

Exploring Workplace Happiness: Islamic Leadership and Work Ethics Driving Engagement and Helping Behaviour


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Abstract

Leadership and work ethics, particularly Islamic or faith-based, are crucial indicators of employees' well-being and work engagement. It increases helping behaviour through motivation and satisfaction levels achieved from a supportive work environment. The research aim is to examine the influence of Islamic leadership and Islamic work ethics on helping behaviour and work engagement through happiness at work to verify this phenomenon, data has been collected from 320 employees working with Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) across central Java, Indonesia. All question items from all variables are said to be valid with a value of more than 0.7 and reliable with a value of more than 0.5. This is quantitative design research where a convenience sampling technique was employed. Statistical analysis was done through SmartPLS, revealing a direct relationship among all study variables, such as Islamic leadership, to helping behaviours and work engagement. Additionally, the study identified a direct relationship between Islamic work ethics and helping behaviours, except for a link with work engagement; similarly, employees' happiness at the workplace acts as a mediator in this study. The hypothesis is accepted because the significance value is more than 1.97. While previous studies have examined workplace happiness and engagement broadly, limited attention has been paid to the role of faith-based leadership and ethics within SMEs in culturally diverse settings like Central Java, Indonesia. This study offers a novel perspective by discussing the pivotal role of Islamic leadership and Islamic work ethics in shaping workplace dynamics, particularly helping behaviour and engagement through happiness.

Article Information:

Received 2024-08-16

Revised 2024-11-16

Published 2025-01-08

Keywords:

Helping Behaviour, Islamic Leadership, Islamic Work Ethics, Work Engagement, Workplace Happiness

INTRODUCTION

Employees with positive work behaviors are assets to the organization. Islamic leadership, which is derived from Islamic teachings, plays a crucial role in shaping the work environment. Leaders incorporating Islamic values are likely to instill employee motivation and satisfaction that fosters commitment and work engagement (Meiyani & Putra, 2019). Values embedded in Islamic leadership may cultivate an engaging and supportive work culture. According to the 2023 World Happiness Report, Indonesia ranks 84th out of 150 countries,

How to cite:

Rokhman, W., Atieq, M. Q., Ahamed, F., Nasir, S. Z., & Shahid, S. (2025). Exploring Workplace Happiness: Islamic Leadership and Work Ethics Driving Engagement and Helping Behaviour. *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.25217/0020258558400>

E-ISSN:

2614-1566

Published by:

Institut Agama Islam Ma'arif NU (IAIMNU) Metro Lampung

indicating a varied state of well-being among the population. Research on happiness is still emerging in Indonesia, with many of the current studies just beginning to examine the factors that impact happiness across various settings, including family, school, and workplace. Human resources are acknowledged as critical to organizational success and require effective management to maximize productivity. Leadership plays an important role in fostering a positive work atmosphere that enhances employees' performance and complies with the organization's objectives (Khaddam et al., 2023).

Numerous studies found that employee happiness was supported by work engagement, helping behaviour, job satisfaction, job involvement, commitment, positive emotions, motivation and compensation. Alternatively, happiness at work will decrease due to the amount of stress, anxiety, depression, and excessive pressure (Maham et al., 2020). Happiness in Islam, called al-Sa'adah, is God's blessing given to every human being through doing good and not evil deeds (Wahab, 2022). The philosopher Al-Farabi highlighted that happiness is achieved in life when there is an absence of problems both in personal and work spheres. Happiness, in this way, extends beyond personal satisfaction and fulfillment to influence broader organizational productivity by promoting a positive work culture (Aboramadan & Dahleez, 2020).

On the other side, unhappiness in employees may lead to adverse outcomes like heightened stress, dissatisfaction, and lack of commitment, which may hinder overall organizational performance (Butt et al., 2019; Soroya et al., 2022; Wesarat et al., 2014). However, some studies suggest that extreme happiness can increase the chances of interpersonal deviance (Kim & Choi, 2023), and such deviant behaviors, though often individually driven, can ultimately affect overall organizational productivity (Appelbaum et al., 2007; Astuti et al., 2020). Therefore, promoting a balanced sense of happiness may help reduce workplace deviations (Bhattacharjee & Bhattacharjee, 2010).

Furthermore, Mathews (2012) it states that there are several determinants of individual happiness at work, including leadership behavior, personal characteristics, organizational trust, job satisfaction, and employees' health status. Meanwhile Harry & Gallie (2019) identified a positive and significant relationship between employee performance and happiness in the workplace. They also stated that every change in employee performance is influenced by employee happiness in the workplace itself.

Good leadership can have a direct impact on the behaviour of employees, which leads to their happiness at work. Among others, Islamic leadership is one of the most effective leadership styles that can influence employee happiness at work and indirectly increase employee engagement (Meiyani & Putra, 2019). Research conducted by various researchers on work engagement revealed that Islamic work ethics have a positive relationship with work engagement (Salmabadi et al., 2015). Numerous studies have confirmed that Islamic work ethics can positively influence work engagement in an organization and is a cornerstone for enhancing employee engagement levels (Tufail, 2022).

Esat et al. (2021) and Sholihin et al. (2022) in their studies examined how religiosity may link with happiness, highlighting that cultural context, such as gender, can influence and moderate this linkage. Adriani & Yufi (2018) research explores the relationship between religiosity and happiness in Muslim youth in Indonesia. Using 12 Muslim youths in Jakarta, this study found differences in youth perceptions of the meaning of happiness. This study found that happiness among young Muslims is not primarily influenced by religion but by the ability or capacity to deal with stress. Similarly, Jaafar et al. (2012) identified in their study that happiness is highly influenced by family as well as community well-being than by individual accomplishments for Malaysians and Indonesians.

Islamic work ethics further reinforce collective values that promote a sense of happiness. The practice of Islamic work ethics in an organization can instigate creativity and innovation (Aflah et al., 2021), improving job performance. Meanwhile, Islamic work ethics are

individually influential and can increase engagement and performance at work (Tufail, 2022). Qasim et al. (2021) also supported the results of previous research, which concluded that Islamic work ethics are a strong predictor of performance. Employees with robust emotional and psychological adherence to Islamic work ethics are likely to perform at their work with high dedication, which will eventually influence their overall performance and well-being at their workplace (Qasim et al., 2021).

According to Bakker et al. (2023), engagement is recognized as a primary indicator of performance, with many organizations increasingly viewing it as a strategy for improving productivity. Engaged employees foster both loyalty and creativity by exhibiting dedication and enthusiasm (Afsar et al., 2018; Gupta & Shaheen, 2017; Joplin et al., 2019). On the other hand, stress, excessive work pressure, and anxiety can undermine organizational engagement (Fisher, 2010; Maham et al., 2020). Hence, promoting a culture of happiness at the workplace can indirectly enhance employees' engagement levels, thus improving employee retention (Gulyani & Sharma, 2018; Mehta, 2021). The framework of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB), grounded in social exchange theory, supports this research and focuses on examining helping behaviours that exceed formal job duties (Moorman, 1991; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This study investigates how Islamic leadership and work ethics promote the development of OCB and employee engagement in the organization by drawing on the social exchange theory.

This research seeks to fill gaps in the existing literature by concentrating on happiness among millennial Muslim employees, a group that has not received much scholarly attention and is under-researched. This study expands its scope to include SMEs, recognizing their significant role in economic development. Moreover, this study also enriches the literature on Islamic management practices by exploring principles of Islamic leadership, work engagement, and work ethics through an Islamic lens. Notable, it investigates happiness as a mediator between Islamic leadership and employee engagement at the workplace, which offers deeper insights into the relationship within Muslim communities.

This research offers significant novelty by linking the concepts of Islamic leadership and Islamic work ethics to helping behaviour, work engagement, and happiness at work as mediators. Specifically, the post-pandemic recovery period demands a deeper understanding of how such constructs influence workplace behaviours and happiness. Different from the previous, this study explores how Islamic values act as work and personal resources in improving employee performance. In the context of JD-R Theory Bakker et al. (2023) Demerouti et al. (2001), Islamic leadership functions as a job resource that creates a positive work environment through support and inspiration, while Islamic work ethics becomes a personal resource that strengthens employees' responsibility and integrity.

Happiness at work acts as a mediator that helps employees manage work demands, thus motivating work engagement and pro-social behaviours such as helping colleagues. The practical implications of this research include the development of Islamic leadership training, the implementation of an organizational culture based on Islamic ethics, and welfare programs that support employee happiness. Thus, organizations can improve productivity, work engagement, and employee retention through an approach that blends spiritual values and modern management.

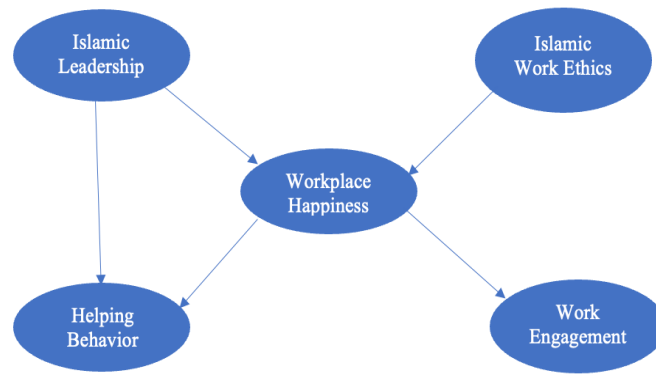


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework – Relationship Between Constructs

Literature review

JD-R (Job Demand Resources) Theory

The Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the impact of workplace demands and resources on employee performance and their (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The JD-R theory is particularly pertinent in SMEs, where workplace happiness is crucial for promoting behaviours, such as helping others and work engagement. This theory categorizes workplace factors into two main categories: job demand, which includes aspects like emotional stress, workload, and role conflict, and job resource, which encompass support, growth opportunities, and autonomy (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Van Veldhoven et al., 2019).

JD-R framework adaptability across various cultural and organizational contexts highlights its applicability to multidimensional constructs such as workplace happiness, which is fundamentally influenced by Islamic leadership and ethical frameworks in this research. For instance, Islamic work ethics that emphasize accountability, cooperation, and community well-being serve as distinctive job resources that can reduce stress and foster helping behaviors, ultimately enhancing overall well-being and greater workplace engagement. These values create a strong sense of shared purpose and enhance employee intrinsic motivation. Job resources like collaborative culture and ethical leadership increase engagement by meeting basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

This leadership encourages behaviours that reinforce satisfaction and positive emotions in the workplace (Ali & Al-Owaidan, 2008). This leadership reduces the negative impact of job demands by fostering psychological safety, trust, and emotional well-being among employees (Ali & Weir, 2005). Islamic leadership reduces job demands by providing clear communication, ensuring fairness, and addressing conflicts in a constructive manner. Hence, employees are less likely to experience interpersonal conflicts or role ambiguity (Ahmed et al., 2019). Similarly, following Islamic work ethics reduces emotional labor by promoting a sense of mutual support and community among colleagues, which reduces the emotional burden associated with demanding roles.

Moreover, as conceptualized in this study, workplace happiness acts as a mediator in the JD-R framework. When the environment is perceived as resource-rich by the employees in terms of supportive leadership and ethical practices, they tend to experience greater workplace happiness. The positive emotional state promotes helping behaviours and, over time, maintains high levels of engagement (van Wingerden et al., 2016).

JD-R theory, initially derived from literature on burnout and engagement, has evolved to incorporate insights from job design and motivation theories, allowing for a better understanding of the impact of job demand and resources on employee engagement and job

performance in diverse organizational settings (Demerouti et al., 2001). The flexibility of the JD-R framework across various cultural and organizational landscapes emphasizes its relevance to this study. By embedding Islamic leadership values and work ethics, this study offers comprehensive insights into how culturally grounded job resources can reduce workplace demands and nurture a motivated and engaged workforce. This aligns well with the growing advocacy to conceptualize leadership and ethical practices to address the unique challenges faced by SMEs.

Workplace Happiness

Salas-Vallina & Alegre (2018) stated that happiness in the workplace has dimensions, namely job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work engagement. Kesebir & Diener (2008) highlighted several important components of happiness, including life satisfaction, job satisfaction, health, marriage, positive emotional mood, and low negative emotions. A happy employee creates a positive and supportive workplace environment, which, in addition to enhancing their own skills and productivity, also contributes to overall organizational success by encouraging engagement and active participation in various organizational activities (Aboramadan & Dahleez, 2020). According to the research findings, a happy employee has the potential to be twice as productive and has six times more energy compared to others. In addition, employees will tend to be creative and innovative in completing various organizational tasks and will survive well. To summarise, the broaden-and-build positive emotion theory (BnB) clearly explains that positive emotions, such as joy and happiness, will impact self-confidence and motivation and reduce pessimism (Fredrickson, 2013).

Helping behaviour

Helping behavior that is fundamentally linked to organizational behavior theory is defined as a voluntary act not directly linked to formal job rewards (Bies & Organ, 1989). This aligns with the OCB framework, particularly the dimension named altruism, which emphasizes selfless support to coworkers (Smith et al., 1983). Such helping behaviors are crucial for internal organizational dynamics, as they improve team cohesion and ensure smooth operational processes (Chou & Stauffer, 2016).

Helping behaviour, being viewed as a multidimensional construct, includes both task and emotional support at the workplace. Employees displaying such behaviours assist colleagues in overcoming work-related difficulties and creating an environment of collaboration, ultimately contributing to the achievement of individual and group objectives, leading to a cycle of reciprocity where cooperation and collaboration flourish (Li & Chen, 2010).

Moreover, employees who contribute to the well-being of others by helping them often experience psychological benefits such as a sense of fulfillment, purpose, and joy. This understanding of various dimensions of helping behaviors can offer organizations a deeper insight into the factors that promote employee engagement in discretionary, supportive actions (Chou & Stauffer, 2016).

Islamic Work Ethics

Islamic work ethics fundamentally originated from the Quran and Sunnah's teachings, as well as the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), which emphasize hard work as the main component of success in both personal and professional realms. This concept is defined as a moral framework that assists individuals in distinguishing between right and wrong within the Islamic context and values (Yousef, 2001). Islamic work ethics is a term rooted in Max Weber's theory of work ethics, which concentrates on the connection between economic and religious behaviour. Recent studies have expanded this concept to capture Islamic ethical principles, mainly in business contexts (Umar et al., 2014). Salahudin et al. (2016) Salahudin et al. (2016)

Islamic work ethics demonstrate a balanced and comprehensive approach to work ethics based on divine commands that identify ethical behaviors within a workplace environment.

Islamic work ethics, at its core, include values that greatly influence individual workplace behaviour. These values comprise dedication, enthusiasm, hard work, creativity, perseverance, responsibility, and cooperation (Al-Douri et al., 2020). Altogether, these values form a multidimensional construct of Islamic work ethics, which reflect both extrinsic behaviours and intrinsic motivations leading toward positive workplace dynamics.

Several Muslim researchers have emphasized the importance and positive impact of Islamic work ethics on employee engagement, encouraging adherence to such work ethics as it can help promote collaboration among employees and reinforce diligence in professional duties (Murtaza et al., 2014). A recent study conducted by Zia et al. (2022) found that Islamic business ethics plays a significant role in the workplace and improves the quality of life and individual behaviour. The quality-of-life links Islamic work ethics with individual behaviours, such as innovation and citizenship.

While principles of Islamic work ethics show similarities with some of those found in Judaism and Christianity, the unique characteristic of Islam emphasizes the importance of the intention behind each action rather than the results alone. This intention behind action is essential, as any action perceived as detrimental is considered unacceptable within the ethical framework.

Therefore, Islamic work ethics serve as an important motivator for engaging in voluntary behaviours that enhance the desire to support and cooperate with others. This eventually facilitates effective task execution, contributing to workplace happiness (Yousef, 2001). The investigation of these multidimensional aspects of Islamic work ethics is crucial for comprehending how they influence individuals' behaviour and contribute to creating a supportive and nurturing work environment in SMEs.

Islamic Leadership

Islamic leadership, grounded in the Qur'an and hadith is an approach that emphasizes Allah's pleasure as the ultimate goal, refining leaders' behaviours to embody values of moral accountability. Islamic leadership goes beyond mere organizational objectives through directing, guiding, and supporting individuals in a positive and constructive manner that promotes a sense of responsibility for societal benefit and collective welfare (Abdallah et al., 2019). The Islamic leadership's multidimensional nature encompasses both spiritual and worldly dimensions, integrating ethical actions as well as spiritual intelligence.

The efficacy of leadership in the workplace cannot be isolated from spiritual principles (Pandia et al., 2023). This approach has a dual focus: encouraging organizational success while upholding spiritual and ethical values from the Qur'an and Sunnah. Hence, Islamic leadership integrates spiritual indicators such as altruistic love, vision, faith, and hope (Zaim et al., 2022). These indicators form the multidimensional basis of Islamic leadership, which reflects a balanced approach aligning divine principles with practical leadership behaviours. By upholding and practicing these values, Islamic leadership seeks to embed ethical standards in the workplace, directing leaders to motivate and inspire followers through determination and moral obligations.

Islamic leadership (IL) was chosen as a focus in this study due to its discrete framework embedded in Islamic principles, which contrasts with more universal spiritual leadership paradigms. Egel & Fry (2016) argue that Islamic leadership is uniquely based in the teachings of the Qur'an, the sunnah, and the practices of the Prophet Muhammad. This prospect indicates that Islamic leadership needs a specialized understanding tied closely to religious standards, which cannot be fully captured by spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003). Unlike spiritual leadership, which may have distinctive applications across different religious perspectives, Islamic

leadership clearly integrates values and principles specific to Islam. Thus, using Islamic leadership in this study allows for a more precise exploration of leadership practices grounded in Islamic principles.

Islamic leadership and work ethics advance immediate workplace happiness by establishing an inclusive, values-driven culture that supports with employees' moral beliefs (Zaim et al., 2022). Leaders display fairness, empathy, and integrity, promising trust and team cohesion. The work and personal values alignment of work boosts motivation and satisfaction. This ethical approach decreases stressors and develops a sense of purpose, leading to a positive work situation without requiring long adjustment periods to generate happiness and engagement.

Work Engagement

The concept of work engagement, related to employee attitudes at work, especially to their attachment and organizational commitment to the concept of work engagement, has been widely explained by several researchers. Work engagement focuses more on emotions and behaviour in actively carrying out roles and tasks in a job (Guo et al., 2021). Truss et al. (2013) explained work engagement as a behaviour determined by the extent to which people use their physical, cognitive, and emotional degrees to demonstrate their roles. According to experts, work engagement has several terms, namely personal/individual engagement, role engagement, and employee engagement. It is a relationship between employees and leaders in the organization, directly and indirectly influencing employees' behaviour and performance.

Another opinion states that work engagement is a sense of belonging to an employee or worker with the organization and can make workers do something beyond their capabilities to give the best for their performance and organizational goals (Suryaningrum et al., 2019). Work engagement is extremely important for an organization to achieve its goals. Thus, organizational leaders must develop strategies to increase their engagement with the organization. To further strengthen the assumption, Bakker et al. (2023) it was stated that work engagement is one of the most important components to boost employee performance, organizational performance, and leaders' participation.

Research Hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to see how the variables of Islamic leadership and Islamic work ethics affect the variables of helping behaviour and work engagement. Furthermore, an analysis is conducted to determine whether the variable of happiness at work as a mediator has an impact on the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Based on the description, the research hypothesis is:

- H₁: Workplace happiness has a positive and significant effect on work engagement.
- H₂: Workplace happiness has a positive and significant effect on helping behaviour.
- H₃: Islamic leadership has a positive and significant effect on helping behaviour.
- H₄: Islamic leadership has a positive and significant effect on work engagement.
- H₅: Islamic leadership has a positive and significant effect on workplace happiness.
- H₆: Islamic work ethics has a positive and significant effect on helping behaviour.
- H₇: Islamic work ethics has a positive and significant effect on work engagement.
- H₈: Islamic work ethics has a positive and significant effect on workplace happiness.
- H₉: Islamic leadership has a positive and significant effect on work engagement, which is mediated by workplace happiness.
- H₁₀: Islamic leadership has a positive and significant effect on helping behaviour which is mediated by workplace happiness.
- H₁₁: Islamic work ethics has a positive and significant effect on work engagement, which is mediated by workplace happiness.

H₁₂: Islamic work ethics has a positive and significant effect on helping behaviour which is mediated by workplace happiness.

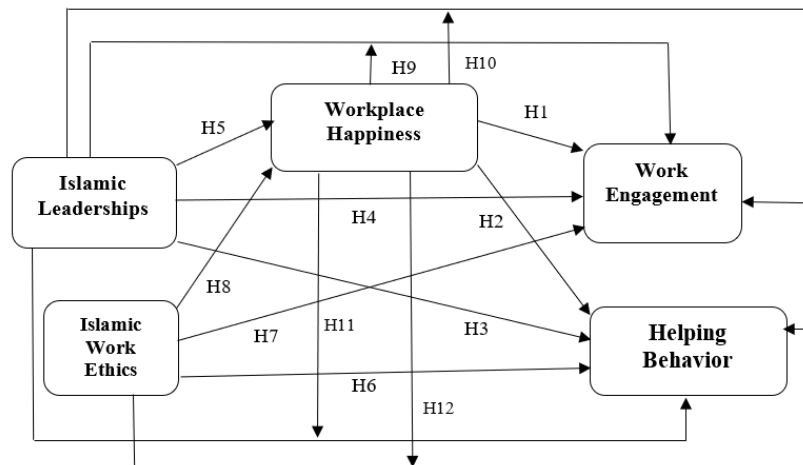


Figure 2. Theoretical model

METHODS

Sample and Data Collection

This type of research is field research using a quantitative approach. It is a survey-based study in which research has been conducted by taking samples directly from the population to find relationships among the study variables. Meanwhile, judging from the scope of the types of scientific explanations produced in the research, this is causal research, which aims to find an answer in the form of a causal relationship between several concepts or variables developed in the study through hypothesis testing.

The population in this study were all MSMEs in Central Java. In connection with the relatively large number of populations and the limited time of the study, this study used a sample from the population. The selection of respondents in Central Java is based on districts that have a large number of workers in MSMEs such as Jepara, Kudus, Banyumas, Pekalongan, Semarang, and several other cities and districts. Data from these districts can serve as a basis for local governments to design policies that focus more on developing the MSME sector, such as providing incentives, skills training, and business capital assistance. In addition, this research can help identify the specific challenges faced by MSME workers in the region so that proposed solutions can be more relevant and effective.

The technique used in determining the sample is accidental sampling. The number of respondents who participated in this study was 350 Muslim employees of MSMEs in Central Java. To obtain research data, a research instrument in the form of a questionnaire was distributed to Employees of MSMEs in Central Java who were the research subjects. The procedures of this research involved several systematic steps. First, the research began with the preparation and design of the study, where the research objectives and hypotheses were clearly formulated based on a thorough literature review. This was followed by identifying the population, which included all MSMEs in Central Java, and selecting a sample from this population using the accidental sampling method due to time constraints and the large size of the population. A sample of 350 has been appropriate based on other research using similar research inquiry and research design (Ahmed et al., 2019; Rhemtulla et al., 2012). The next step involved the design and validation of the research instrument a questionnaire specifically tailored to measure the variables in question.

Subsequently, data collection was conducted by distributing the questionnaire directly to the respondents, targeting employees of MSMEs in Central Java who were available at the time

of data collection. During this stage, clear instructions were provided to respondents to ensure the reliability of the data collected. After the data collection phase, the collected data was then organized and entered into a statistical software program for analysis.

The analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses and to determine the causal relationships among the variables, aligning with the research's causal design. Finally, the research concludes with an interpretation of the findings, leading to insights on the causal relationships between the variables under study and implications for MSMEs in Central Java. The results were documented and analyzed for further discussion, providing a comprehensive explanation of the causal relationships explored in the study.

Out of the 350 questionnaires distributed, there were 320 valid responses obtained. As for the basic information of the respondents in Table 1, the majority of respondents are women, as much as 54 percent; the rest are male employees. In terms of age, the majority of respondents were between 21 and 30 years old, about 52 percent of the respondents, followed by 83 employees aged under 20 years. Regarding the educational level of the participants, as many as 68 percent of respondents have a senior high school education, followed by 17 percent who have a university education, and the rest have as low education as secondary school.

As regards organizational tenure, the majority worked for 1 to 2 years, as much as 58 percent; the rest were above 3 years. Meanwhile, the enterprises that the respondent worked for were mainly in manufacturing at 32%, 21% in restaurants/retail while 16% worked in the convection field, and the rest in education, medical, services, and others. As for the salary, 49 percent earn between IDR 1 to 2 million, followed by less than 1 million earned by 14 percent of them and 2 to 5 million by 33 percent, while the remaining earned more than 5 million. About the number of employees in businesses where the majority of respondents work in small

Table 1. Demographics-Profile of Respondent

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender			Salary (Million Rupiah)		
Male	148	46 %	Less Than 1 million	46	14 %
Female	172	54 %	1 – 2	158	49 %
Total	320		2 – 5	104	33 %
			More Than 5 million	12	4 %
			Total	320	
Age			Number Of Employees in Mses		
≤ 20	83	26 %	1 - 5	102	32 %
21 - 30	162	51 %	6 - 10	65	20%
31 - 40	48	15 %	More Than 10	153	48 %
41 – Above	27	8 %	Total	320	
Total	320				
Education Level			Type Of Business		
Elementary School	10	3%	Convection	35	11 %
Junior High School	37	12 %	Restaurant/ Store	68	21 %
Senior High School	219	68 %	Services	52	16 %
University	54	17 %	Education	13	4 %
Total	320		Farming	7	2 %
			Manufacture	102	32 %
			Medical	6	2 %
			Others	37	12 %
			Total	320	
Length Of Employment (Years)					
1-2	184	58 %			
3- 5	72	22 %			
More Than 5	64	20 %			
Total	320				

businesses that have more than 10 employees, this makes 48 percent, and the rest business entities have less than 10 employees, see Table 1.

Measures

Islamic leadership: This variable was measured using 8-item spiritual leadership tools (Fry, 2003). The scale has three dimensions: vision, hope or faith, and altruistic love with Cronbach alpha value 0.93. The Islamic leadership scale Fry (2003) was chosen over the newer scale Zaim et al. (2022) predominantly because Fry’s scale gives a robust basis in spiritual leadership that aligns well with core Islamic beliefs. Fry’s 8-item scale encompasses the dimensions of vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love, which aligns with Islamic principles of leadership and ethical conduct. This scale has been validated across various contexts, offering a reliable and well-established tool for evaluating leadership attributes that stress moral integrity and persistence. Although Zaim et al. (2022) developed a scale precisely for Islamic leadership, Fry’s scale provides a wider spiritual perspective that can also be implicitly applied in Islamic contexts, making it a adaptable choice for evaluating workplace outcomes like employee happiness. To measure this variable, 5 Likert scales are used ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Islamic work ethics was assessed using a standardized 4-item scale (Wahab, 2022). Example items are “good work benefits both oneself and others” and “work is not an end in itself but a means to foster personal growth and social relations. The alpha value for this scale indicated 0.78. Happiness at work was measured using a modified scale from a measure developed by Salas-Vallina & Alegre (2018). It consisted of 7 questions using a five-degree scale (very low = 1 to very high = 5). Cronbach alpha reported was 0.80 for this variable. Work engagement was measured by a modification of the short form Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed Schaufeli et al. (2006), which consists of 3 questions that measure enthusiasm, dedication, and absorption using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Cronbach's of this scale is 0.82. Helping behaviour was measured using a five-item questions modification developed by Podsakoff et al. (2009). To measure this variable, 5 Likert scales are used ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The alpha value is reported as 0.82.

Data Analysis

This study tests the hypothesis using the PLS (Partial Least Square) method. The PLS method is an alternative method of analysis with variance-based SEM (Structural Equation Modelling). PLS is a causal (causal) model that explains the influence between variables on the constructed variable. The advantage of this method is that it does not require assumptions and can be estimated with a relatively small number of samples. In Structural Equation Modelling, there are two types of models that are formed, namely the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). The measurement model shows how the manifest variable, or the observed variable, represents the latent variable to be measured. Meanwhile, the structural model shows the strength of estimation between latent and construct variables (Hair Jr et al., 2014), see Table 2.

Table 2. Measurement Model Assessment

Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability	Result
Happiness at Work	0.804	0.860	Reliable
Helping Behaviour	0.820	0.881	Reliable
Islamic Work Ethics	0.787	0.875	Reliable
Islamic Leadership	0.936	0.947	Reliable
Work Engagement	0.820	0.917	Reliable

Table 3. Validity Loading Factor

	HAW	HB	IWE	IL	WE		HAW	HB	IWE	IL	WE
HAW1	0.691					IL4				0.859	
HAW3	0.709					IL5				0.857	
HAW4	0.777					IL6				0.858	
HAW5	0.719					IL7				0.821	
HAW6	0.698					IL8				0.835	
HAW7	0.666					IWE1		0.807			
HB1		0.769				IWE2		0.855			
HB2		0.768				IWE3		0.849			
HB3		0.836				WE1					0.925
HB4		0.849				WE2					0.916
IL1				0.814							
IL2				0.802							
IL3				0.802							

Table 4. Average variance extracted (AVE)

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Result
Happiness at Work	0.506	Discriminant validity
Helping Behaviour	0.650	Discriminant validity
Islamic Work Ethics	0.701	Discriminant validity
Islamic Leadership	0.691	Discriminant validity
Work Engagement	0.848	Discriminant validity

A variable is said to meet construct reliability if it has a composite reliability value > 0.7 and a Cronbach’s alpha value also more than 0.7 (Hair Jr et al., 2014). Based on table 2 above, shows that the results of Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability of all the variables, namely, happiness at work, helping behavior, Islamic work ethics, Islamic leadership, and work engagement, have a value of more than 0.7 so that all variables are said to be reliable.

In table 3 above, there are 3 loading factor values below 0.7 for the happiness at work variable, namely HAW 1, 6, and 7, so these 3 variables are eliminated from the model. Other results show that all loading factors have values > 0.7, so it can be concluded that all indicators meet the required convergent validity criteria.

Based on table 4 above, the AVE value on the variable happiness at work, helping behaviour, Islamic work ethics, Islamic leadership, and work engagement is worth > 0.50, so it can be said that the measurement model has discriminant validity.

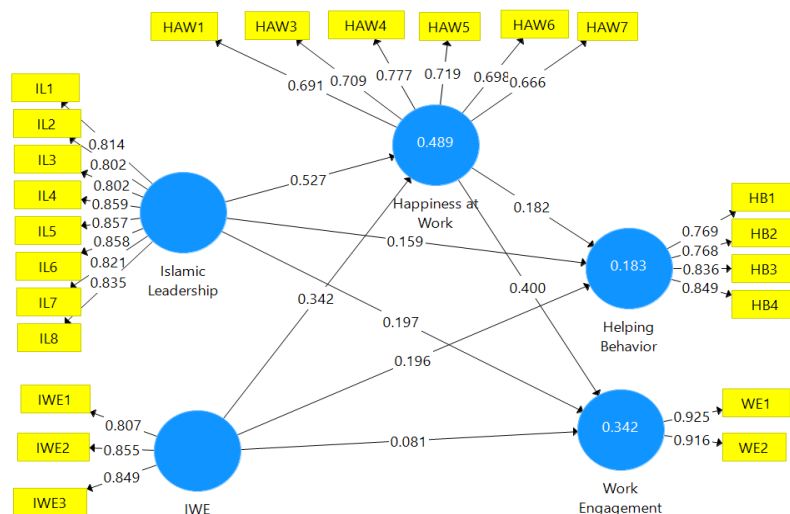


Figure 2. Path model coefficients

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The criterion for the path coefficient value is that if the value is positive, then the effect of a variable on the variable it influences is unidirectional. If the path coefficient value is negative, then the effect of a variable on other variables is in the opposite direction (Hair et al., 2014). The research hypothesis can be accepted if the value of t count (t-statistic) > t table at an error rate (α) of 5% is 1.97.

Hypothesis 1 shows the results from the previous table, namely the path coefficient value is 0.182 (positive), the t-statistic value is 2.340 (> 1.97), and the p-value is 0.02 (<0.05), fulfilling the requirements. These results indicate that H1 in this study is accepted. Hypothesis 1 shows that happiness at work has a positive effect on helping behaviour. Employees who are happy at work will voluntarily help and assist other colleagues in terms of work. These results are in line with the research. De Clercq et al. (2017) explains similar things about happiness at work and helping behaviour. Hypothesis 2 shows the results from the table above, that the path coefficient value of 0.400 (positive), the t-statistic value of 6.612 (> 1.97), and the p-value of 0.000 (<0.05) fulfilling the requirements. These results indicate that H2 in this study is accepted. Hypothesis 2 shows that happiness at work has a positive effect on work engagement. Employees, when they work, feel happy indirectly; they will be bound by the organization or company. These results align with the research (Rosdaniati & Muafi, 2021), which explains the relationship between happiness at work and work engagement.

Hypothesis 3 explains in Table 4 that the path coefficient value is 0.342 (positive), the t-statistic value is 8.514 (> 1.97), and the p-value is 0.000 (<0.05), fulfilling the requirements. These figures indicate that H3 in this study is accepted with the remark that Islamic work ethics positively influence happiness at work by having a direct impact. The higher the Islamic work ethic, the higher the employees' happiness at work. The same thing is explained by Lee et al. (2017) where the research findings explain the relationship between Islamic work ethics and positive influence on workplace happiness. Hypothesis 4 indicates the results from the above table, the path coefficient value is 0.196 (positive), the t-statistic value is 3.398 (> 1.97), and the p-value is 0.001 (<0.05), that fulfil the requirements. These results show that H4 in this study is accepted with the respective findings that Islamic work ethics positively influence helping behaviour. Islamic work ethics with Islamic principles can make employees voluntarily help other employees at work, this is supported by research (Qasim et al., 2021).

Hypothesis 5, however, shows different results in Table 4, that there is no effect of Islamic work ethics on work engagement with a path coefficient value of 0.081, a t-statistic of 1.731 (<1.97), and a p-value that does not meet the requirements of 0.084 (>0.05). These results are supported by research Tufail et al. (2016), which explains that Islamic work ethics do not significantly affect work engagement. Islamic leadership may not influence engagement if the

Table 5. Hypothesis test results

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Values	Result
HAW→HB	0.182	2.340	0.020	Accepted
HAW→WE	0.400	6.612	0.000	Accepted
IWE→HAW	0.342	8.514	0.000	Accepted
IWE→HB	0.196	3.398	0.001	Accepted
IWE→WE	0.081	1.731	0.084	Rejected
IL→HAW	0.527	14.412	0.000	Accepted
IL→HB	0.159	2.081	0.038	Accepted
IL→WE	0.197	3.047	0.002	Accepted
IWE→HAW→HB	0.062	2.221	0.027	Accepted
IWE→HAW→WE	0.137	4.838	0.000	Accepted
IL→HAW→HB	0.096	2.322	0.021	Accepted
IL→HAW→WE	0.211	6.104	0.000	Accepted

leadership procedures do not directly influence employees' intrinsic motives or align with their personal objectives. Furthermore, engagement is often caused by clear job resources and role transparency, which may not be fully explained by a values-driven approach. Without practical support arrangements, even values-driven leadership might not be adequate to support long-term engagement in demanding work conditions.

As for hypothesis 6, the result Table 4 shows that the path coefficient value of 0.527 (positive), the t-statistic value of 14.412 (> 1.97), and the p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), which meets the requirements. Thus, the results indicate that H6 in this study is accepted in a way that Islamic leadership positively affects work happiness. The influence of Islamic leadership is significant because leadership that responds with Islam can provide happiness at work (Maham et al., 2020). Hypotheses 7 and 8 also reveal the same result, that there is a significant influence of Islamic leadership on helping behavior and work engagement with a t-statistic value of more than 1.97 and a p-value of less than 0.05. Each of these results is in accordance with previous research that found a similar positive effect (Asim et al., 2021; Meiyani & Putra, 2019; Wijayati & Rahman, 2022).

Hypotheses 9 and 10 are hypotheses about a mediation effect of happiness at work between Islamic work ethics and helping behaviour and between Islamic work ethics and work engagement. As hypothesized, happiness at work significantly mediates the relationship between Islamic work ethics and helping behaviour and work engagement. The results of the indirect effect H9 show a T-statistic ($2.221 > 1.97$) and p-value ($0.027 < 0.5$), so the hypothesis is accepted; similarly, H10 shows T-statistic ($4.838 > 1.97$) and p-value ($0.000 < 0.5$), thus, the hypothesis is accepted. Both findings are in accordance with research conducted by Esat et al., (2021) and Salas-Vallina & Alegre (2018), which explains happiness as a link between variables. The next hypotheses, H11 and H12, also show positive results with the t-statistic values and p-values that meet the requirements. These results indicate that happiness at work has a mediating effect between Islamic leadership and helping behaviour, as well as between Islamic leadership and work engagement.

DISCUSSION

This study examines and determines how much influence Islamic leadership and Islamic work ethics have on work involvement/engagement and helping behaviour. The influences of the two variables of Islamic leadership and Islamic work ethics with work engagement and helping behaviour are mediated by the variable of happiness at work. From the results of the data analysis, it was uncovered that all hypotheses are accepted except for the Islamic work ethics variable on work engagement. The study's results also show that Islamic leadership has a strong influence and relationship on work engagement and helping behaviour. The role of happiness at work as a mediating variable can establish the relationship between variables. This finding is in accordance with the social exchange theory expressed by Cook et al. (2013). This theory explains the norm of reciprocity; when superiors provide support and attention to subordinates, the subordinates will return the same thing. When leaders show and carry out positive behaviours, there is an impact on increasing work as a feedback process from what the leaders do (Asim et al., 2021). Islamic leadership that upholds ethical and spiritual values treats subordinates well and respects them as taught in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The significant relationship between Islamic work ethics and helping behaviour can be explained using Job Demands-Resources (JDR) Theory (Bakker et al., 2023; Demerouti et al., 2001). In the context of JDR, Islamic work ethics functions as a personal resource that strengthens an individual's motivation and ability to cope with job demands. The values of Islamic work ethics, such as justice, honesty, and responsibility, encourage individuals to exhibit altruistic behaviours, including helping co-workers, as such behaviours are considered part of worship and social responsibility. When individuals have strong personal resources such

as Islamic work ethics, they tend to be more motivated to cope with work pressures and contribute to a positive work environment. This creates a balance between work demands and resources, thus enhancing helping behaviour. In this context, Islamic work ethics not only strengthens relationships between individuals but also supports organizational sustainability through the creation of a harmonious and collaborative work culture. By fostering an environment characterized by mutual respect and ethical behavior, Islamic work ethics mitigate the emotional strain associated with work demands and create such conditions that foster prosocial actions (Bakker et al., 2023). Additionally, Islamic work ethics function as a resource with the JD-R framework, reducing workplace stressors and enhancing employees' capacity to engage in discretionary efforts.

Happiness at work has a positive effect on helping behaviour. Employees who are happy at work will voluntarily help and assist other colleagues in terms of work. These results align with the research De Clercq et al. (2017), which explains similar things about happiness at work and helping behaviour. Happiness at work has a positive effect on work engagement. Employees, when they work, feel happy indirectly; they will be bound by the organization or company. These results align with the research findings Rosdaniati & Muafi (2021), which explain the relationship between happiness at work and work engagement. Islamic work ethics positively influence happiness at work and work engagement. The higher the Islamic work ethic, the higher their happiness at work and work engagement. This finding is supported by a study conducted Qasim et al. (2021), which explains the relationship between Islamic work ethics and happiness at work and work engagement.

One hypothesis shows that Islamic work ethics has no effect on work engagement. Employee might hold different expectations regarding work engagement that do not align with the principles of Islamic work ethics. For instance, while these ethics promote hard work and integrity, employees may prioritize factors like autonomy, recognition, and personal growth over ethical considerations, leading to lower engagement levels if those needs are unmet (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The interpretation of Islamic work ethics can vary significantly across different cultures and environments. In some contexts, the emphasis on collectivism and community in Islamic ethics may conflict with individual aspirations for personal achievement, potentially dampening overall work engagement (Hofstede, 2001). Furthermore, if employees perceive that ethical standards are not uniformly applied within the organization, it could lead to disengagement rather than increased commitment (Brown & Treviño, 2006).

Islamic leadership positively affects work happiness (Maham et al., 2020). The positive influence of Islamic leadership on helping behavior and work engagement is consistent with prior research (Asim et al., 2021; Meiyani & Putra, 2019; Wijayati & Rahman, 2022). Various previous studies have shown that employees who practice Islamic work ethics tend to be more satisfied with work, happier, and more productive. Qasim et al. (2021) found a mediating role for quality-of-life variables (happiness, pride, etc.) in the relationship between Islamic work ethics and work outcomes; these results suggest that subjective happiness and life satisfaction will play a central role when explaining the relationship between Islamic work ethics and work outcomes. Furthermore, ethical behavior at the individual level will shape the ethical and cultural climate at the organizational level.

Happiness at work can mediate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and helping behaviour through increased intrinsic motivation and a positive work atmosphere. Islamic work ethics, which emphasize values such as justice, caring, and social responsibility, create a strong moral foundation for individuals to feel satisfied with their work (Mustofa, 2022; Qaiser & Abid, 2022). When individuals practice Islamic work ethics, they tend to feel more spiritually and emotionally connected to their work, which in turn increases happiness at work. This happiness acts as a mediating factor that strengthens individuals' propensity to exhibit altruistic behaviours, including helping co-workers. Happy individuals are more motivated to contribute

positively to their work environment, as they feel that such behaviour is in line with personal values and brings inner satisfaction (Aryan & Kathuria, 2017).

Thus, happiness at work is not only an outcome of Islamic work ethics but also an important mechanism that encourages helping behaviour in an organizational context. This creates a more collaborative, productive, and harmonious work environment. Furthermore, the JD-R framework complements this understanding by categorizing workplace happiness as a critical job resource. In this framework, Islamic work ethics work as a resource that reduces work-related stress and cultivates positive emotions, creating an environment conducive to helping behaviour. When employees experience happiness in their workplace, their willingness to engage in discretionary behaviours increases. Happiness at work serves as a psychological mechanism that links ethical practices to prosocial behaviours. Employees experiencing happiness at work are more connected to their work environment, which makes them more likely to assist and support others and contribute to a collaborative environment (van Wingerden et al., 2016).

Limitation and Recommendation for Future Research

These findings may not be generalizable due to the sample size being a small portion of the population in the region. The proposed model may not work in all organizations due to varying organizational policies. In addition, the challenges faced in this study are the differences in the organizational environment in Indonesia compared to other countries, as well as the country's level of development. However, the study amplified that happiness at work plays an important role in increasing work engagement and socializing helping behaviour. These ultimately show direct influences on employees and the company's performance. Thus, the research reiterates to all relevant stakeholders that only by prioritizing employees' happiness and promoting benevolent behavior can organizations create a more productive and fulfilling work environment, which generates the employees' happiness, leading to better performance. To cultivate employee happiness, other than creating a positive work environment, organizations should also focus on many other things, such as offering fair compensation and benefits, promoting work-life balance, providing opportunities for growth and development, and fostering a supportive workplace culture. Future researchers are suggested to continue exploring the issues.

CONCLUSIONS

Through a comprehensive review of the literature, this empirical study observes the influence of Islamic leadership and Islamic work ethics on employees' helping behaviour and work engagement, with employee happiness at work proposed as a mediating factor for both relationships. The study targets MSME employees, as these enterprises grow over time and contribute significantly to national economies. The results reveal that while Islamic work ethics positively impact work engagement, they do not significantly influence helping behaviour. Islamic leadership, however, positively affects helping behaviour and not work engagement. Additionally, findings indicate that happiness at work positively influences helping behavior and work engagement and serves as a mediator in the relationships between Islamic leadership, Islamic work ethics, and both helping behavior and work engagement.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Partial financial support was received from IAIN Kudus for collecting the Data. There is no conflict among the authors.

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Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal

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