

PRIMARY RESEARCH

Mediating Effect of Intrinsic Motivation on the relationship between Islamic Work Ethics and Job Performance

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Abstract.

Purpose: In this article, we examined the mediating effect of employees' intrinsic motivation (IM) on the relationship between Islamic work ethics (IWE) and job performance (JP) in the higher education sector of Pakistan. A correlational research design was employed to undertake this cross-sectional study.

Methodology: This study was conducted using a simple random sampling technique.

Findings: The results of the study reveal a strong positive association between IWE and JP and moderately positive relationships between IWE and IM, and IM and JP. Further, the study also reveals that Intrinsic Motivation fully mediates the impact of IWE on job performance.

Significance: The results of this study show that there is a strong positive significant association between Islamic work ethics and job performance. Moreover, intrinsic motivation has also mediated the relationship between IWE and JP.

Research Limitations/Implications: The most important and beneficial contribution and addition to the current research is the introduction of intrinsic motivation as a mediating component, which has not been explored extensively in prior studies. Employee performance can be noticed when Islamic work concepts have a positive impact on IM.

Practical and Social Implications: This study confirms previous findings while also adding new information and a new perspective to the existing body of knowledge. Intrinsic motivation is revealed to be important in regulating the relationship between IWE and JP.

KAUJIE Classification: H13, K1, K10, L32, L41, L42

JEL Classification: G23, O16

INTRODUCTION

During the last two decades, one of the most common factors in several high profile corporate collapses, such as Enron, WorldCom and Satyam, was indulgence in unethical practices such

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as fraud, corruption and workplace harassment (Abdi et al., 2014). Such collapses highlighted the need and importance of workplace ethics in organizations (Husin & Norhasniah, 2012). Consequently, organizational development (OD) managers started incorporating ethical guides in their employee development and training programs based on the Weberian model of Protestant Ethics (Asadullah et al., 2020). Further, researchers also started studying the need and importance of work ethic as well as certain human behavioral traits that may demand work ethic (Asadullah et al., 2020; Murtaza et al., 2016). This led to scholarly research on the impact of work ethic on job performance and the associated role of certain mediating mechanisms in this relationship (Asadullah et al., 2020). Various studies have examined the impact of work ethics on employees' job performance. Employing multiple theories, they attempt to explain the behavior of employees at the workplace as a result of the inculcation of work ethics. The researchers further identified three domains of work ethic that include Protestant Work Ethics (originated from teachings of Christianity), Confucius Work Ethics (originated from Chinese Confucius philosophy) and Islamic Work Ethics (having roots in Islamic teachings) (Asadullah et al., 2020). Organizations benefit from good cooperation because it improves teamwork, job quality, instils harmony and the rights of each member inside the organisation, and improves communication (Al-samdi et al., 2021). Among all the codes of work ethic, the Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) became popular because of its instrumentality for job performance because it treats work as noble task instead of mere calculative act (Asadullah et al., 2020).

Irrespective of the predictive ability of IWE toward job performance of employees, other studies suggest that in organizations where there is a culture of exchange mechanisms and calculative orientations, work ethics are not directly effective in predicting the job performance of employees. Instead, the job performance behavior of employees in these organizations is characterized by IWE and mediation of motivating factors (Hayati & Caniago, 2012). This suggests that while IWE may not be directly instrumental in predicting job performance in such situations, it may internally motivate the employees to exhibit better job performance (Hayati & Caniago, 2012).

Thus far, research on work ethic has mainly focused on Protestant Work Ethics (PWE) as a predictor of job performance behavior of employees at the workplace, neglecting the importance of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) in determining job performance (Asadullah et al., 2020). Further, to the best of our knowledge, no research has yet considered intrinsic motivation as a potential mediating variable in the relationship between Islamic work ethics and job performance.

To address this research gap, we examine the mediating role of intrinsic motivation in the IWE and job performance relationship. Although it is evident from the recent research that IWE predicts employees' job performance, based on the assumptions of self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000), we believe that in organizations with higher calculative orientations, there is a dire need of mediating mechanisms such as intrinsic motivation between the relationship of IWE and job performance of employees. The SDT suggests that certain internal drivers (including one's core values, interests, and personal sense of morality) inspire individuals to behave in certain ways (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Core values intrinsically

motivate an individual to achieve his/her desirable goal. Thus, it can be assumed that IWE internally motivates employees to exhibit improved job performance.

THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Impact of Islamic Work Ethic on Job Performance

Job performance is described as “observable things (or behaviors) people do at the workplace which are relevant for the goals and objectives of an organization” (Campbell et al., 1990). Hayati and Caniago (2012) found a positive association between job performance & IWE, although the study didn't give any hypothetical reason to support the results. Imam et al. (2013) also found a positively significant relationship between job performance and IWE; the correlation value is 0.770 with P-value is less than 0.05. Similarly, regression analysis also showed positive relation in X, while personality Y shows the result of regression is 56.4% at a 99% confidence interval. Further, Murtaza et al., (2016) reported similar results. Their study showed a positive relationship between IWE and Job performance. The study further revealed that IWE has a predictive ability of employees' job performance. The study reported a 34% variation in job performance due to IWE. However, no arguments support the results theoretically or logically. IWE would assist these workers in coping with the stress of supervisory abuse. These people, who have strong work ethics, would not compromise on their work even if they were being abused by their bosses (Ahmed Tahir & Khan, 2020).

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000) states that people want control over their actions. The SDT theorizes the concept of autonomy that an individual can perform better if he has the autonomy to do with his own will in consideration of IWE and Islamic spiritual values and principles with no stress upon him can help him to perform well at the workplace. Based on the assumptions of SDT, the literature showed that there is a positive significant association between JP and IM (Hayati & Caniago, 2012), with an additional impact on the organizational commitment that would also lead to an individual performing well at their workplace for the organization (Hayati & Caniago, 2012). The SDT theory also suggests that the three psychological needs - autonomy, competence, and relatedness - defined by Deci and Ryan (2000), motivate an individual's behaviour in performing different actions or reactions. In the past, it has been consistently shown by various researchers, Nithyanandan (2010), Rokhmen and Omar (2008) and Yousef (2001) that IWE has a significant effect on JP and IM (Hayati Caniago, 2012). These studies indicate that those individuals who are intrinsically motivated are also highly satisfied with their jobs at the workplace. Based on the above discussion, it is hypothesized under consideration of SDT that how it strengthens the relationship between IWE and JP.

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between IWE and JP

Impact of Islamic work ethic on Intrinsic Motivation

Islamic work ethics (IWE) is a noble deed to help in maintaining the equilibrium in one's social life. High levels of commitment to one's job usually result in avoiding unethical practices and wealth accumulation. Therefore, it can be asserted that Islamic work ethics

bound an individual to perform good deeds and abstain from bad ones (Shamsudin et al., 2010).

Deci and Ryan (1985) write about intrinsic motivation and the self-determination theory, which identifies three psychological needs: competence, relatedness and autonomy, while intrinsic motivation also expresses the psychological needs of hunger, food, wealth and status initially. Along with these primary psychological needs, intrinsic motivation also includes the search for and engagement in operations that we find difficult, exciting and internally rewarding. These spiritual values in the context of IWE also give inherent satisfaction to an individual while performing at the workplace (Usman et al., 2016).

Hayati and Caniago (2012) asserted that Islamic work ethic (IWE) has a positive relationship with an employee's intrinsic motivation (IM), however, the study didn't explain this relationship with any theoretical reason. In another study conducted in Pakistan, the authors find the presence of a positive and significant relationship between IM and IWE of an individual at the workplace (Zaman et al., 2013). However, the results of this study cannot be generalized because of the very small sample size (n=80). Further, the study lacks any theoretical arguments to explain extracted results.

IWE is associated with important processes and outcomes related to work like job performance, organizational citizenship behavior and motivation (Berings et al., 2004). In the same context, work ethics and moral values can be the main interpreters of motivation for performing a task at the workplace (Latham & Pinder, 2005).

Motivation is very closely associated with the concept of energy. Freud (1962) and Hull (1943) discussed this concept in classical theories and associated it with the concept of instincts and determinations (Arvanitis, 2017). An organisation's employees show intrinsic motivation due to built-in energy to pursue and overcome challenges (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Self-determination theory's view of ethics will make an effort upon the psychological record of an individual's moral values and ethical behaviors that interplay between the individual and the environment.

Self-determination theory (SDT) focuses on the nature of motivation, or the "Why" of behavior. It is the theory of personality and macro human motivation (Hussain et al., 2015). Deci and Ryan (2000) explained that the SDT has multidimensional approaches to motivation, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for employees. They further elaborated that those individuals who are highly intrinsically motivated have high levels of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The SDT theory argues that rather than being intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, individuals are autonomously motivated to involve themselves in behaviors (Naheed & Mat Isa, 2018). Based on the above discussion, we can generate a hypothesize that:

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between IWE and IM

Impact of Intrinsic Motivation on Job Performance

Research strongly supported IM as a key predictor of JP (Callahan et al., 2003) in sports and education settings (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Gagné and Deci (2005) argued that there is positive

relationship between IM or autonomous motivation and job performance in organizations. However, according to Gagné and Deci (2005, p. 347), IM only appears to significantly affect employees' JP in case of out-of-the-ordinary tasks, while "when a job comprises only routine tasks, however, there seems to be no performance benefit to intrinsic motivation". Studies conducted in the banking sector regarding performance appraisal of employees showed the presence of a strong positive relationship between job performance and IM (Kuvaas, 2006).

By considering SDT theory, its component of autonomy supports the concept of autonomous motivation or intrinsic motivation, which has a significant positive effect on job performance in such a way that the autonomy is necessarily considered for moral value and regulations to be adopted appropriately for the subsequent actions of behavior to be practiced (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Therefore, based on the above discussion, we hypothesize that: -

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between IM and JP

Mediating Role of Intrinsic Motivation in Islamic Work Ethics and Job Performance Relationship

Intrinsic motivation leads to doing something by an individual that is inherently enjoyable or interesting for him. The SDT also states that intrinsic motivation is based on inherent reward while extrinsic reward is based on outside rewards (Deci & Ryan, 2000). An intrinsically motivated individual is able to define his area of concern, while he is able to do what he wants to do but at the same time is also concerned with his easiness at work by considering his autonomy and control of actions.

The literature describes the Protestant Work Ethics (PWE) in the background of workers and employers is a motivational achievement (Hayati & Caniago, 2014). Nithyanandan (2010) stated that higher PWE people are also highly intrinsically motivated (Gheitani et al., 2019). Consequently, the theory of IWE was conceptualized by researchers later when they noted that due to the fact that people in different societies may have different cultures, PWE may not be applicable for all such cultures. It indicates the relationship between intrinsic motivation and IWE, especially from the perspective of Muslims perspective by considering such studies. The Muslim individual who follows Islamic moral values and practices is keen to help others or wants to do something for others, either at the workplace or in society, willingly because he has a strong foundation of Islamic education imparted by his parents, schools and society (Usman et al., 2016). Therefore, it shows that there is strong positive association between IWE and IM because the Islamic value and norms teaches an individual to gain reward by helping others, a perspective of intrinsically motivated people.

The first two psychological needs of self-determination theory, "autonomy" and "competence", focus on intrinsic motivation leading to an individual's self-regulation. Deci and Ryan (1985) also opine that meeting an individual's autonomy and competence needs leads to intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. The sense of competence does not increase intrinsic motivation until it is accompanied by a sense of autonomy. Therefore, intrinsic motivation plays a greater role in enhancing job performance at the workplace.

As discussed earlier, IM has not been used as a mediating variable between IWE and job performance in the research literature (Gheitani et al., 2019). IWE has a positive impact

on job performance. The performance and positive attitude of employees in reference to self-determination theory under its component of “relatedness” with other employees at the workplace have always been major sources of organization and its management. The organization always try to improve the performance and positive behavior of their employees by expending considerable amounts on it (Imam et al., 2013). However, an intrinsically motivated individual doesn't need any external reward like money to perform his tasks at the workplace. Hayati and Caniago (2014) have shown that there is a significantly positive impact of IWE on IM and JP with some other organizational outcomes. Those who follow Islamic work ethics as a value are more satisfied at their jobs while performing any task and are more committed with their work (Yousef, 2001).

In line with the self-determination theory, an individual having positive intentions or actions towards his job under IWE may perform much better than those who have negative intentions. Gheitani et al. (2019) states that intrinsically motivated individuals always play a greater role in the achievements of an organization. According to Harackiewicz (1979), behaviors that are associated with intrinsic motivation are also associated with pleasure (Gheitani et al., 2019). They further argue that intrinsic motivation has a positive impact on behaviors related to work. In performing an activity, IM promotes an attractive behavior that results in internal satisfaction and enjoyment to the performer. As mentioned earlier that IM is the most important factor in preventing unethical and corrupt behavior of employees at the workplace by Gheitani et al. (2019).

Zaman et al. (2013) has conducted a study that shows the mediating role between intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. Based on the regression analysis of this study, he found that there is a strong positive association between the IWE and Job satisfaction through mediating role of intrinsic motivation (Zaman et al., 2013). Considering the above-mentioned discussion, it is concluded that intrinsic motivation has an extensive input while performing at a job with a helping attitude in the context of Islamic work ethic, not only from an individual's perspective but also from that of the organization (Gheitani et al., 2019).

According to self-determination theory, an intrinsically motivated individual is more self-regulated. The “competence” component of this theory allows an individual to do work in his own way to perform well in his own area of expertise, which would directly affect his job performance. The sense of autonomy gives him a positive indication to do work as he wants to do and supports his intrinsic motivation while performing at the workplace. The Islamic moral and spiritual values that come inherently to an individual or are learnt through the environment also have a greater impact on his intrinsic motivation positively and lead to an increase in his performance and positive attitude towards work (Deci & Ryan, 2010).

H4: Intrinsic Motivation will mediate the relationship between IWE and JP

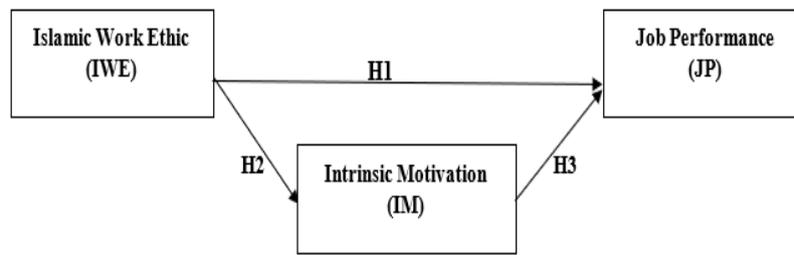


FIGURE 1. Research Model

METHODS

This study employs a relational design to undertake this quantitative and cross-sectional study to examine the relationship and impact of Islamic work ethics on the job performance of employees with mediating role of employees' intrinsic motivation. A standard structured questionnaire was used for the collection of data.

Participants

The participants of the study include all the managers and faculty members of Riphah International University Islamabad and its affiliated institutions (e.g. its Hospitals, Medical college, Institute of Media Sciences, Dental College, Institute of Management Sciences etc.). The researcher employed simple random sampling. A total of 292 questionnaires were completed by the participants using a sample size calculator through the online tool Raosoft a sample size calculator.

Instrument

Islamic work ethics. Islamic Work Ethics was measured through a 23×items scale developed by (Khadijah et al., 2015). The responses were quantified on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree=5 to Strongly Disagree=1.

Job performance. Job performance was measured using 7×items scale developed by Williams and Anderson (1991). The responses were quantified on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree=5 to Strongly Disagree=1. This scale measures the in-role behavior of employees.

Intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic Motivation was measured using 3×item scale used by (Tremblay et al., 2009). The responses were quantified on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree=5 to Strongly Disagree=1.

RESULTS

The data were analysed using SPSS version 21 by employing descriptive and inferential statistics that include reliability analysis, correlation analysis as well as mediation analysis using Preacher and Hayes' (2008) process.

Descriptive and Correlational Analysis

Table 1 shows that on average, among respondents, there were 141 males and 151 females out of 292 samples size, and the average age was 36 years with a minimum 23 and maximum 73 years with a deviation of 10 to 11 years.

TABLE 1
Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	141	48.3
Female	151	51.7
Total	292	100

Table 2 shows that the working experience on average was above 9 years with a deviation of 9 to 10 years, which shows that they were experienced and young personnel.

TABLE 2
Working Experience

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	292	23	73	36.38	10.199
Working Experience	292	0	46	9.37	9.529

Table 3 shows that most of the participants have their education level is post-graduation or above, where female respondents were more as compared to males.

TABLE 3
Qualifications

	Frequency	Percent
Bachelors	58	19.9
Masters	54	18.5
MS/MPhil	141	48.3
Ph.D.	39	13.4
Total	292	100

Table 4 showing that out of respondents the strength of faculty members was relatively high as compared to other respondent category which shows that great interest and involvement of them in this study.

TABLE 4
Designations

	Frequency	Percent
Faculty Member	212	72.6
Assist./Deputy Manager	48	16.4
Manager	25	8.6
Director	7	2.4
Total	292	100

TABLE 5
Reliability and Variance

Constructs	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Islamic Work Ethics	23	0.95	0.95	0.84
Job Performance	7	0.98	0.97	0.72
Intrinsic Motivation	3	0.91	0.89	0.63

Table 5 shows that Composite Reliability (CR) and (ii) Cronbach's Alpha Reliability for these constructs exceeded 0.7, which shows high internal consistency. Further, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) also exceeded the defined value of 0.60, indicating that all the items converge on their indicators.

TABLE 6
Correlation Matrix

	M	SD	IWE	JP	IM
Islamic Work Ethics (IWE)	4.1159	0.35163	1		
Job Performance (JP)	4.2979	0.43855	.626**	1	
Intrinsic Motivation (IM)	4.2397	0.55646	.388**	.367**	1

Table 6 above shows that there is a strong positive association between IWE and JP ($r=0.62$, $p<0.01$), however IWE and IM depict a moderately positive relationship ($r=0.39$, $p<0.01$), as do IM and JP ($r=0.37$, $p<0.01$). This bivariate matrix of results shows that the results provisionally support the hypotheses H1, H2, and H3.

TABLE 7
Mediation Analysis

Variable's Relationship	β	t	p
Independent variable to Mediator			
IWEL ->IM	0.121	4.28	0.001
Direct effect of Mediator on JP			
IM-> JP	0.732	12.168	0.001
IWE effect on JP			
IWE->JP	0.239	3.405	0.000
	β	CI lower	CI upper
Indirect effect of HL on KH via mediator (bootstrap results) Distrust	0.1081	0.0656	0.2936

The third hypothesis postulated that intrinsic motivation mediates the relationship between IWE and JP. This hypothesis was tested using the Bootstrapping approach (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). It is evident from the results given in Table 3 that IM significantly mediates the relationship of IWE and JP at 95% bootstrap CI, excluding zero (CI.95 =0.0656, 0.2936).

Islamic work ethics and Job Performance

The first hypothesis aimed to test the presence of a significant positive relationship between Islamic work ethics and job performance among employees. The results are similar to the previous findings in the literature (e.g. Din et al., 2019; Yousef, 2001; Rokhman & Omar, 2008). The results of an exploratory factor analysis also show a strong association between IWE and Job performance. This indicates that the guidelines of IWE play a greater role in achieving the organizational goals. The results of this study also show that Islamic work ethics and values contribute a lot in enhancing not only employees' own work performance but also have a greater impact on organizational overall performance. The self-determination theory also supports its perspective of autonomy. Autonomy to an employee helps him to perform well at the workplace by considering the Islamic spiritual values and conviction adopted as a Muslim (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Islamic Work Ethics and Intrinsic Motivation

As indicated earlier, research literature argues for the presence of a very strong and meaningful association not only between IWE and IM (Hayati & Caniogo, 2012), but also between PWE (Protestant work ethics) and IM (Din et al., 2019). The results show that their Islamic beliefs and values motivate employees towards excellence in their work and ensure their high commitment. The study also shows that if the employees base their behavior on Islamic values and ethics, they will possess high levels of intrinsic motivation, as supported by the literature (Din et al., 2019). The SDT theory also supports this concept, the psychological concepts of its basic needs for motivation like hunger, food and wealth etc., which is also supported in the context of IWE and Islamic spiritual values that how an individual gets satisfied while helping others (Usman et al., 2016).

Intrinsic Motivation and Job Performance

The results of this study indicate the presence of a strong positive relationship between IM and JP. In line with the findings of research literature on the subject, this suggests that inner motivation driven by Islamic belief and faith ensures the commitment of employees at the work place and helps them to achieve their individual as well as organizational goals positively (Zaman et al., 2013).

The faith in God and Muslims' attitude help them to accomplish their tasks at the workplace honestly and allow them to perform their duties and responsibilities efficiently and effectively (Gheitani et al., 2019). Therefore, individual effort, commitment, positive attitude and most importantly faith in God (as embodied by one's consideration for Islamic values), can definitely help a lot in performing well at the workplace. The SDT theory also supports these findings since it states that the basic needs of an employee that an organization should fulfil

results in a good performance by an employee at the workplace (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

The Combined effect of Islamic Work Ethics and Intrinsic Motivation on Job Performance

The sixth hypothesis of this study postulated that intrinsic motivation would mediate the impact of IWE on JP. This study shows that there is indeed a significantly strong positive association between Islamic work ethics and job performance, and intrinsic motivation has also mediated the relationship between IWE and JP. The results drawn using AMOS 21 show that there is partial mediation among all these three variables. These results find adequate support in the research literature (Din et al., 2019). The Islamic beliefs, values and principles followed by an individual must have a strong motivation to perform well in the workplace (Al-Douri et al., 2020). This hypothesis also garners support from the self-determination theory, as intrinsic motivation comes from inherent satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and this intrinsic motivation enables an employee to perform well at the workplace.

Conclusions and Implications for Further Research

This research was conducted to investigate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and employees' perceived job performance in consideration of their desirable attitude, behaviors and their intentions towards the individual as well as organizational goals. Intrinsic motivation was taken as the mediator between the relationship of IWE and JP. A total of 3 hypotheses were developed based on past research and studies. The results of the study show that employees having good Islamic faith and positive intentions are more loyal to their jobs and perform better at the workplace. Such motivations could be exploited and enhanced through adequate training programs for employees that would focus on their helping attitudes and positive behaviors towards their job performance. This study was conducted to empirically examine the relationship between Islamic work ethics and job performance with intrinsic motivation as the mediator. The findings of the study open some new dimensions for future research. The impacts of other predictors and mediators, such as affective commitment, job satisfaction etc., on job performance should also be investigated, while the use of extrinsic motivation as a potential mediator may also make for an interesting study.

Intrinsic motivation as a mediator is relatively a new area of research. Although some studies have used it recently in analyses of employees' performance and their behaviors at the workplace, much work still needs to be done. For example, not much evidence is available in the literature about its effects, how these intrinsic motivations can be enhanced in light of Islamic teachings and how they can directly affect the attitude and behaviors of an employee towards organizational success.

It is also recommended that while this study was based on simple random sampling techniques, future studies should be carried out by taking some sophisticated sampling techniques with a large sample size in a wide demographic area in the context of higher education in Pakistan. This study can also be extended to both private and public higher education institutions to make the results more specific and generalizable.

In this study, all the variables, including mediating variables, were measured on 5 points

Likert scale; future studies should be carried out using different Likert scales with different variables to prevent bias.

Theoretical Implications

Research has looked into the relationship between Islamic work ethics and job performance in the past, finding a negative link between IWE and numerous aspects of employees' attitudes, such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work outcomes, job specification, and so on (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009). This research backs up earlier findings and adds some crucial information in a new dimension to the existing body of knowledge. Intrinsic motivation is found to play a significant role in moderating the link between IWE and JP. This intrinsic drive points to significant gaps in the literature regarding mediating variables between Islamic work ethics and job success.

The introduction of intrinsic motivation as a mediating component, which was not addressed extensively in previous studies, is the most essential and valuable contribution and addition to the current literature. When Islamic work principles have a beneficial impact on IM, it may be seen in employee performance.

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