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RECONCEPTUALIZING WORK THROUGH FAITH: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF BELONGING, MORAL REGULATION, AND SELF-TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

Work in Islamic-oriented organizations may be experienced simultaneously as an economic, professional, relational, moral, and spiritual activity shaped by employees' religious values. This study explores how Muslim employees in Islamic-oriented organizations in Indonesia interpret and experience the meaning of work through faith-based perspectives. Using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach, data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with 28 Muslim employees working in various Islamic-oriented institutions. The findings identify five interconnected dimensions through which participants interpreted their work: amanah as moral responsibility; muraqabah as internal moral self-regulation; faith-based belonging grounded in shared Islamic values; spiritual and relational job satisfaction; and self-transformation through continuous ethical and spiritual development. The study suggests that Islamic faith functioned for participants as both a personal source of meaning and an interpretive moral-relational framework shaping attitudes, workplace behavior, and organizational attachment. These findings contribute to discussions on meaningful work, Islamic work ethics, and workplace spirituality by offering an empirically grounded understanding of how faith becomes embedded in everyday organizational experiences. The study further highlights the importance of moral alignment, spiritual consciousness, and collective values in fostering ethical commitment and meaningful organizational engagement within Islamic-oriented workplaces

Keywords: *Amanah; Faith-based belonging; Islamic work ethics; Muraqabah; Workplace spirituality.*

Abstrak

Pekerjaan dalam organisasi berorientasi Islam dapat dipahami secara bersamaan sebagai aktivitas ekonomi, profesional, relasional, moral, dan spiritual yang

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dipengaruhi oleh nilai-nilai keagamaan karyawan. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana karyawan Muslim di organisasi berorientasi Islam di Indonesia memaknai dan mengalami pekerjaan melalui perspektif berbasis keimanan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam semi-terstruktur terhadap 28 karyawan Muslim yang bekerja pada berbagai institusi berorientasi Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pekerjaan dimaknai melalui lima dimensi yang saling berkaitan, yaitu amanah sebagai tanggung jawab moral, muraqabah sebagai pengendalian moral internal, rasa memiliki berbasis nilai-nilai Islam, kepuasan kerja spiritual dan relasional, serta transformasi diri melalui pengembangan etika dan spiritual yang berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa keimanan Islam bagi partisipan berfungsi sebagai sumber makna personal sekaligus kerangka moral dan relasional dalam memahami sikap, perilaku kerja, dan keterikatan terhadap organisasi. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada diskusi mengenai meaningful work, etika kerja Islam, dan workplace spirituality dengan menghadirkan pemahaman empiris tentang bagaimana nilai-nilai keimanan terintegrasi dalam pengalaman organisasi sehari-hari. Penelitian ini juga menegaskan pentingnya keselarasan moral, kesadaran spiritual, dan nilai kolektif dalam membangun komitmen etis serta keterlibatan kerja yang bermakna di lingkungan organisasi berorientasi Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Amanah; Rasa Memiliki Berbasis Keimanan; Etika Kerja Islam; Muraqabah; Spiritualitas di Tempat Kerja*

مستخلص

لا يُنظر إلى العمل في المؤسسات ذات التوجّه الإسلامي بوصفه نشاطًا اقتصاديًا فحسب، بل يُفهم أيضًا باعتباره ممارسة مهنية وعلاقاتيّة وأخلاقية وروحية تتشكّل من خلال القيم الدينية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف كيفية تفسير الموظفين المسلمين في المؤسسات ذات التوجّه الإسلامي في إندونيسيا لمعاني العمل وتجاربهم المهنية من منظور قائم على الإيمان. اعتمدت الدراسة على منهج التحليل الظاهراتي التفسيري (IPA)، وتم جمع البيانات من خلال مقابلات معمقة شبه منظّمة مع 28 موظفًا مسلمًا يعملون في مؤسسات إسلامية متنوعة. وأظهرت النتائج أن العمل يُفهم من خلال خمسة أبعاد مترابطة، وهي: الأمانة باعتبارها مسؤولية أخلاقية، والمراقبة الذاتية القائمة على الوعي الديني (المراقبة)، والانتماء القائم على القيم الإسلامية المشتركة، والرضا الوظيفي الروحي والعلاقاتي، والتحوّل الذاتي من خلال التطور الأخلاقي والروحي المستمر. وتشير النتائج إلى أن هذه المعاني الروحية لم تُلغِ الاعتبارات المهنية والمادية أو الضغوط العملية في الحياة التنظيمية، بل تعايشت معها وشكّلت إطارًا تفسيريًا لفهم المسؤولية والانتماء والرضا والتطور الشخصي. وتبيّن الدراسة أن الإيمان الإسلامي لا يعمل فقط كنظام اعتقاد شخصي، بل يشكّل أيضًا إطارًا أخلاقيًا وعلاقاتيًا يؤثر في مواقف الموظفين وسلوكهم المهني وانتمائهم التنظيمي. كما تشير النتائج إلى أن الالتزام الديني يمكن أن يكون مصدرًا للمعنى والانضباط الأخلاقي، وفي الوقت نفسه قد يشكّل مسؤولية داخلية تتطلب من الموظفين الحفاظ على الالتزام عند مواجهة التعب والضغوط ومتطلبات العمل. وتسهم هذه الدراسة في إثراء النقاشات المتعلقة بمعنى العمل، وأخلاقيات العمل الإسلامية، والروحانية في بيئة العمل، من خلال تقديم فهم تجريبي لكيفية اندماج القيم الإيمانية في التجارب التنظيمية اليومية. وتبرز الدراسة أهمية فهم العمل في المؤسسات

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ذات التوجّه الإسلامي بوصفه تجربة متعددة الأبعاد تتفاعل فيها الاعتبارات الروحية والأخلاقية والعلاقاتيّة والمهنية والمادية، بدلًا من اعتبار الإيمان بديلًا عن الجوانب العملية للعمل.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الأمانة؛ الانتماء القائم على الإيمان؛ أخلاقيات العمل الإسلامية؛ المراقبة؛ الروحانية في مكان العمل

A. Introduction

Contemporary organizations increasingly recognize that employees seek not only financial compensation but also meaning, ethical alignment, and psychological belonging within the workplace.[1] Work is no longer interpreted solely as an economic activity oriented toward productivity and organizational outcomes, but also as a social, moral, and existential arena through which individuals construct identity, values, and interpersonal relationships.[2] Employees increasingly evaluate organizational experiences based on whether organizational practices are consistent with their ethical beliefs, personal aspirations, and broader life purposes.[3] Consequently, discussions concerning meaningful work, spirituality, and ethical consciousness have gained increasing attention in organizational and management studies.[4]

In line with this development, contemporary scholarship increasingly highlights the importance of meaningful work for employees' psychological and moral well-being.[5] Meaningful work is associated not only with motivation and engagement but also with emotional attachment and ethical commitment within organizations.[6] Employees increasingly expect workplaces to provide opportunities for moral fulfilment and value congruence beyond

[1] Donde P Ashmos and Dennis Duchon, "Spirituality at Work: A Conceptualization and Measure," *Journal of Management Inquiry* 9, no. 2 (2000): 134–45, https://doi.org/10.1177/105649260092008; Maryam Kouchaki and Isaac H Smith, "Moral Decision-Making in Organizations," *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 12, no. 1 (2025): 45–72, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-110622-045715.

[2] Amy Wrzesniewski and Jane E Dutton, "Crafting a Job: Revisioning Employees as Active Crafters of Their Work," *Academy of Management Review* 26, no. 2 (2001): 179–201, https://doi.org/10.2307/259118; Deborah Callaghan and Helen Collins, "'If Only These Conversations Had Happened in Induction': Influencing Employee Aspiration with Action Learning-Led Inductions in the Big Four," *Employee Relations: The International Journal* 46, no. 1 (2024): 19–35, https://doi.org/10.1108/er-03-2023-0120.

[3] Raghavendra Sode and Kalaa Chenji, "The Mediating Role of Workplace Spirituality: Exploring the Relationship Between Self-Transcendence, Spiritual Transcendence, and Innovative Work Behavior," *Acta Psychologica* 245 (2024): 104228, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104228.

[4] Burak Oc and Maryam Kouchaki, "The More the Merrier: How Psychological Standing and Work Group Size Explain Managers' Willingness to Communicate About Unethical Conduct in Their Work Group," *Journal of Business Ethics* 190, no. 4 (2024): 775–86, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05431-y; Lindsey D Cameron, "The Making of the 'Good Bad' Job: How Algorithmic Management Manufactures Consent through Constant and Confined Choices," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (2024): 458–514, https://doi.org/10.1177/00018392241236163.

[5] Arpana Rai, Minseo Kim, and Sanjay Kumar Singh, "Meaningful Work from Ethics Perspective: Examination of Ethical Antecedents and Outcomes of Meaningful Work," *Journal of Business Research* 169 (2023): 114287, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.114287.

[6] Adam M Grant, "The Significance of Task Significance: Job Performance Effects, Relational Mechanisms, and Boundary Conditions," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 93, no. 1 (2008): 108–24, https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.1.108.

material rewards and career advancement.[7] As a result, discussions regarding spirituality, ethical consciousness, and value-based organizational behavior have become increasingly prominent in management and organizational scholarship.[8]

Research on meaningful work has examined how work can provide psychological significance through autonomy, intrinsic motivation, personal identity, and opportunities for self-development. Wrzesniewski and Dutton[9], for example, conceptualized employees as active participants in shaping the meaning of their work, while Grant[10] highlighted the importance of task significance and prosocial contribution in generating meaningful work experiences. More recent research has also examined ethical antecedents of meaningful work, showing that ethical considerations may shape how employees evaluate the significance and value of their work.[11] These perspectives have substantially advanced understanding of meaningful work by demonstrating that psychological, relational, and ethical processes can contribute to employees' experiences of meaning.[12]

Although these perspectives provide important explanations of meaningful work, they do not fully capture how employees integrate religious commitments into their everyday understanding of work. In particular, existing research provides comparatively less insight into how religious concepts are experienced as lived forms of responsibility, self-regulation, belonging, and moral reflection within organizational settings. This limitation is especially relevant in Islamic-oriented organizations, where religious values may become embedded in everyday workplace practices rather than functioning only as individual beliefs or attitudinal variables.[13] Existing perspectives on meaningful work have highlighted personal fulfillment, identity, relationships, ethical values, and prosocial contribution as important sources of meaning. Religious commitment may add another interpretive dimension by giving employees a faith-based framework for understanding responsibility, purpose, and ethical conduct in relation to their faith.[14] Consequently, organizational scholarship still tends to underexplore

[7] Sode and Chenji, "The Mediating Role of Workplace Spirituality: Exploring the Relationship Between Self-Transcendence, Spiritual Transcendence, and Innovative Work Behavior."
[8] Wrzesniewski and Dutton, "Crafting a Job: Revisioning Employees as Active Crafters of Their Work."
[9] Wrzesniewski and Dutton.
[10] Grant, "The Significance of Task Significance: Job Performance Effects, Relational Mechanisms, and Boundary Conditions."
[11] Rai, Kim, and Singh, "Meaningful Work from Ethics Perspective: Examination of Ethical Antecedents and Outcomes of Meaningful Work."
[12] Sharon K Parker, Frederick P Morgeson, and Gary Johns, "One Hundred Years of Work Design Research: Looking Back and Looking Forward," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 102, no. 3 (2017): 403–20, https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000106.
[13] Knut Laaser and Jan Ch Karlsson, "Towards a Sociology of Meaningful Work," *Work, Employment and Society* 36, no. 5 (2022): 798–815, https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170211055998.
[14] Mai Chi Vu and Nicholas Burton, "The Influence of Spiritual Traditions on the Interplay of Subjective and Normative Interpretations of Meaningful Work," *Journal of Business Ethics* 180, no. 2 (2022): 543–66, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04893-2.

how religious worldviews shape employees' understanding of responsibility, ethical conduct, and organizational belonging within everyday workplace experiences.[15]

In the Islamic tradition, work can be understood in multiple ways, including economic livelihood, professional responsibility, social contribution, moral conduct, and spiritual accountability. Islam conceptualizes work as part of ibadah (worship), moral responsibility, and human stewardship (khalifah) on earth, where spiritual consciousness and ethical cultivation become integral dimensions of social life and collective responsibility.[16] From an Islamic epistemological perspective, work is inseparable from the cultivation of adab, moral consciousness, and spiritual accountability in human life.[17] The Qur'an emphasizes that human actions are inseparable from accountability before God, as reflected in Surah At-Taubah (9:105), which explains that human deeds will ultimately be observed and evaluated by Allah. In this understanding, work becomes inseparable from ethical intentionality and spiritual consciousness.

The concept of amanah in Surah Al-Ahzab (33:72) positions responsibility as a sacred trust that must be fulfilled ethically and conscientiously. Islamic teachings also emphasize muraqabah, namely spiritual awareness that Allah continuously observes human behavior, shaping moral discipline and self-regulation beyond external supervision. This consciousness is further reflected in Surah Qaf (50:16), which highlights God's nearness to human beings and His awareness of their inner intentions and actions. Accordingly, moral responsibility in Islam is not dependent solely on institutional monitoring but also on inner spiritual awareness.

Islamic teachings further emphasize ihsan, namely performing actions with excellence and sincerity out of awareness of God's presence. A prophetic tradition explains ihsan as *"to worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, and if you fail to see Him, He indeed sees you"* (Sahih Muslim).[18] Within this framework, work may be experienced simultaneously as a contractual and professional activity and as a moral practice through which spirituality, ethics, social responsibility, and personal purpose are interpreted. Islamic ethical teachings also emphasize sincerity (*ikhlas*) and moral self-discipline as important dimensions of individual conduct. In

[15] Gary R Weaver, "Virtue in Organizations: Moral Identity as a Foundation for Moral Agency," *Organization Studies* 27, no. 3 (2006): 341–68, https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840606062426.
[16] Saepudin Mashuri, Sauqi Futaqi, and Ahmad Sulhan, "Spiritual Base of Pesantren for Building Multicultural Awareness in Indonesia Context," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 24, no. 1 (2024): 1–20, https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v24i1.17141.
[17] Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, "Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam," *Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, 1995.
[18] Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, "Sahih Muslim 8a," *The Book of Faith* (Sunnah.com, n.d.).

discussing Ibn Khaldun's labor theory of value, Karataşli & Clark[19] examined the relationship between labor, economic value, and historical social relations. These perspectives highlight how work can be understood beyond its economic function, including its ethical and social dimensions. Al-Attas[20] further positioned ethical consciousness and *adab* as central foundations of human responsibility.

These issues become particularly relevant within Islamic-oriented organizations where religious values are embedded into organizational culture, managerial systems, and everyday workplace interactions.[21] Recent studies further suggest that internal sharia-based organizational capabilities may strengthen ethical sustainability and institutional resilience within Islamic organizations.[22] In such contexts, work is frequently interpreted not merely as professional responsibility but also as amanah and ibadah, shaping how employees understand accountability, sincerity, discipline, and organizational obligations.[23] Religion, therefore, functions not only as a symbolic identity or organizational attribute but also as a lived moral framework influencing employees' attitudes, ethical conduct, and interpersonal relationships.[24] Previous studies further demonstrate that workplace spirituality and shared moral values may strengthen employee commitment, resilience, ethical awareness, and organizational attachment within faith-based institutions.[25]

Recent discussions within Islamic organizational scholarship have also highlighted the growing importance of spirituality and religious commitment in shaping organizational engagement and ethical behavior. Recent scholarship has increasingly examined the relationships among spirituality, moral identity, meaningful work, and ethical behavior in

[19] Şahan Savaş Karataşli and Derek Clark, "Ibn Khaldun's Labor Theory of Value and the Question of Race: Revisiting the 'Nondebates of the 1970s' through The Muqaddimah," *Journal of World-Systems Research* 30, no. 1 (2024): 302–38, https://doi.org/10.5195/jwsr.2024.1195.

[20] Al-Attas, "Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam."

[21] Muhammad Bilal Zafar and Mohd Fauzi Abu-Hussin, "Religiosity and Islamic Work Ethic: A Cross-Cultural Comparison in Majority and Non-Majority Muslim Countries," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 105 (2025): 102115, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2024.102115.

[22] Irwan Thaib et al., "Sharia Internal Resources: Capabilities To Drive The Sustainability of Islamic Banking," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 25, no. 1 (April 2025): 168–203, https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v25i1.28984.

[23] Faryal Javid et al., "Do Islamic Work Ethics Matter? Impact of Aversive Leadership on Employees' Emotional and Psychological Health Through the Lens of Conservation of Resource Theory," *Sustainable Futures* 8 (2024): 100309, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sftr.2024.100309.

[24] Erika V Hall et al., "MOSAIC: A Model of Stereotyping Through Associated and Intersectional Categories," *Academy of Management Review* 44, no. 3 (2019): 643–72, https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2017.0109; Sania Usmani, "Perceptions of Politics and Knowledge Sharing: Moderating Role of Islamic Work Ethic in the Islamic Banking Industry of Pakistan," *Heliyon* 10, no. 18 (2024): e37032, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e37032.

[25] Anjali G Nath, "Reframing Workplace Spirituality: A Critical Inquiry through Cummings' Dimensions," *Acta Psychologica* 261 (2025): 105737, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105737; B Nishanthi et al., "Exploring Workplace Spirituality and Its Impact on Organizational Effectiveness: A Bibliometric Review and Prospective Research Directions," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 12 (2025): 101685, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101685; Satish Kumar et al., "Religion as a Social Shaping Force in Entrepreneurship and Business: Insights from a Technology-Empowered Systematic Literature Review," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 175 (2022): 121393, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121393.

organizational settings, indicating that religious and spiritual commitments can extend beyond personal belief into employees' workplace experiences. Such findings indicate that spirituality cannot be reduced to a personal belief system but should also be understood as a relational and organizational phenomenon that shapes employees' experiences and moral orientations in workplace settings.

Nevertheless, organizational scholarship still provides limited discussion regarding how employees subjectively experience and internalize religious meanings within everyday organizational practices. Prior studies on Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) have generally focused on the relationships among ethics, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee performance.[26] Much of this literature relies predominantly on quantitative approaches that conceptualize ethics as measurable attitudes, behavioral tendencies, or organizational variables.[27] In some studies, religion is operationalized primarily as a demographic, cultural, or attitudinal factor, which may give less attention to how employees subjectively experience religious commitment as an ongoing process of moral reflection and spiritual accountability.

Recent reviews of Islamic Work Ethics and related workplace spirituality research indicate that much of the literature has emphasized behavioral, attitudinal, and organizational outcomes, including performance, commitment, ethical behavior, and leadership. In contrast, phenomenological explorations of lived religious experience and spiritual consciousness remain relatively underdeveloped. Consequently, important Islamic concepts such as amanah, muraqabah, ikhlas, ihsan, and spiritual responsibility continue to receive limited attention within contemporary organizational scholarship. While these studies provide important evidence regarding organizational and behavioral outcomes, comparatively less attention has been given to how Muslim employees experience, interpret, and negotiate religious meanings in the ordinary situations of organizational life.[28] The experiential dimensions of spirituality, ethical reflection, and religious consciousness, therefore, remain underdeveloped in the organizational literature. This limitation creates an important gap in understanding how Muslim employees construct meaning and moral identity in workplace settings.

[26] Kuntarno Noor Aflah et al., "Islamic Work Ethics and Employee Performance: The Role of Islamic Motivation, Affective Commitment, and Job Satisfaction," *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business* 8, no. 1 (2021): 997–1007, https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2021.vol8.no1.997.

[27] Fahmi Natigor Nasution and Ahmad Rafiki, "Islamic Work Ethics, Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction of Islamic Banks in Indonesia," *RAUSP Management Journal* 55, no. 2 (2020): 195–205, https://doi.org/10.1108/rausp-01-2019-0011.

[28] Xavier Parent-Rocheleau and Sharon K Parker, "Algorithms as Work Designers: How Algorithmic Management Influences the Design of Jobs," *Human Resource Management Review* 32, no. 3 (2022): 100838, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2021.100838.

A similar tendency can also be found in studies concerning workplace belonging. Existing scholarship consistently highlights the importance of belonging for employee well-being, inclusion, retention, and organizational identification.[29] Existing scholarship has conceptualized workplace belonging through several complementary perspectives, including social identity, interpersonal inclusion, psychological safety, relational connection, and value congruence.[30] Within Islamic-oriented organizations, these dimensions may intersect with shared religious commitment, ukhuwah, collective moral purpose, and spiritual solidarity.[31]

Employees may therefore perceive organizational membership not only as professional participation but also as participation in a morally meaningful community grounded in shared Islamic values and ethical responsibility.[32] Despite its significance, empirical understanding regarding how faith-based belonging is experienced, negotiated, and internalized within organizational contexts remains limited in existing literature.[33] Existing studies rarely examine how employees interpret organizational attachment through religious consciousness and transcendental responsibility. Consequently, organizational belonging is often discussed primarily through psychological or social perspectives while overlooking spiritual and moral dimensions.

Based on these gaps, this study explores how Muslim employees in Islamic-oriented organizations experience and construct faith-based meanings of work, belonging, and moral responsibility within everyday organizational life. This study therefore examines work within Islamic-oriented organizational contexts as a multidimensional experience in which professional, material, relational, psychological, moral, and spiritual considerations may intersect. Rather than treating religious and non-religious understandings of meaningful work as mutually exclusive, this study examines how Muslim employees negotiate multiple sources of meaning in everyday organizational life, including professional responsibility, interpersonal relationships, material considerations, personal development, and religious accountability. Within this configuration, Islamic faith provides an additional moral and spiritual framework

[29] Apoorva Pandey, Mridul Maheshwari, and Nishtha Malik, "A Systematic Literature Review on Employee Well-Being: Mapping Multi-Level Antecedents, Moderators, Mediators and Future Research Agenda," *Acta Psychologica* 258 (2025): 105080, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105080.

[30] Parker, Morgeson, and Johns, "One Hundred Years of Work Design Research: Looking Back and Looking Forward"; Amy E Colbert, Joyce E Bono, and Radostina K Purvanova, "Flourishing via Workplace Relationships: Moving Beyond Instrumental Support," *Academy of Management Journal* 59, no. 4 (2016): 1199–1223, https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2014.0506.

[31] Muhammad Iqbal Arrasyid et al., "Sociopreneurial Behaviour Formation: Antecedents and Conversion. Case of Dairy Farming Industry in Indonesia," *Social Enterprise Journal* 20, no. 5 (2024): 810–31, https://doi.org/10.1108/sej-10-2023-0135; Ebony Melzak et al., "A Scoping Review of the Factors Contributing to a Sense of Belonging in Early Career Teachers," *Educational Research Review* 48 (2025): 100700, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2025.100700.

[32] Hall et al., "MOSAIC: A Model of Stereotyping Through Associated and Intersectional Categories."

[33] Weaver, "Virtue in Organizations: Moral Identity as a Foundation for Moral Agency."

through which participants interpreted their work as amanah, practiced muraqabah, experienced belonging, and understood personal transformation. The study, therefore, seeks to examine how employees interpret work as amanah, internalize muraqabah as moral self-regulation, experience faith-based belonging, and understand organizational life as a process of ethical and spiritual self-transformation.

This research contributes to scholarship in organizational and Islamic studies in several ways. First, the study extends discussions on Islamic Work Ethics beyond dominant positivistic and quantitative explanations toward a phenomenological understanding of lived religious experience within organizations. Second, the study reconceptualizes work as a multidimensional experience in which economic participation, professional responsibility, interpersonal relationships, and moral-spiritual accountability may be experienced simultaneously. Third, the study contributes to broader discussions of workplace spirituality, organizational identity, ethical management, and the moral meaning of work by examining how Islamic faith operates as an interpretive framework through which participants understood organizational experiences, ethical responsibilities, and aspects of selfhood.

To address these objectives, this study employs an interpretative qualitative approach, namely Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), to examine employees' lived experiences within Islamic-oriented organizations.[34] IPA was selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of how individuals interpret moral experiences, spiritual meanings, and organizational realities through reflective and interpretative engagement.[35] This study involved 28 Muslim employees working across several Islamic-oriented institutions, including educational organizations, zakat institutions, social service institutions, and Islamic-based business organizations situated in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia. The fieldwork and semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted over six months and concluded in November 2025, focusing extensively on employees' experiences of work, ethical reflection, organizational belonging, and spiritual responsibility.

To ensure interpretative rigor and trustworthiness, the collected narrative data were analyzed using iterative IPA procedures comprising repeated reading, initial noting, development of emergent themes, cross-case thematic analysis, and interpretative abstraction of superordinate themes.[36] Reflexive interpretation and thematic verification were continuously

[34] John W Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions* (SAGE Publications, n.d.).
[35] Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publication, 2014).
[36] John W Creswell and CN Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, 2018).

conducted throughout the analytical process to maintain coherence between participants' lived experiences and the conceptual interpretations that emerged.[37]

Consistent with IPA's double hermeneutic orientation, the analysis involved interpretative engagement in which participants attempted to make sense of their lived experiences while the researchers reflexively interpreted those meaning-making processes. Reflexive memoing and iterative interpretation were continuously employed to maintain interpretative sensitivity, contextual coherence, and analytical depth throughout the study. This interpretative process enabled the researchers to explore not only participants' explicit narratives, but also the deeper moral, relational, and spiritual meanings through which participants made sense of their organizational experiences.

B. Discussion

1. Work as Amanah and Moral Responsibility

The findings of this study demonstrate that Muslim employees in Islamic-oriented organizations interpreted work not merely as an economic obligation or professional duty, but as *amanah*, namely a sacred moral trust carrying accountability before God. Across the accounts, participants commonly described work as a form of ethical and spiritual responsibility, although the ways in which this responsibility was understood and enacted varied across organizational situations. One participant explained, *"This work is not just about completing tasks. It is a trust. Even if no one is checking, I still feel responsible because God entrusted this to me."* This account shows how amanah was experienced as personal accountability in situations without external supervision. Another participant similarly connected work with amanah while emphasizing the practical and relational responsibilities involved in serving others: *"The most important thing is when serving customers who complain. Here... faith is really tested. Whether we can remain patient or honest. I remember that this is an amanah, so it has to be carried out properly."* Taken together, these accounts suggest that amanah was not experienced as a uniform religious principle but was interpreted through participants' everyday responsibilities and organizational situations. While the first participant emphasized accountability before God even in the absence of external supervision, the second participant connected amanah with maintaining patience and honesty when facing difficult interpersonal situations. The convergence across these accounts lies in the moral

[37] Michael Quinn Patton, "Two Decades of Developments in Qualitative Inquiry: A Personal, Experiential Perspective," *Qualitative Social Work* 1, no. 3 (2002): 261–83, https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325002001003636.

significance attached to responsibility, whereas the variation reflects how participants translated amanah into different everyday organizational circumstances. Such experiences indicate that work was understood as part of religious devotion embedded within everyday organizational life rather than as a purely contractual activity. These findings resonate with the Islamic Work Ethics literature, which emphasises that work in Islam is inseparable from moral responsibility, accountability, and spiritual intentionality.[38] The findings also support discussions on workplace spirituality, suggesting that employees increasingly seek ethical coherence and deeper meaning in organizational life rather than merely material achievement.[39]

The findings further reveal that participants evaluated work not solely on technical achievement or productivity, but also on moral integrity and sincerity in fulfilling responsibilities. Employees perceived superficial performance or work conducted merely for external recognition as inconsistent with the ethical meaning attached to work itself. Consequently, professionalism was interpreted less as outperforming others and more as maintaining honesty, responsibility, and moral consistency in everyday conduct. Such findings demonstrate that the workplace functioned as a continuous arena of moral self-evaluation and ethical discipline grounded in Islamic consciousness. This finding aligns with Weaver's (2006) argument that moral identity shapes ethical agency within organizational contexts and supports recent discussions emphasising morality and ethical intentionality in organizational behaviour.[40] In this sense, organizational participation became closely connected to the cultivation of ethical selfhood and spiritual accountability.

From an Islamic perspective, participants' understanding of work as *amanah* reflects a transcendental moral ontology in which professional responsibility is interpreted not merely as contractual compliance but as accountability before Allah. This understanding corresponds with the Qur'anic notion of trust and responsibility in QS Al-Ahzab:72, where humans are described as bearers of *amanah*. Islamic ethical teachings also emphasize sincerity (*ikhlas*), moral discipline, and ethical conduct as important dimensions of human responsibility. In this study, these principles provide an interpretive framework for understanding participants'

[38] Zaid Oqla Alqhaiwi, Tamer Koburtay, and Jawad Syed, "The Interplay Between Islamic Work Ethic, Unethical Pro Behaviors, and Moral Identity Internalization: The Moderating Role of Religiosity," *Journal of Business Ethics* 193, no. 2 (2024): 393–408, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05527-5.

[39] Ashmos and Duchon, "Spirituality at Work: A Conceptualization and Measure."

[40] Oc and Kouchaki, "The More the Merrier: How Psychological Standing and Work Group Size Explain Managers' Willingness to Communicate About Unethical Conduct in Their Work Group"; Kouchaki and Smith, "Moral Decision-Making in Organizations."

accounts of ethical self-cultivation and spiritual accountability. Likewise, Al-Attas[41] argues that work and knowledge in Islam are rooted in *adab*, namely the cultivation of proper ethical consciousness and recognition of responsibility before God. The findings enrich existing theories of meaningful work by highlighting moral intentionality and spiritual responsibility as important dimensions of workplace meaning alongside autonomy, identity, and self-fulfilment.[42] Participants interpreted meaningfulness through a combination of ethical intentionality, transcendental responsibility, personal values, and professional experience. In this sense, spirituality represented an important dimension of workplace meaning that interacted with, rather than replaced, personal fulfilment, professional achievement, and other sources of meaningfulness. Work became meaningful because it represented an ethical duty entrusted by God, thereby positioning spirituality as a central foundation of organizational meaning rather than merely as a supplementary motivational factor.[43]

The findings additionally suggest that employee engagement and commitment may also emerge through moral obligation and transcendental accountability alongside instrumental rewards or intrinsic enjoyment.[44] Participants demonstrated that persistence, discipline, and commitment were closely connected to ethical responsibility and spiritual consciousness. Such findings support previous discussions indicating that spirituality and ethical congruence may strengthen emotional attachment and long-term commitment within organizations.[45] Recent discussions in Islamic organizational scholarship further suggest that spirituality-based organizational commitment may shape ethical consistency and sustainable engagement in faith-based workplaces. Within this framework, professionalism and spirituality were not experienced as separate domains. Work became spiritually meaningful because it connected individuals simultaneously to God, organizational responsibility, and broader social contribution.

[41] Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam* (Johor Bahru: Penerbit UTM Press, 2014), https://search.worldcat.org/title/891718758.

[42] Tuure Haarjärvi and Sari Laari-Salmela, "Examining the Role of Dignity in the Experience of Meaningfulness: A Process-Relational View on Meaningful Work," *Humanistic Management Journal* 7, no. 3 (2022): 417–40, https://doi.org/10.1007/s41463-022-00133-5.

[43] Nishanthi et al., "Exploring Workplace Spirituality and Its Impact on Organizational Effectiveness: A Bibliometric Review and Prospective Research Directions."

[44] Carmen Păunescu et al., "Employability, Proactiveness and Workplace Behaviors: Is Socioeconomic Status a Mediator?," *Journal of Business Economics and Management* 25, no. 1 (2024): 47–65, https://doi.org/10.3846/jbem.2024.20745; Franco Fraccaroli, Sara Zaniboni, and Donald M Truxillo, "Challenges in the New Economy: A New Era for Work Design," *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 11, no. 1 (2024): 307–35, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-081722-053704.

[45] Jenny Bimrose et al., "Transforming Identities and Co-Constructing Careers of Career Counselors," *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 111 (2019): 7–23, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.07.008.

Table 1. Participant characteristics by organizational sector and gender

Sector / Organization Type	GENDER		Grand Total
	Female	Male	
Creative Muslim Agency		1	1
Islamic Cooperative	2		2
Islamic Education	5		5
Islamic Foundation	1		1
Islamic Hospitality	1	1	2
Islamic Retail	4	1	5
Islamic Social Foundation	1	1	2
Umrah & Hajj Travel Services	2	1	3
Zakat Organization	5	2	7
Grand Total	21	7	28

Source: Author

The sample's gender composition also warrants reflexive consideration. Of the 28 participants, 21 were female, and 7 were male. This predominance may have increased the visibility of relational experiences such as interpersonal care, emotional support, and collective responsibility in the accounts presented in this study. However, because the study was not designed as a gender-comparative investigation and the male subgroup was relatively small, the findings cannot establish whether these experiences are specifically associated with gender. Instead, the gender composition should be understood as part of the interpretive context of the present findings. Future research involving more balanced gender representation could examine whether the meanings attached to care, moral responsibility, and workplace belonging vary across gendered experiences and organizational contexts.

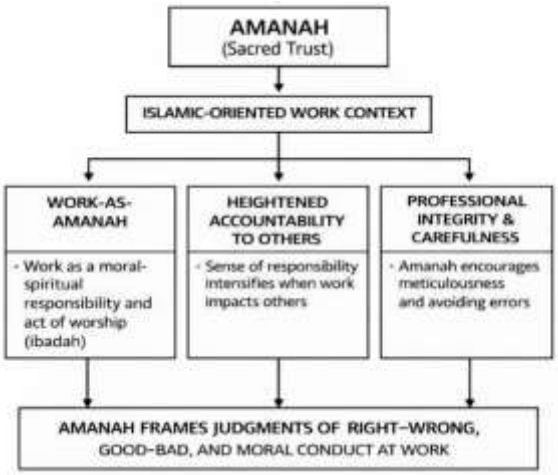


Figure 1. Amanah as the core meaning of work

2. Faith-Based Self-Regulation in Organizational Life

Participants' understanding of work as *amanah* was closely connected to the emergence of *muraqabah*, namely the awareness that God continuously observes human actions. Participants described this awareness as an internal mechanism shaping discipline, honesty, patience, and ethical conduct in everyday organizational activities. Rather than relying exclusively on formal organizational supervision, participants described awareness of Allah's observation as an internal source of responsibility, particularly when they experienced fatigue or when direct supervision was absent. One participant explained: *"Sometimes when I am tired, I remember that Allah sees me. That makes me keep trying to work as well as possible."* Another participant similarly described awareness of divine observation as a motivation to maintain work performance: *"I feel encouraged to work more optimally because I realize that every task is watched by Allah SWT."* These accounts suggest that *muraqabah* was experienced as an internalised form of accountability that operated alongside, rather than simply in place of, organizational supervision.

Taken together, these accounts suggest that muraqabah was experienced in more than one way. For the first participant, awareness of Allah became particularly salient when experiencing fatigue and functioned as a source of continued effort. For the second participant, awareness of divine observation was experienced more explicitly as motivation to work optimally. The convergence lies in the internalization of accountability beyond direct organizational supervision, while the variation concerns the circumstances in which this awareness became meaningful. Thus, *muraqabah* was not experienced merely as a theological belief, but as a lived form of self-regulation through which participants interpreted responsibility and sustained their engagement with everyday work. These findings support previous discussions suggesting that workplace spirituality may influence self-regulation, mindfulness, and ethical behaviour within organizational settings.[46] However, the present accounts add a phenomenological dimension by showing how such spiritual awareness was experienced in concrete work situations, particularly when participants faced fatigue or the need to maintain performance.

At the same time, the experience of *muraqabah* was not necessarily free from pressure. The internalization of responsibility could also make employees feel personally responsible for sustaining their effort when work became demanding. Participants generally described

[46] Lilian Otaye-Ebede, Samah Shaffakat, and Scott Foster, "A Multilevel Model Examining the Relationships between Workplace Spirituality, Ethical Climate and Outcomes: A Social Cognitive Theory Perspective," *Journal of Business Ethics* 166, no. 3 (2020): 611–26, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-019-04133-8.

muraqabah as supporting ethical self-regulation under organizational pressure. However, interpreting responsibility as an internal moral obligation could also intensify personal responsibility when work became difficult or tiring. The present data do not establish that management used *muraqabah* to impose additional work, discourage employees from raising material concerns, or suppress employee voice. Rather, the accounts suggest that faith-based responsibility may function both as ethical guidance and as a demanding form of self-accountability under difficult working conditions.

This distinction is important because internal spiritual regulation should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of harmonious or pressure-free organizational experiences. Participants' accounts indicate that faith could help them sustain responsible conduct, but the same internalization of responsibility could also increase the felt obligation to continue performing well despite fatigue or demanding circumstances. In this sense, *muraqabah* represents a lived experience in which spiritual meaning and work demands may coexist rather than mutually exclude one another**.**

These findings contribute to organizational behaviour literature by highlighting a faith-based form of self-regulation rooted in participants' awareness of divine accountability. Existing organizational studies have examined external control mechanisms such as supervision, algorithmic monitoring, performance measurement, rewards, and sanctions**.**[47] The present findings suggest that formal organizational controls are not the only context through which employees understand and regulate their conduct. Participants also drew upon an internal moral framework grounded in religious consciousness. Ethical behaviour therefore appeared to be understood not merely as compliance with organizational procedures, but as a responsibility that remained meaningful even when direct managerial supervision was limited.[48]

From this perspective, faith-based self-regulation may complement formal organizational controls by providing employees with an additional basis for interpreting responsibility and maintaining ethical conduct. However, the findings should not be interpreted as suggesting that internalised faith can substitute for fair organizational systems, reasonable workloads, or appropriate managerial practices. Rather, spiritual self-regulation

[47] Keith Leavitt, Christopher M Barnes, and Debra L Shapiro, "The Role of Human Managers within Algorithmic Performance Management Systems: A Process Model of Employee Trust in Managers through Reflexivity," *Academy of Management Review* 50, no. 4 (2025): 745–67, https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2022.0058.

[48] Rita Di Mascio and Johra Fatima, "The Role of Identification in Frontline Employee Decision-Making," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 43 (2018): 131–38, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.01.008.

and formal organizational conditions should be understood as potentially interacting dimensions of employees' work experiences.

From an Islamic perspective, the concept of *muraqabah* reflects a form of ethical self-governance grounded in continuous awareness of Allah's presence, in line with QS Qaf:16 concerning divine closeness and observation. Al-Ghazali similarly explains that moral discipline arises from constant self-awareness and remembrance of divine accountability, rather than from external coercion alone. Within the present study, this religious concept was reflected in participants' descriptions of continuing to work responsibly even when they were tired or not directly supervised. Thus, *muraqabah* appeared not simply as an abstract theological principle, but as a lived interpretive framework through which participants understood effort, responsibility, and ethical conduct in everyday organizational life.

Importantly, the findings also suggest that the relationship between faith and work regulation is more nuanced than a simple contrast between internal spiritual control and external organizational control. Participants' experiences indicate that religious accountability could strengthen ethical commitment while simultaneously creating a strong sense of personal responsibility under demanding conditions. This duality is important for understanding faith-based workplaces because spiritual commitment may provide meaning and moral orientation without necessarily eliminating the material, emotional, or organizational pressures associated with work.

Spirituality, therefore, functioned not merely as a personal belief but also as an internal source of behavioural self-regulation, shaping participants' ethical conduct, emotional discipline, and professional integrity.[49] The findings consequently position *muraqabah* as a lived form of faith-based self-regulation in which divine accountability, professional responsibility, and everyday organizational demands intersect.

[49] Javid et al., "Do Islamic Work Ethics Matter? Impact of Aversive Leadership on Employees' Emotional and Psychological Health Through the Lens of Conservation of Resource Theory."

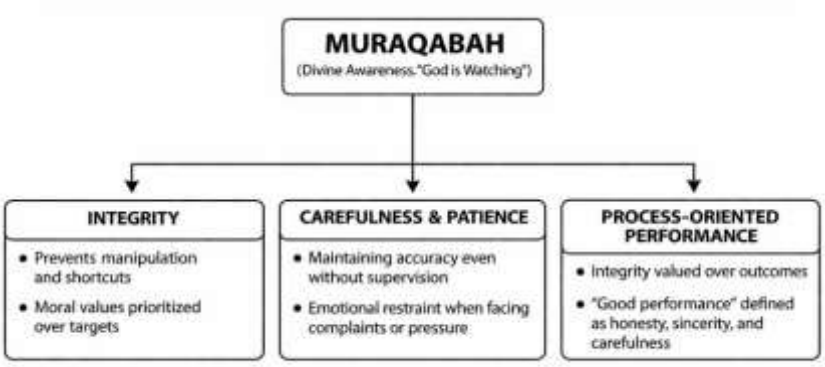


Figure 2. Muraqabah as a driver of internal performance regulation

3. Relational Belonging and Islamic Workplace Community

The findings demonstrate that belongingness within Islamic-oriented organizations was experienced not only as interpersonal acceptance, but also as alignment with shared religious values and collective moral purpose. Participants described feeling attached to the organization because its values reflected their understanding of Islamic principles. One participant described this sense of belonging through the experience of working within an Islamic organizational culture: *"The Islamic work culture makes me feel like I am at home."* Such experiences indicate that belonging emerged through the integration of value congruence, meaningful contribution, and spiritually supportive relationships. These findings align with studies suggesting that belongingness develops through emotional connectedness, value alignment, and relational trust within organizations.[50] The findings further support discussions emphasising that spirituality and shared ethical orientation may strengthen collective attachment and organizational identity.[51]

The findings further reveal that belongingness was reinforced through *ukhuwah* (brotherhood or sisterhood), cultivated through prayer activities, mutual reminders, informal spiritual discussions, and emotionally supportive interpersonal interactions. These experiences strengthened trust, collective identity, and emotional attachment within the workplace. Participants also described belonging through everyday relational practices that reflected shared Islamic values. One participant explained, *"It is not only about working, but also about reminding each other to do good."* Such findings indicate that organizational attachment emerged not merely from social interaction, but from participation in a shared moral mission.

[50] Colbert, Bono, and Purvanova, "Flourishing via Workplace Relationships: Moving Beyond Instrumental Support."
[51] Otaye-Ebede, Shaffakat, and Foster, "A Multilevel Model Examining the Relationships between Workplace Spirituality, Ethical Climate and Outcomes: A Social Cognitive Theory Perspective."

This finding supports Grant's[52] argument concerning prosocial motivation and meaningful contribution while extending it into a faith-based relational context. The findings also resonate with previous research emphasising the role of collective values and shared identity in strengthening organizational attachment.[53]

Taken together, these accounts suggest that faith-based belonging involved both value congruence and relational interaction. The first account emphasizes feeling at home within an Islamic organizational culture, whereas the second highlights belonging as enacted through mutual care and moral reminders. The convergence lies in the importance of shared Islamic values. At the same time, the variation concerns how belonging was experienced, either as an internal sense of compatibility with the organizational environment or through interpersonal practices with colleagues. The findings broaden conventional understandings of belongingness that commonly emphasise emotional acceptance, interpersonal inclusion, or organizational compatibility.[54] Participants in this study described belonging through a more complex relational structure consisting of shared faith, collective moral engagement, and spiritual solidarity. Organizational membership, therefore, carried ethical and transcendental significance beyond ordinary professional participation. However, belonging was not necessarily experienced as a fixed or unconditional state; rather, participants' sense of attachment appeared to be shaped by their perceptions of value alignment and everyday relational experiences within the organization. Participants experienced belonging as moral participation within a community sharing common religious purpose and ethical commitments.[55] This finding reflects broader Islamic communal traditions in Indonesia in which religious identity, moral authority, and collective solidarity are socially constructed through shared spiritual values and institutional practices.[56]

[52] Grant, "The Significance of Task Significance: Job Performance Effects, Relational Mechanisms, and Boundary Conditions."
[53] Eka Pariyanti, Andiana Rosid, and Wiwiek Rabiatul Adawiyah, "Workplace Deviant Behavior among Employees of Islamic-Based Universities in Lampung: The Moderating Role of Islamic Workplace Spirituality," *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education* 14, no. 4 (2022): 1567–91, https://doi.org/10.1108/jarhe-03-2021-0089.
[54] Pandey, Maheshwari, and Malik, "A Systematic Literature Review on Employee Well-Being: Mapping Multi-Level Antecedents, Moderators, Mediators and Future Research Agenda."
[55] Thaib et al., "Sharia Internal Resources: Capabilities To Drive The Sustainability of Islamic Banking."
[56] Sehat Ihsan Shadiqin et al., "Muda Waly Al-Khalidi (1917–1961): Pesantren, Tariqah, and Politics of Religious Authority in Aceh," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 25, no. 1 (2025): 67–93, https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v25i1.14233.

From an Islamic perspective, the findings suggest that workplace belonging may be part of a broader spiritual and moral community grounded in *ukhuwah*, collective responsibility, and shared values oriented toward worship. Al-Attas[57] explains that social relations within Islamic institutions should be rooted in *adab* and ethical harmony rather than purely instrumental interaction. Participants often described stronger feelings of belonging when organizational relationships, practices, and goals were perceived as compatible with their religious values. However, belonging was not necessarily static or unconditional; it appeared to depend on the extent to which participants perceived alignment between their personal values, interpersonal relationships, and everyday organizational practices. Consequently, the workplace became not merely a professional institution, but also a moral community in which organizational participation carried spiritual significance and ethical meaning. This finding contributes to organizational scholarship by demonstrating that faith-based belonging provides additional moral and spiritual dimensions to existing discussions of organizational identity and attachment.[58]

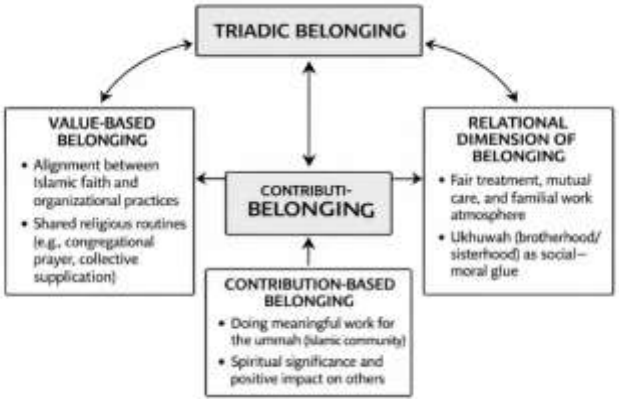


Figure 3. Faith-based belonging through values, relationships, and contribution

4. Islamic Job Satisfaction and Spiritual Fulfillment

Participants described job satisfaction through multiple dimensions, including spiritual peace, moral fulfilment, relational harmony, perceived contribution, and material aspects of employment. For some participants, spiritual and relational meaning appeared to coexist with material considerations rather than replace them. Satisfaction was primarily interpreted through feelings of spiritual peace, moral fulfilment, relational harmony, and perceived

[57] Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, 2nd printing (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1993), https://traditionalhikma.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Al-Attas-Islam-and-Secularism.pdf.

[58] Bryan J Dik, Denise Daniels, and Alexandra J Alayan, "Religion, Spirituality, and the Workplace: A Review and Critique," *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 11, no. 1 (2024): 279–305, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-110721-041458.

blessings (*barakah*) derived from work. One participant stated, *"Sometimes the work is tiring, but my heart feels calm. I feel this job has blessings."* Another participant, however, described a less tranquil experience: *"When it comes to peace of mind, I actually cannot be too calm, because every day I am always thinking about the agenda for the next day*." Taken together, these accounts suggest that Islamic job satisfaction was not a frictionless state of spiritual fulfilment. While one participant associated work with inner calm and barakah, another experienced ongoing anticipation and mental pressure related to future work demands. The convergence across these accounts lies in the importance of work meaning, whereas the variation reveals that spiritual meaning did not necessarily eliminate the practical and emotional pressures of employment. Such findings indicate that employees evaluated satisfaction not merely through material rewards, but through the extent to which work aligned with their moral and spiritual values. These findings support discussions on workplace spirituality, emphasising that fulfilment may emerge through ethical coherence, meaningful contribution, and spiritual tranquillity rather than solely through economic incentives.[59] The findings additionally resonate with Islamic perspectives, positioning work as part of *ibadah* and moral responsibility rather than merely transactional labour.

Where participants discussed fatigue, organizational pressure, or material considerations, these experiences did not necessarily eliminate the sense of meaning they derived from work. Instead, participants appeared to negotiate satisfaction across several dimensions, including spiritual fulfilment, relational harmony, meaningful contribution, and the material conditions of employment. Employees frequently associated satisfaction with helping others improve spiritually, contributing positively to society, and maintaining harmonious relationships within the organization. Satisfaction was therefore experienced as a multidimensional process in which spiritual meaning, relational quality, meaningful contribution, and material considerations could intersect. Such findings support previous studies emphasising that meaningful work and prosocial contributions may strengthen employee well-being and emotional fulfilment.[60] The findings also align with discussions suggesting that spiritual consciousness may contribute to psychological resilience and positive workplace experiences.[61]

[59] Ashmos and Duchon, "Spirituality at Work: A Conceptualization and Measure."
[60] Grant, "The Significance of Task Significance: Job Performance Effects, Relational Mechanisms, and Boundary Conditions."
[61] Raghavendra Sode, Kalaa Chenji, and R Vijayaraghavan, "Exploring Workplace Spirituality, Mindfulness, Digital Technology and Psychological Well-Being: A Complex Interplay in Organizational Contexts," *Acta Psychologica* 251 (2024): 104601, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104601.

This finding extends discussions on meaningful work and employee well-being by emphasising fulfilment derived from moral contribution and value congruence rather than hedonic pleasure alone.[62] The present findings suggest that spiritual consciousness and religious commitment may represent important yet underexplored dimensions of employee satisfaction within Islamic-oriented workplaces. Rather than understanding well-being solely in terms of psychological comfort or reduced strain, participants emphasised spiritual tranquillity, gratitude, sincerity, and moral coherence as central aspects of fulfilment. The findings therefore suggest that job satisfaction may also emerge through ethical congruence and spiritual fulfilment beyond material compensation or career advancement opportunities.[63]

Relational quality additionally played a significant role in shaping participants' satisfaction experiences. Emotional trust, mutual care, and supportive interpersonal interactions strengthened feelings of comfort and fulfilment within the organization. Participants often described feeling spiritually and morally "at home" in the workplace. This finding supports previous discussions highlighting the role of relational well-being and interpersonal trust in shaping workplace experiences.[64] From an Islamic perspective, satisfaction was closely associated with the experience of *barakah*, moral harmony, and socially beneficial contribution. Consequently, satisfaction in Islamic-oriented organizations cannot be separated from the broader ethical and spiritual environment in which work is experienced.



Figure 4. Islamic job satisfaction anchored in religious and prosocial impact

[62] Pandey, Maheshwari, and Malik, "A Systematic Literature Review on Employee Well-Being: Mapping Multi-Level Antecedents, Moderators, Mediators and Future Research Agenda"; Asta Stankevičienė et al., "The Mediating Effect of Work-Life Balance on the Relationship Between Work Culture and Employee Well-Being," *Journal of Business Economics and Management* 22, no. 4 (2021): 988–1007, https://doi.org/10.3846/jbem.2021.14729.

[63] Marinka A C T Kuijpers et al., "Towards a Career Perspective on Lifelong Development: Applying a Multiple-Stakeholder Approach to Explore the Concept," *Employee Relations: The International Journal* 47, no. 9 (2025): 45–62, https://doi.org/10.1108/er-04-2024-0253.

[64] Colbert, Bono, and Purvanova, "Flourishing via Workplace Relationships: Moving Beyond Instrumental Support."

5. Self-Transformation Through Work and Faith

The findings reveal that participants experienced work as a medium of personal, moral, and spiritual transformation. Participants commonly described workplace experiences as contributing to the development of patience, sincerity, emotional maturity, and self-reflection, although the extent and meaning of these changes varied across individual accounts. One participant described this transformation more specifically: *"The most significant change was an increase in my sense of responsibility, discipline, and awareness that work is part of worship."* Organizational challenges, interpersonal interactions, and everyday responsibilities were interpreted not merely as professional demands but also as opportunities for ethical growth and spiritual learning. Another participant emphasised a more relational and emotional form of transformation, stating that *"the work made us more patient, calmer, and also more grateful."* Taken together, these accounts suggest that self-transformation through work was experienced through different pathways. One participant emphasised changes in responsibility, discipline, and religious awareness, whereas another highlighted patience, emotional regulation, and gratitude. The convergence lies in the perception that work changed the self beyond technical competence, while the variation shows that transformation was shaped by the specific relational and organizational situations in which participants worked. These findings align with discussions suggesting that work experiences may shape identity construction, emotional development, and moral self-understanding.[65] The findings also support Islamic perspectives emphasising *tarbiyah* and continuous moral self-improvement through everyday practice.

Participants reported becoming more reflective, emotionally controlled, patient, and less judgmental over time. Workplace difficulties were increasingly understood as opportunities for self-improvement rather than merely organizational burdens. Such transformation emerged not only through formal organizational training, but also through repeated moral practice and faith-integrated work experiences. Consequently, work functioned simultaneously as a professional and spiritual learning environment. These findings support studies suggesting that meaningful work may contribute to psychological growth, self-awareness, and long-term identity development.[66] The findings also resonate with discussions

[65] Bimrose et al., "Transforming Identities and Co-Constructing Careers of Career Counselors."
[66] Hannes Zacher, Dorien T A M Kooij, and Margaret E Beier, "Active Aging at Work: Contributing Factors and Implications for Organizations," *Organizational Dynamics* 47, no. 1 (2018): 37–45, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2017.08.001.

on workplace spirituality, emphasising self-transcendence and ethical development as dimensions of organizational experience.[67]

The findings further indicate that workplace experiences functioned not only as mechanisms of productivity enhancement and competence development, but also as processes of moral education and character formation.[68] Workplace difficulties were often interpreted as opportunities to cultivate virtues such as sabar (patience), ikhlas (sincerity), and muhasabah (self-reflection), although such interpretations did not necessarily remove the practical or emotional difficulties associated with demanding work situations. These findings suggest that work carried pedagogical and spiritual meanings extending beyond instrumental organizational objectives. In this sense, organizational life functioned as an arena of ethical refinement and spiritual cultivation rather than merely economic productivity. From an Islamic perspective, these findings can be interpreted as illustrating how everyday work experiences provide opportunities for moral self-discipline and spiritual development through sincere intention and ethical consciousness. Similarly, workplace interactions and cooperation may be understood as practices through which individuals develop collective responsibility and ethical awareness.

The findings further demonstrate that participants did not perceive professional identity and spiritual identity as separate domains. Instead, faith and professionalism were experienced as interconnected and mutually reinforcing dimensions of the self. Through repeated engagement with morally meaningful work practices, employees developed stronger ethical awareness and a deeper understanding of professionalism grounded in religious values. This finding contributes to organizational scholarship by providing additional insight into religious identity formation and spiritual selfhood within workplace contexts.[69]

However, the accounts do not suggest that faith-based meaning eliminated the practical tensions of organizational life. Participants' experiences included fatigue, organizational pressure, demanding responsibilities, and the need to balance everyday work expectations with personal and spiritual commitments. Thus, spiritual meaning and organizational difficulty could coexist within the same work experience. For some participants, faith provided a basis for maintaining patience, responsibility, and commitment when work became demanding. Still, it did not necessarily remove the emotional or practical pressures associated with such situations. Religious commitment therefore appeared not only as a source of meaning but also

[67] Nath, "Reframing Workplace Spirituality: A Critical Inquiry through Cummings' Dimensions."
[68] Parker, Morgeson, and Johns, "One Hundred Years of Work Design Research: Looking Back and Looking Forward."
[69] Hall et al., "MOSAIC: A Model of Stereotyping Through Associated and Intersectional Categories."

as an internal form of responsibility that could become demanding under difficult working conditions.

The present findings should nevertheless be interpreted within the study's empirical boundaries. The interviews did not specifically investigate whether management used concepts such as *amanah* or *muraqabah* to encourage excessive work, discourage salary-related concerns, or suppress employee voice and unionization. Therefore, the study cannot establish that such practices occurred. Instead, the findings suggest that participants internalized responsibility through religious meaning, highlighting the need for future research to examine how faith-based responsibility interacts with workload, compensation, employee voice, and organizational power relations in Islamic-oriented workplaces.

The interconnected themes suggest that participants integrated religious meaning with professional, relational, psychological, and practical dimensions of work. Rather than replacing the economic and organizational purposes of employment, faith provided an interpretive framework through which participants understood responsibility, belonging, satisfaction, and personal development. The integrated framework presented in Figure 6 demonstrates how *amanah*, *muraqabah*, faith-based belonging, spiritual fulfilment, and self-transformation dynamically reinforced one another in shaping employees' interpretations of meaningful work and organizational identity. These findings contribute to growing discussions regarding the importance of religion and spirituality in shaping workplace experiences, ethical behaviour, and organizational commitment.[70] The findings additionally highlight Islamic spirituality as an important moral and interpretative framework shaping organizational meaning and ethical experience.

The findings additionally provide practical implications for organizations seeking to strengthen ethical commitment and sustainable employee engagement. Islamic-oriented organizations may benefit from fostering environments that support moral reflection, shared values, spiritual expression, and collective purpose while also maintaining fair working conditions, reasonable workloads, appropriate compensation, and opportunities for professional development. The findings suggest that spiritual meaning should complement rather than substitute for organizational practices that address employees' professional, relational, and material needs. Such approaches may encourage stronger organizational attachment, ethical responsibility, and long-term commitment among employees. More broadly, the findings

[70] Javid et al., "Do Islamic Work Ethics Matter? Impact of Aversive Leadership on Employees' Emotional and Psychological Health Through the Lens of Conservation of Resource Theory."

suggest that organizational sustainability may be strengthened when workplaces accommodate employees' ethical and spiritual aspirations alongside professional responsibilities.

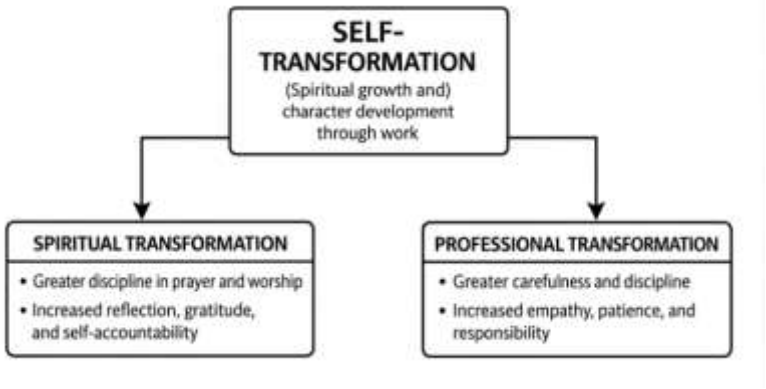


Figure 5. Work as a pathway of self-transformation

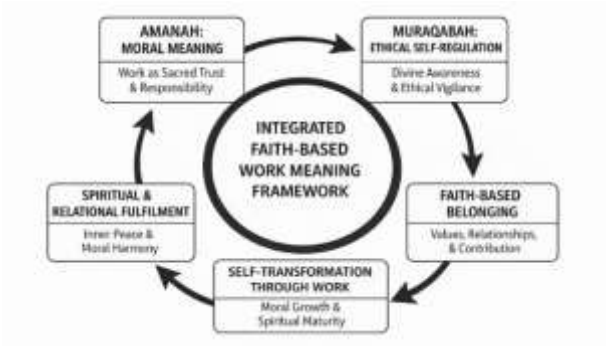


Figure 6. Integrated conceptual framework of faith-based work meaning in Islamic-oriented organizations

C. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Muslim employees in Islamic-oriented organizations perceive work not merely as an economic activity but as a moral, relational, and spiritual practice rooted in Islamic consciousness and accountability before God. Consistent with Islamic traditions emphasizing *adab*, *amanah*, and ethical self-cultivation, participants understood work as part of ibadah and moral responsibility while also engaging with its professional, relational, and material dimensions. The findings therefore suggest that faith does not necessarily displace the practical purposes of employment; rather, it provides an additional moral and spiritual framework through which employees interpret those purposes. Through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), five interconnected themes emerged: *amanah* as moral responsibility, *muraqabah* as internal self-regulation, faith-based belonging, Islamic job satisfaction, and self-transformation. Together, these themes reveal that work is experienced as a process of ethical refinement, spiritual awareness, and relational engagement

that shapes professional identity, interpersonal conduct, and organizational participation. Employees reported that accountability before God encouraged sincerity, responsibility, emotional restraint, and commitment, even without direct supervision, while belongingness and satisfaction arose from value congruence, *ukhuwah*, collective purpose, and spiritual fulfilment.

The findings contribute to organizational and Islamic studies by positioning faith not merely as a contextual variable but as an epistemological and moral framework that shapes organizational meaning, ethical behavior, workplace attachment, and personal transformation. The study also addresses the limited phenomenological exploration within Islamic Work Ethics scholarship, which has largely relied on quantitative approaches. Practically, the findings suggest that organizations can support ethical commitment and meaningful engagement by combining shared values, moral reflection, spiritual awareness, and collective purpose with fair organizational practices, appropriate material rewards, manageable workloads, and professional support. As this research focuses on employees in Islamic-oriented organizations in Indonesia, future studies may extend these insights through comparative, longitudinal, and interdisciplinary investigations of the relationship between Islamic spirituality, moral consciousness, and organizational structures in contemporary workplaces.

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