leadership theory suggests leaders with vision, strong communication skills, and personal appeal can inspire employees to work with higher dedication and commitment (Mhatre and Riggio 2014). Transformational leadership aligns with this theory,

as transformational leaders build emotional connections with employees, provide motivation, and create a positive work environment, fostering employee engagement (Tajpour, Hosseini, and Mohiuddin 2023). The JD-R model states that job resources, including supportive leadership, autonomy, and acknowledgement, are vital in enhancing employee engagement (Gözükara and Şimşek 2015). Transformational leadership functions as a job resource, with leaders who motivate and support their employees, fostering a work environment that promotes motivation, enthusiasm, and commitment to responsibilities. Empirical studies have consistently found a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement. Gözükara and Şimşek (2015); Bader, Gielnik, and Bledow (2023) indicated that transformational leaders enhance engagement by providing a clear vision, fostering trust, and creating a supportive work environment. Similarly, Din et al. (2025) demonstrated that transformational leadership encourages innovation and gives employees a sense of purpose, leading to higher engagement. Mhatre and Riggio (2014) also emphasized that transformational leaders boost employee commitment and motivation, strengthening their engagement. Qalati et al. (2022) further confirmed that transformational leadership reduces workplace stress and fosters a sense of belonging, contributing to greater employee engagement. Moreover, He et al. (2020); Prudenzi et al. (2024) highlighted that transformational leaders create a collaborative and value-driven work culture, enabling employees to feel more involved and motivated.

H4: transformational leadership positively affects employee engagement.

Islamic deontological ethics theory emphasizes that work is an economic activity, a form of worship, and a moral responsibility, encouraging employees to work with integrity, honesty, and dedication (Sadeqian, Rad, and Jafari 2024). This is consistent with Herzberg's two-factor theory, which posits that intrinsic motivators such as achievement, recognition, and meaningful work enhance job satisfaction, leading to higher engagement. Islamic work ethics create an ethical and value-driven work environment, increasing job satisfaction and strengthening employee engagement (Suthatorn and Charoensukmongkol 2023). The JD-R model explains that employee engagement improves when job resources, such as job satisfaction, are present (Gözükara and Şimşek 2015). Thus, job satisfaction is a mediator, linking Islamic work ethics to employee engagement by enhancing intrinsic motivation and workplace commitment. Empirical research affirms that job satisfaction is a mediating factor in the link between Islamic work ethics and employee engagement. Amaliasita (2023) found that employees who practice Islamic work ethics tend to have higher job satisfaction, which ultimately enhances their engagement. Similarly, Aflah et al. (2021); Niswaty et al. (2021) confirmed that Islamic work ethics foster a harmonious and ethical work culture, leading to greater job satisfaction and employee engagement. Ali and Al-Owaihian (2008) further emphasized that honesty, responsibility, and fairness in Islamic work ethics contribute to higher job satisfaction, strengthening employees' involvement in their work. Moreover, Halbusi et al. (2022); Hashemizadeh et al. (2023) found that job satisfaction is a key mechanism linking Islamic work ethics to employee engagement, as satisfied employees tend to feel more motivated and dedicated to their responsibilities. Prudenzi et al. (2024) also highlighted that organizations implementing Islamic work ethics create value-driven workplaces, where satisfaction and engagement are mutually reinforcing.

H5: job satisfaction can mediate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and employee engagement.

Islamic deontological ethics theory states that work is not merely an economic activity but also a form of worship and a moral responsibility, encouraging employees to work with honesty, dedication, and integrity (Sadeqian, Rad, and Jafari 2024). This aligns with charismatic leadership theory, which suggests that leaders with strong vision, personal appeal, and effective communication can inspire employees to demonstrate higher



commitment and engagement (Mhatre and Riggio 2014). Transformational leadership supports this theory by enhancing employees' motivation, reinforcing ethical values, and fostering a supportive work environment (Tajpour, Hosseini, and Mohiuddin 2023). The JD-R model states that job resources such as leadership support and an ethical work environment strengthen employee engagement (Gözükara and Şimşek 2015). Transformational leadership moderates by amplifying the impact of Islamic work ethics on engagement, ensuring that ethical values are internalized and actively practised in the workplace. The relationship between Islamic work ethics, transformational leadership, and employee engagement can be analyzed through Islamic deontological ethics theory, charismatic leadership theory, and the JD-R model. Purnama et al. (2021) discovered that transformational leaders enhance the influence of Islamic work ethics on employee engagement by fostering a value-oriented and supportive work environment. Similarly, Din et al. (2025) revealed that transformational leadership inspires employees and encourages them to integrate Islamic ethical values into their work, leading to higher engagement. Additionally, Qalati et al. (2022) demonstrated that transformational leadership strengthens the connection between Islamic work ethics and engagement by fostering a more collaborative and innovative work culture. Furthermore, Bader, Gielnik, and Bledow (2023) emphasized that transformational leaders enhance employees' motivation and ethical behavior, significantly contributing to engagement. Research by Gözükara and Şimşek (2015); Prudenzi et al. (2024) also confirmed that when transformational leadership is present, employees are more likely to adopt and apply Islamic work ethics, ultimately increasing their engagement in the organization.

H6: transformational leadership can moderate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and employee engagement.

Herzberg's two-factor theory proposes that intrinsic motivators, including achievement, recognition, and meaningful work, increase job satisfaction, boosting engagement (Laeheem 2018). However, the strength of this relationship may depend on external factors such as leadership style and organizational culture (Suthatorn and Charoensukmongkol 2023). Charismatic leadership theory states that leaders with a strong vision, personal appeal, and effective communication inspire employees to be more dedicated and engaged (Mhatre and Riggio 2014). Transformational leadership aligns with this theory by enhancing motivation, fostering ethical values, and providing emotional support, reinforcing the effect of job satisfaction on employee engagement (Tajpour, Hosseini, and Mohiuddin 2023). The JD-R model explains that job resources, such as supportive leadership and high job satisfaction, contribute to greater employee engagement (Gözükara and Şimşek 2015). Transformational leadership is a moderating factor, enhancing the connection between job satisfaction and engagement by ensuring employees feel appreciated, inspired, and in harmony with the organization's vision. Empirical studies support the moderating role of transformational leadership in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement. Purnama et al. (2021) found that transformational leaders enhance the effect of job satisfaction on engagement by providing guidance, motivation, and emotional support. Similarly, Gözükara and Şimşek (2015); Din et al. (2025) confirmed that employees in organizations with transformational leadership are more likely to translate job satisfaction into higher engagement due to increased workplace collaboration and intrinsic motivation. Additionally, Qalati et al. (2022); Bader, Gielnik, and Bledow (2023) emphasized that transformational leadership reduces job-related stress and fosters a strong sense of belonging, strengthening the connection between job satisfaction and engagement. Moreover, Gözükara and Şimşek (2015); Prudenzi et al. (2024) discovered that organizations led by transformational leaders create a more supportive and ethical work culture, making employees more likely to engage when they experience job satisfaction.



H7: transformational leadership can moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement.

The conceptual model of this research is illustrated in Figure 1, depicting the relationships among Islamic work ethics, transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and employee engagement.

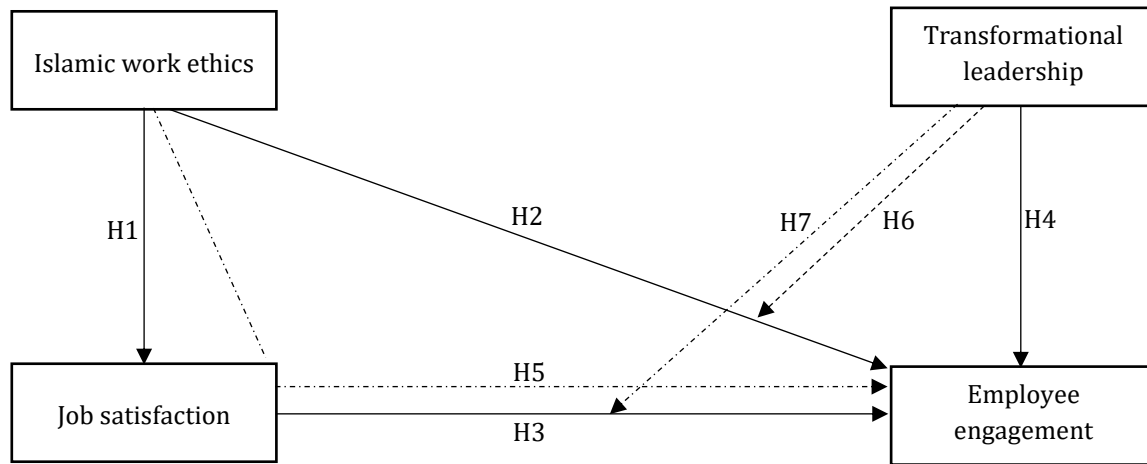


Figure 1 research conceptual framework

## Method

This study employs an explanatory quantitative approach to examine the influence of the Islamic work ethic on employee engagement with transformational leadership as a moderating factor and job satisfaction as a mediating variable. The research design follows a cross-sectional approach, which examines relationships between variables at a specific moment (Harrison, Reilly, and Creswell 2020). This approach was chosen due to its efficiency in capturing the current state without requiring extensive resources, as necessary in a longitudinal study (Gomm 2008). Although cross-sectional research cannot track long-term changes, this study provides insights into how the Islamic work ethic influences employee engagement and how transformational leadership strengthens this relationship through job satisfaction. For future research, a longitudinal approach could be applied to comprehend the evolution of employee engagement over time. The study's population includes all employees employed at Brangkal Printing, totaling 75 individuals. Given the relatively small population size, the study employs a total sampling technique, where all population members are selected as respondents. This approach is appropriate as it maximizes the representativeness of the data and provides comprehensive insights into the organization's workforce. Data was collected from December 2024 to January 2025 using a Likert-scale questionnaire (1–5) to measure employees' perceptions of the research variables (Table 1).

Table 1 operational variables

Variables	Indicators	Statements	Scale
(Ramadhan and Ryandono 2015)	Honesty	I am always honest in every task I perform.	Likert
	Responsibility	I accept complete accountability for the outcomes of my work.	
	Discipline	I always work according to established rules and schedules.	
	Hard work	I always strive to give my best effort at work.	
	Intention to work as worship	I consider my work as part of worship.	
	Fairness	I always act fairly in every work-related	

Variables	Indicators	Statements	Scale
Employee engagement (Nugroho 2023; Russen et al. 2024)		decision.	Likert
	Concern for others	I care about the well-being of my colleagues.	
	Perseverance at work	I remain diligent in my work despite facing challenges.	
	Emotional attachment	I feel emotionally attached to my job.	
	Dedication	I am deeply committed to fulfilling my work responsibilities.	
	Enthusiasm	I feel enthusiastic every time I perform my job.	
	Work focus	I always stay focused while working and avoid distractions.	
	Intrinsic motivation	I am motivated to deliver my best performance.	
	Commitment to work	I put in my best effort every day.	
	Willingness to develop	I am always eager to improve my skills at work.	
Job satisfaction (Purnama 2017)	Loyalty to the organization	I am committed to continuing my career in this organization.	Likert
	Satisfaction with work	I feel fulfilled by the type of tasks I handle.	
	Satisfaction with work environment	I feel comfortable with my work environment.	
	Work-life balance satisfaction	I can balance my work and personal life.	
	Recognition for hard work	I feel appreciated for my efforts.	
	Opportunities for self-development	I have opportunities to improve my skills.	
	Good relationships with colleagues	I maintain harmonious work relationships with my colleagues.	
	Job role clarity	I clearly understand my job roles and responsibilities.	
Transformational leadership (Aniebonam et al. 2025)	Fair compensation system	I feel that the salary and benefits system in this organization is fair.	Likert
	Inspiration	My leader inspires me to work better.	
	Idealized influence	My leader serves as a role model in upholding organizational values.	
	Intellectual stimulation	My leader encourages me to think creatively at work.	
	Individual consideration	My leader cares about the individual needs of employees.	
	Communication skills	My leader effectively communicates the organization's vision and goals.	
	Motivational encouragement	My leader consistently motivates employees.	
	Building trust	My leader builds relationships based on trust.	
	Encouraging innovation	My leader encourages me to innovate in my work.	

This study employs partial least squares–structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) as the data analysis method to evaluate direct, mediating, and moderating effects within the



proposed research framework. PLS-SEM was chosen for its efficiency in analyzing intricate relationships among latent variables and its capacity to handle sample size and data distribution issues. Additionally, PLS-SEM is well-suited for handling moderate sample sizes and accommodating non-normally distributed data, making it a robust approach for examining intricate variable interactions (Hair et al. 2014). The analysis was performed using Smartpls software, followed by the following steps: (1) Evaluation of the Measurement Model. Convergent validity: Assessed using average variance extracted (AVE), with a minimum acceptable value of  $> 0.5$  (Balu and Rathnasabapathy 2025). Discriminant validity: Evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio, where  $HTMT < 0.85$  indicates good construct discrimination (Balu and Rathnasabapathy 2025). Instrument reliability: Measured using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha, with values  $> 0.7$  considered reliable. (2) Structural Model Evaluation. Path coefficients: Employed to assess the direction and magnitude of the relationships between variables. Significance testing: Conducted through bootstrapping with 5,000 resampling iterations, with a t-value  $> 1.96$  at a 95% confidence level indicating statistical significance (Hair et al. 2014). (3) Assessment of Model Predictive Power. Coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ): Assesses how well the independent variables account for variations in employee engagement. Predictive relevance ( $q^2$ ): Measured using the Stone-Geisser test to evaluate the model's predictive accuracy. Effect size ( $f^2$ ): Identifies the relative impact of each independent variable on the overall model.

## Results and discussion

Table 2 respondent characteristics

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	15	19.7
Female	60	80.3
Total	75	100
Age:		
20 - 35 years	50	66.5
36 - 55 years	25	33.5
> 55 years	1	0.01
Total	75	100
Education:		
Elementary school	1	0.5
Junior high school	15	20.2
Senior high school	45	60.5
Bachelor's degree	6	8.3
Others	8	10.5
Total	75	100
Work duration:		
6 - 24 months	12	16.5
24 - 36 months	11	15.3
> 36 months	51	68.2
Total	75	100

Source: primary data (processed, 2025)

Table 2 shows respondents' characteristics, where most respondents in this study are women (80.3%), while men account for only 19.7%. This indicates that the workforce at



Brangkal Printing is predominantly female, possibly due to recruitment policies or the nature of the job, which is more appealing to female workers. Regarding age distribution, most employees fall within the 20–35 age range (66.5%), while 33.5% are between 36–55 years old, and only 0.01% are over 55. The dominance of younger employees suggests that the workforce is energetic and has strong potential for further development. Meanwhile, the smaller percentage of older employees may indicate challenges in retaining senior workers. Regarding educational background, most employees have a high school diploma (60.5%), followed by junior high school (20.2%), bachelor's degree (8.3%), and others (10.5%), with only 0.5% having elementary education. This suggests that most employees have a secondary education level suitable for the printing industry's operational needs. The relatively low percentage of employees with a bachelor's degree implies that a small portion of the workforce likely occupies administrative and managerial positions. Additionally, the high percentage of high school graduates highlights the need for additional training programs to enhance their skills and competencies. Regarding work experience, 68.2% of employees have worked for more than 36 months, 15.3% have 24–36 months of experience, and 16.5% have 6–24 months of experience. The high proportion of employees with more than three years of tenure suggests that employee turnover at Brangkal Printing is relatively low, indicating that the company successfully retains its workforce. Additionally, the absence of employees with less than six months of experience in the data implies that the company may have a selective recruitment system, ensuring that newly hired employees possess sufficient work experience before joining.

Table 3 measurement model testing

Variables	Items	$\lambda$	Cronbach's $\alpha$	rho_a	CR	AVE
Islamic work ethics (IWE)	IWE1	0.880	0.956	0.957	0.963	0.765
	IWE2	0.777				
	IWE3	0.894				
	IWE4	0.876				
	IWE5	0.882				
	IWE6	0.879				
	IWE7	0.911				
	IWE8	0.894				
Job satisfaction (JOS)	JOS1	0.801	0.958	0.962	0.965	0.776
	JOS2	0.830				
	JOS3	0.926				
	JOS4	0.845				
	JOS5	0.874				
	JOS6	0.944				
	JOS7	0.909				
	JOS8	0.907				
Employee engagement (EEG)	EEG1	0.963	0.987	0.987	0.988	0.914
	EEG2	0.955				
	EEG3	0.965				
	EEG4	0.961				
	EEG5	0.951				
	EEG6	0.966				
	EEG7	0.958				
	EEG8	0.931				
Transformational leadership (TFL)	TFL1	0.903	0.961	0.964	0.967	0.787
	TFL2	0.910				
	TFL3	0.921				
	TFL4	0.836				
	TFL5	0.867				





Variables	Items	$\lambda$	Cronbach's $\alpha$	rho_a	CR	AVE
	TFL6	0.896				
	TFL7	0.911				
	TFL8	0.851				

Source: primary data (processed, 2025)

Table 3 shows the findings from the measurement model analysis that all variables in this study satisfy the requirements for convergent validity, internal reliability, and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was evaluated using factor loadings ( $\lambda$ ) and average variance extracted (AVE), where all indicators have  $\lambda$  values above 0.70, indicating that each item strongly contributes to its respective variable. Additionally, all AVE values exceed 0.50, with the highest AVE observed in employee engagement (0.914), demonstrating that the constructs effectively explain the variance of their indicators. Regarding reliability, the outcomes of the Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and composite reliability (CR) tests demonstrate exceptionally high reliability for all variables, with  $\alpha$  values ranging from 0.956 to 0.987 and CR values between 0.957 and 0.988. These results confirm that all constructs exhibit strong internal consistency, ensuring their credibility in measuring the intended concepts. Furthermore, discriminant validity was evaluated using rho\_a, with all values exceeding 0.70, reinforcing that each construct's indicators are strongly correlated and distinct.

Table 4 discriminant validity

Variables	EEG	IWE	JOS	EEG * IWE	EEG * JOS	EEG
Fornell-Larcker Criterion						
EEG	0.956					
IWE	0.518	0.875				
JOS	0.713	0.581	0.881			
EEG * IWE	-0.162	-0.120	-0.005	1.000		
EEG * JOS	-0.233	-0.005	-0.202	0.538	1.000	
EEG	0.597	0.307	0.531	-0.058	-0.299	0.887
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)						
EEG						
IWE	0.531					
JOS	0.730	0.603				
EEG * IWE	0.163	0.122	0.072			
EEG * JOS	0.235	0.048	0.203	0.538		
EEG	0.610	0.320	0.551	0.064	0.303	

Source: primary data (processed, 2025)

Table 4 shows the findings of the discriminant validity test, which confirms that each variable in this research model has a clear conceptual distinction and does not overlap. According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, each variable's average variance extracted (AVE) exceeds its correlations with other variables, indicating strong discriminant validity. For example, employee engagement is 0.956, higher than its correlations with other variables, such as Islamic work ethic (0.518) and job satisfaction (0.713). This suggests that employee engagement is conceptually distinct from the Islamic work ethic and job satisfaction, despite maintaining a significant relationship with them.

Furthermore, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) test results show that all HTMT values are below 0.85, the recommended threshold for good discriminant validity. For example, the HTMT value between Islamic work ethic and job satisfaction is 0.603, indicating that although these variables are moderately correlated, they remain conceptually distinct. Meanwhile, the moderation effect of transformational leadership on the relationship between Islamic work ethic and job satisfaction has a very low HTMT value, suggesting that this

moderating effect operates independently and does not directly influence other variables. Overall, these discriminant validity findings confirm that each variable in this study can be analyzed separately and holds a distinct conceptual meaning. These results also strengthen the function of job satisfaction as a mediating variable, given its strong relationship with employee engagement. Further validate transformational leadership as a moderating variable that enhances the effect of Islamic work ethic on other variables.

Thus, these findings support the robustness of the research model, making it suitable for examining the relationships among Islamic work ethics, transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and employee engagement at Brangkal Printing.

**Table 5 hypothesis results**

Hypothesis	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T-statistics	P-values
H1: IWE → EEG	0.127	0.136	0.122	1.035	0.301
H2: IWE → JOS	0.581	0.584	0.087	6.689	0.000
H3: JOS → EEG	0.484	0.478	0.136	3.560	0.000
H4: TFL → EEG	0.303	0.305	0.102	2.954	0.003
H5: IWE → JOS → EEG	0.281	0.278	0.090	3.109	0.002
H6: IWE * TFL → EEG	-0.140	-0.149	0.103	1.366	0.172
H7: JOS * TFL → EEG	0.033	0.046	0.112	0.298	0.765

Source: primary data (processed, 2025)

Table 5 shows the results of the hypothesis testing that Islamic work ethics do not affect employee engagement ( $\beta = 0.127$ ,  $T = 1.035 < 1.96$ ,  $p = 0.301 > 0.05$ ), not supporting H1. Islamic work ethics positively and significantly affect job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.581$ ,  $T = 6.689 > 1.96$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), supporting H2. Additionally, job satisfaction positively and significantly affects employee engagement ( $\beta = 0.484$ ,  $T = 3.560 > 1.96$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), supporting H3. Similarly, transformational leadership positively and significantly affects employee engagement ( $\beta = 0.303$ ,  $T = 2.954 > 1.96$ ,  $p = 0.003 < 0.05$ ), supporting H4. In the mediation result, job satisfaction can mediate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and employee engagement ( $\beta = 0.281$ ,  $T = 3.109 > 1.96$ ,  $p = 0.002 < 0.05$ ), supporting H5. However, the moderation result indicates that transformational leadership cannot moderate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and employee engagement ( $\beta = -0.140$ ,  $T = 1.366 < 1.96$ ,  $p = 0.172 > 0.05$ ), not supporting H6. Transformational leadership cannot moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement ( $\beta = 0.033$ ,  $T = 0.298 < 1.96$ ,  $p = 0.765 > 0.05$ ), not supporting H7.

**Table 6 determination coefficient and predictive relevance**

Variables	R <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup>
Employee Engagement	0.607	0.385
Job Satisfaction	0.337	0.317

Source: primary data (processed, 2025)

The results of the  $r^2$  and  $q^2$  tests in Table 6 demonstrate that the research model possesses a relatively strong predictive capability in accounting for employee engagement and job satisfaction at Brangkal Printing. The  $r^2$  value for employee engagement is 0.607, indicating that 60.7% of its variation is explained by the independent variables in the model, namely Islamic work ethics, transformational leadership, and job satisfaction. Meanwhile, the  $r^2$  value for job satisfaction is 0.337, which means that 33.7% of its variation is attributed to the model's factors. In comparison, the remaining 66.3% is affected by other variables not examined in this study, such as work environment, compensation, or individual psychological factors.



Additionally, the predictive relevance ( $q^2$ ) test results show that the model has a relatively strong predictive capacity:  $q^2 = 0.385$  for employee engagement.  $q^2 = 0.317$  for job satisfaction. These values suggest that the model not only explains the theoretical relationships between variables but also can forecast future levels of employee engagement and job satisfaction.

However, the higher  $r^2$  value for employee engagement compared to job satisfaction indicates that employee engagement is more strongly influenced by the factors included in this model, whereas job satisfaction may still be affected by external factors not considered in this study.

Table 7 f-square

Variables	EEG	IWE	JOS	EEG * IWE	EEG * JOS	EEG
EEG	0.025		0.509			
JOS	0.296					
EEG * IWE	0.034					
EEG * JOS	0.002					
EEG	0.157					

Source: primary data (processed, 2025)

The effect size ( $f^2$ ) analysis in Table 7 indicates that job satisfaction has the strongest effect on employee engagement ( $f^2 = 0.296$ ). This means that employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to be actively engaged in their tasks and responsibilities. Transformational leadership moderately affects employee engagement ( $f^2 = 0.157$ ). This suggests that an inspiring and supportive leadership style significantly enhances employee motivation and engagement. The Islamic work ethic has a small effect on employee engagement ( $f^2 = 0.025$ ). While Islamic work values remain important, job satisfaction and leadership have a more dominant influence on employee engagement at Brangkal Printing. The moderating influence of transformational leadership on the link between Islamic work ethic and employee engagement is minimal ( $f^2 = 0.034$ ). Its moderating effect on the relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement is nearly insignificant ( $f^2 = 0.002$ ). This suggests that job satisfaction plays a more direct role in increasing employee engagement, without being significantly influenced by transformational leadership as a moderating factor.

#### *Effect Islamic work ethics on employee engagement*

The study's findings reveal that Islamic work ethics do not affect employee engagement, meaning that even when Islamic work ethics are implemented in the workplace, employee engagement does not automatically increase without additional supporting factors. This finding suggests that Islamic work ethics alone are insufficient to enhance employee engagement, as values such as honesty, responsibility, and hard work primarily serve as intrinsic motivation, which needs to be reinforced by other factors such as job satisfaction and inspirational leadership. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Rahmawaty, Ahamed, and Rokhman (2022), which states that job satisfaction acts as the main mediator in the link between Islamic work ethics and employee engagement is job satisfaction, suggesting that employees with strong ethical work values will demonstrate high engagement only when they are satisfied with their jobs. From the Islamic deontological ethics theory perspective, Islamic work ethics emphasize that work is not merely an economic activity but also a form of worship and moral responsibility (Ali and Al-Owaihnan 2008). However, in practical reality, employees still require a supportive work environment, including a fair reward system, transparent organizational policies, and leadership that inspires them to be more engaged. According to the JD-R model, employee engagement tends

to rise when sufficient job resources are available, including organizational support and opportunities for career advancement (Gözükara and Şimşek 2015). Conversely, the study by Zhang et al. (2024) discovered that Islamic work ethics can directly enhance employee engagement, particularly in organizations strongly rooted in Islamic values, where ethical norms are deeply embedded in corporate culture. This discrepancy may be due to differences in organizational context and work culture, where in workplaces that do not explicitly adopt Islamic values, the impact of work ethics on engagement requires additional reinforcement from job satisfaction and effective leadership. This finding implies that organizations implementing Islamic work ethics must integrate ethical values with other strategies, such as improving job satisfaction through a fair work environment and clear reward systems, as well as strengthening the role of transformational leadership to ensure that Islamic work ethics are strongly linked to employee engagement.

#### *Effect Islamic work ethics on job satisfaction*

The study findings show that Islamic work ethics positively affect job satisfaction, suggesting that as the implementation of Islamic work ethics in an organization increases, so does the level of employee job satisfaction. This finding suggests that honesty, responsibility, hard work, and discipline create a more ethical, fair, and meaningful work environment, ultimately enhancing job satisfaction. This result aligns with studies by Aflah et al. (2021), which found that organizations implementing Islamic ethical principles tend to have higher job satisfaction levels, as employees feel valued and experience greater psychological well-being. From the perspective of Herzberg's two-factor theory, job satisfaction is influenced by intrinsic motivators such as meaning in work, recognition of efforts, and achievement (Aungsuroch et al. 2024). In this context, Islamic work ethics act as an intrinsic motivational factor, as employees who view their work as a form of worship and a moral obligation are more likely to be more satisfied with their jobs. Additionally, in the JD-R model, job satisfaction serves as a job resource that reduces stress and enhances employees' psychological well-being (Gözükara and Şimşek 2015). However, some studies present different findings. Hashemizadeh et al. (2023) found that Islamic work ethics do not always lead to higher job satisfaction, especially in organizations where work systems do not consistently support the application of ethical values. Furthermore, Halbusi et al. (2022) emphasized that in some highly competitive industries, external factors such as salary, incentives, and career opportunities have a greater impact on job satisfaction than ethical work values. These differing results suggest that organizational context and corporate culture are crucial in determining how Islamic work ethics can enhance job satisfaction. Therefore, organizations aiming to improve job satisfaction should consistently integrate Islamic work ethics into company policies, organizational culture, and employee interactions while ensuring that the work environment fosters employee well-being and career growth. The implications of these results emphasize the significance of integrating Islamic work ethics into organizational strategies, particularly in faith-based or ethically driven workplaces. Organizations can leverage these values to improve employee morale, trust, and overall job satisfaction by embedding ethical principles into company policies, leadership practices, and day-to-day operations. However, the effective application of Islamic work ethics necessitates consistency in work systems and a supportive environment. Furthermore, while emphasizing moral values, organizations should address external motivational factors such as fair compensation and career development. By adopting a holistic approach, companies can create a workplace culture that is ethical and promotes sustainable employee well-being and motivation.



### *Effect of job satisfaction on employee engagement*

The study findings reveal that job satisfaction positively affects employee engagement, implying that as job satisfaction increases, so does the level of employee engagement within the organization. This suggests that employees who are content with their jobs are more likely to be motivated, emotionally connected to their work, and willing to contribute more actively. Conversely, employees with low job satisfaction are less likely to be engaged, may experience burnout, and are more prone to seeking employment elsewhere. This result aligns with studies by Ystaas et al. (2023); Zhang et al. (2024), which found that job satisfaction is strongly correlated with employee engagement and organizational commitment, reinforcing the idea that satisfied employees are more likely to stay committed and engaged in their work. Additionally, Judge and Bono (2001) confirmed that high job satisfaction enhances employee motivation and engagement, as satisfied employees feel valued and perceive their work as meaningful. The JD-R model clarifies this relationship by stating that job satisfaction acts as a crucial job resource that increases engagement when employees have adequate workplace support, fair compensation, and career development opportunities (Gözükara and Şimşek 2015). However, some studies present different findings. Halbusi et al. (2022) argued that job satisfaction does not always directly increase engagement, especially in high-stress environments or workplaces with weak organizational support. Similarly, Mayer et al. (2018) found that some employees who are content with their jobs may not always be highly engaged, particularly if they feel unchallenged or lack opportunities for growth. These variations highlight the importance of additional factors, such as leadership support, career development, and workplace culture, in strengthening the job satisfaction-engagement link. Based on these findings, organizations should prioritize job satisfaction as a key driver of employee engagement by creating a supportive work environment, implementing fair compensation policies, providing career growth opportunities, and fostering transformational leadership. This approach ensures employees feel satisfied, highly engaged, and committed to their roles. The implications of these findings emphasize that organizations should treat job satisfaction not only as a goal but as a strategic foundation for enhancing employee engagement. Ensuring job satisfaction through transparent communication, employee recognition, fair compensation, and professional development can foster a deeper emotional connection between employees and their work. Furthermore, organizations should go beyond merely improving working conditions and actively cultivate a culture of continuous growth and transformational leadership to sustain long-term engagement. Organizations can cultivate a motivated, loyal, and high-performing workforce by recognizing and addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic factors of job satisfaction.

### *Effect of transformational leadership on employee engagement*

The study findings show that transformational leadership positively affects employee engagement, suggesting that the more transformational leadership is implemented within an organization, the higher the level of employee engagement. This finding highlights that leaders who inspire, provide clear direction, and encourage individual development can enhance employee motivation and foster greater engagement. Transformational leadership, defined by inspiration, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, is essential in fostering a positive work environment that motivates employees to be more engaged in their tasks. This result aligns with the study by Qalati et al. (2022), which discovered that transformational leadership directly enhances employee motivation, ultimately leading to higher engagement levels. Similarly, Gözükara and Şimşek (2015) emphasized that transformational leaders create a clear vision, build emotional connections with employees, and strengthen their commitment and engagement with the organization. From the perspective of charismatic leadership theory, leaders with strong vision, personal



appeal, and effective communication skills can inspire employees to work with higher dedication and commitment (Mhatre and Riggio 2014). Additionally, in the JD-R model, transformational leadership acts as a job resource, providing emotional and motivational support that enhances employee engagement (Gözükara and Şimşek 2015). In real-world organizational settings, workplaces led by transformational leaders tend to have more dynamic and innovative cultures, where employees feel appreciated, motivated, and aligned with the organization's mission. However, some studies present contrasting findings. He et al. (2020) found that transformational leadership does not always significantly impact engagement, particularly in high-turnover industries where external factors such as compensation and career progression dominate. Additionally, Prudenzi et al. (2024) suggested that in some cases, transformational leadership can create excessive pressure on employees, especially when leaders set overly high expectations, potentially leading to stress and disengagement. These differences highlight the need for balanced leadership approaches that consider motivation and employee well-being. Based on these findings, organizations should focus on leadership development programs to cultivate transformational leadership skills, foster a supportive and innovation-driven work culture, and ensure that leadership practices align with employee needs and organizational goals. By doing so, companies can enhance employee engagement, increase motivation, and create a more committed workforce.

*Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between islamic work ethics and employee engagement*

The study results indicate that job satisfaction can mediate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and employee engagement, suggesting that Islamic work ethics do not directly enhance employee engagement but rather do so through increased job satisfaction. This finding implies that honesty, responsibility, and hard work contribute to a more ethical and meaningful work environment. However, they alone cannot drive employee engagement unless employees feel satisfied with their jobs. This result aligns with studies by Gheitani et al. (2019), which found that job satisfaction is a crucial mediator between work ethics and employee engagement, particularly in organizations that emphasize religious values. Similarly, Alkandi et al. (2023) highlighted that job satisfaction is essential in connecting workplace culture to employee engagement. According to Herzberg's two-factor theory, job satisfaction arises from intrinsic motivators such as recognition, achievement, and meaningful work, while Islamic work ethics contribute to these factors by instilling a sense of purpose (Laeheem 2018). Additionally, in the JD-R framework, job satisfaction acts as a critical job resource, helping employees develop a deeper emotional and cognitive connection to their work (Gözükara and Şimşek 2015). Many organizations that emphasize ethical work values still struggle to increase engagement, as employees may not feel adequately supported in terms of recognition, fair rewards, or a balance of work. Thus, job satisfaction is the bridge connecting ethical work values to employee engagement. However, Hashemizadeh et al. (2023) found that in organizations with deeply embedded Islamic values, Islamic work ethics can directly enhance employee engagement without requiring job satisfaction as a mediator, suggesting that the role of job satisfaction may vary depending on organizational culture. Based on these findings, organizations should prioritize job satisfaction as a key strategy for increasing employee engagement by implementing fair reward systems, supportive leadership, and policies that promote employee well-being. By doing so, companies can ensure that ethical values are effectively translated into higher employee commitment and engagement.



### *Transformational leadership moderates the relationship between islamic work ethics and employee engagement*

The study findings show that transformational leadership cannot moderate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and employee engagement. This indicates that although transformational leadership is vital in boosting employee engagement, it does not notably strengthen the connection between Islamic work ethics and engagement. The result suggests that employees with strong Islamic work ethics already possess high intrinsic motivation, making transformational leadership less impactful in enhancing their engagement. This aligns with the study by Marnoto, Supardi, and Soegiarto (2024), which found that transformational leadership has a reduced influence in workplaces with deeply embedded ethical values because employees are already driven by their moral and spiritual principles. Similarly, Qalati et al. (2022) highlighted that the effectiveness of transformational leadership depends heavily on organizational context and culture, suggesting that in organizations with a strong ethical foundation, leadership may not play a significant role in engagement. From the Islamic deontological ethics theory perspective, employees who adhere to Islamic work ethics are already guided by moral responsibility, integrity, and dedication, reducing their reliance on external leadership for motivation (Ali and Al-Owaihnan 2008). Additionally, in the JD-R framework, while leadership is generally considered a key job resource, employees with strong intrinsic motivation may already have high engagement levels, making additional leadership influence less significant (Gözükara and Şimşek 2015). Many Islamic-based organizations foster high employee engagement through organizational culture rather than leadership style, as employees view their work as an act of worship and responsibility toward Allah. However, contrasting research by Bader, Gielnik, and Bledow (2023) found that transformational leadership can still enhance engagement by providing vision and fostering collaboration, even in value-driven organizations. Similarly, Prudenzi et al. (2024) suggested that transformational leadership plays a moderating role in culturally diverse workplaces, where employees may have varying levels of adherence to ethical work values. These differences highlight that the moderating effect of transformational leadership may be context dependent. Based on these findings, organizations should focus more on strengthening ethical work culture and employee well-being rather than relying solely on transformational leadership to enhance engagement. Additionally, leadership strategies should be adapted to organizational needs, ensuring that leadership styles align with existing workplace values to maximize engagement.

### *Transformational leadership moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement*

The study findings show that transformational leadership cannot moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement. This implies that although transformational leadership directly contributes to increased employee engagement, it does not notably amplify the effect of job satisfaction on engagement. The finding implies that job satisfaction alone is already a strong determinant of employee engagement, making the additional influence of transformational leadership less significant. This aligns with the study by Fajar, Sanusi, and Arifin (2024), which found that transformational leadership does not significantly strengthen engagement levels in organizations with high job satisfaction. Similarly, Qalati et al. (2022) emphasized that the effectiveness of transformational leadership is highly context-dependent, particularly about the current levels of job satisfaction within an organization. From the viewpoint of Herzberg's two-factor theory, job satisfaction stems from intrinsic motivators like recognition, achievement, and meaningful work, which are already enough to drive engagement without additional leadership influence (Aungsuroch et al. 2024). Furthermore, in the JD-R model, job satisfaction acts as a core job resource, directly



fostering employee engagement by providing emotional and psychological well-being (Gözükara and Şimşek 2015). Many organizations with high employee satisfaction report strong engagement levels even without transformational leadership, especially when work-life balance, fair compensation, and professional growth opportunities are well-established. However, some studies present contrasting views. Bader, Gielnik, and Bledow (2023) found that transformational leadership can enhance the job satisfaction-engagement relationship, particularly in organizations facing structural challenges or undergoing change. Similarly, Prudenzi et al. (2024) suggested that transformational leadership plays a key role in maintaining engagement, even among satisfied employees in dynamic and competitive workplaces. These variations imply that the moderating effect of transformational leadership is more relevant in unstable work environments or organizations with lower baseline satisfaction. Based on these findings, organizations should prioritize job satisfaction as the primary driver of employee engagement, focusing on fair compensation, well-being policies, and career development opportunities, rather than relying solely on transformational leadership as a moderating factor. Additionally, leadership strategies should be adapted to organizational needs, ensuring that transformational leadership is applied effectively where it is most impactful.

## Conclusions

This study reveals that Islamic work ethics positively affect job satisfaction, which boosts employee engagement, but their direct influence on employee engagement is not significant, emphasizing the mediating role of job satisfaction. Furthermore, while transformational leadership directly and significantly affects employee engagement, it does not moderate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and engagement, nor between job satisfaction and engagement. These findings suggest that Islamic work ethics contribute to a positive work environment and improve job satisfaction, but their influence on employee engagement is indirect. Meanwhile, transformational leadership effectively drives employee engagement but does not amplify the effects of ethical values or job satisfaction, indicating that other contextual factors may shape these relationships.

Theoretically, this study reinforces Islamic work ethics theory by demonstrating its role in enhancing job satisfaction. It supports the idea that honesty, responsibility, and discipline strengthen intrinsic motivation. It also contributes to employee engagement theory by emphasizing that job satisfaction is a key driver of engagement, highlighting the need for organizations to improve employee well-being to foster commitment. Furthermore, it provides new insights into transformational leadership theory, showing that transformational leadership is more effective as a direct influence on employee engagement rather than as a moderating factor, especially in ethically grounded workplaces. Practically, organizations can enhance employee engagement by integrating Islamic work ethics into corporate culture through training and ethical leadership, implementing fair reward systems and work-life balance policies to improve job satisfaction, optimizing transformational leadership through inspiration and inclusive leadership, providing career development opportunities, and fostering effective communication and collaboration. By adopting these strategies, companies can cultivate a highly engaged workforce, enhance productivity, and improve employee retention, contributing to long-term organizational success.

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations, such as its cross-sectional design that does not track long-term engagement trends, limited generalizability due to data collection from a single company (Brangkal Printing), potential bias in self-reported data, and the exclusion of external factors such as economic conditions and broader organizational culture. Future research should consider longitudinal studies to examine engagement over time, expanding research across various industries, exploring additional moderation and





mediating variables such as organizational culture and leadership communication styles, and incorporating qualitative methods for deeper insights into how ethical values and leadership shape engagement. By addressing these gaps, future research can provide more comprehensive strategies for organizations to enhance Employee Engagement through ethical work values and leadership excellence.

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