

# Workplace Spirituality and Empowering Leadership in Improving Proactive Behavior: The Role of Job Engagement as Mediator

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## ABSTRACT

The function of this article is how to know the influence of workplace spirituality, empowering leadership and proactive behavior. Further, we also examined the effect of job engagement as mediator. Sample of this study is employees of four Islamic Banking (BNI Syariah, Bank Syariah Mandiri, Bank Nagari Syariah, Bank Muamalat) in the city of Padang with 200 respondents. The analysis technique used in this study is structural equation modeling analysis. The results show that there is direct effect of workplace spirituality and empowering leadership on proactive behavior and indirect effect by job engagement. This research suggest that Islamic Banking should encourage leader its leader to empower subordinates.

**Keywords:** Workplace spirituality, empowering leadership, job engagement, proactive behavior

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In a turbulent world economic environment, many people are starting to turn to sharia-based banking. Sharia-based banking is often more secure and comfortable for its users. In addition, according to the life philosophy of the Minangkabau people who form the majority in West Sumatra, namely Adat Basandi Sarak, Sarak Basandi Kitabullah. This means that the life of the people of West Sumatra strongly upholds traditional values guided by religion. Even though the Islamic banking market is very large, its development is still slow due to the lack of creativity and innovation of these business people in creating their products and services. In addition, there is an assumption in society that Islamic banking is more expensive than conventional, lack of capable human resources in management.

Proactive behavior is a high-value concept rather than a management model, which can be an important determinant of company success, can

increase company effectiveness. It is time for companies to focus their attention on ways to recognize and improve policies and systems that have the potential to suppress such individual initiatives. Employees who are proactive will exhibit self-directed, anticipatory and focus on the future with the aim of bringing about change, both for the situation they face, themselves, others, groups, and companies (Belschak and Hartog, 2009)

The proactive employee behavior in the organization is needed to carry out the vision and mission of an organization. Griffin & Parker, (2007) states that proactive work behavior is a new model in job performance. This indicates that job performance has changed from its original focus on fulfilling tasks in job descriptions to all work behaviors that have contributed to the effectiveness of the organization. Parker, Bindl and Strauss (2010) emphasized that proactive behavior is one form of measuring employee performance.

This study examines a model of proactive behavior in the workplace by considering social

context. The importance of social context is because individuals need support from the surrounding environment both from leaders, coworkers, and their organizations (Cai, Parker, Chen, & Lam, 2019). Previous research has focused on testing leadership as an antecedent of proactive behavior (Cai et al., 2019). Transformational leadership was found to have a positive effect on employee proactive behavior (Duan, Li, Xu, & Wu, 2017; Schmitt, Den Hartog, & Belschak, 2016). The results of the literature review Cai et al., (2019) suggested exploring the other concept of leadership

Another social context is workplace spirituality. Workplace spirituality consists of various kinds that always focus on carrying out activities and seeking a meaning, purpose, and work that is more meaningful for oneself and others (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). Workplace spirituality is a pleasant workplace atmosphere and beneficial for people. Spirituality in the workplace can mean that the workplace is an association of people who have a relationship with thought and enthusiasm and cooperation.

This study also examines the role of job engagement as mediator in proactive behavior models. This is based on the fact that individuals who engage in proactive behavior are triggered by a motivational process mechanism, namely "Can Do", "Reasons to Do", "Energy to Do" (Parker et al., 2010). Individuals who are tied to work will show strong motivation for proactive behavior.

## **Literature Review and Hypotheses Development**

### **Proactive Behavior**

Meyers (2019) defines proactive behavior is something that is the basic form of proactive behavior as someone who is relatively not urged by situational forces or certain circumstances and someone who can influence environmental change. So that people who are proactive can recognize opportunities and act on those opportunities, show initiative and be persistent in fighting for meaningful change. Employees transform mission, find and solve company problems, and ultimately use it to affect the surrounding environment. In addition, some people identify their own problems

and solve them to advance the personal and corporate environment.

Individuals who have proactive behavior tend to have characteristics in the level of the task or work compared to individuals who are passive, individuals who are proactive can innovate with job design (Joo & Lim, 2009). That is, individuals who have a higher proactive behavior, can see or feel the complexity of the work that is higher. Meanwhile, Covey (2001) said that proactive behavior is to take the initiative and be able to control his own life and make choices according to values, think before reacting, aware that can not control everything that happens. Being proactive is not just about taking initiative. Being proactive means being responsible for one's own behavior (past, present, or future), and make choices based on principles and values, not based on mood and circumstances.

### **Spirituality Workplace and Proactive Behavior**

Spirituality in the workplace can be interpreted that association of people who have unity of thought and enthusiasm and believe that increasing excitement is at the core of increasing thought (Adeoti, Shamsudin, & Wan, 2017). Spirituality workplace is the atmosphere or psychological conditions at work. Workplace spirituality consists of various things, which I always do, focus on activities and the search for meaning, purpose, and work that more fully means for others. Then workplace spirituality is an understanding of an individual's self as a spiritual being whose soul needs maintenance in the workplace with all the values that exist in him; experience the sense of purpose and meaning in his work; and also experience the feeling of being connected to others and the community in which the individual works. (Ashmos Dan Duchon, 2000).

Milliman, Gatling, and Sunny (2018) suggest that Workplace Spirituality positive and significant effect on proactive behavior. Employee spirituality is one of the complementaries in the work so that in the workplace environment it is fully or better, personally and universally. Workplace Spirituality is an organizational climate in the workplace environment that prioritizes the

inner life of its employees as well as a gathering place for people who have a unity of spirit and thought and have a feeling of belonging (togetherness) in the organizational sphere. For this reason, the hypothesis proposed is:

H1: Workplace spirituality will be positively related to proactive behavior

### **Empowering Leadership and Proactive Behavior**

Empowering leadership is a type of leadership that divides employees' power sharing to develop their self-control and to foster greater self-righteousness (Vecchio, Justin, and Pearce, 2010; Zhang, 2010). Empowering special leadership to increase autonomy to employees (Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006) and increase responsibilities among subordinates (Marrone et al. 2014). Thus, employee who have proactive behavior will feel superior and fit when their leaders provide support and delegate power (Wang et al., 2008).

H2: Empowering leadership will be positively related to proactive behavior

### **Workplace spirituality and Job Engagement**

Job engagement can be affected by a workplace spirituality. Fahri argues that workplace spirituality is a psychological climate where individuals see themselves as having an inner life that grows and is cultivated with work that provides meaning that takes place in society (Fahri, 2010). Kumar (2013) states that organizations must understand that the level of employee satisfaction not only requires material, but employees want more than what the organization provides. Every individual employee has a physical and spiritual need, and fulfillment is meaningful so that employees are motivated to give the best for their organization.

A more recent study by Petchsawang and Mclean (2017) found four dimensions of workplace spirituality, namely knowing, affection, superiority then attention operationalized as high-level constructs, were positively related to work engagement as measured by the UWES instrument.

H3: workplace spirituality will be positively related to job engagement

### **Empowering Leadership and Job Engagement**

Empowering leadership has a significant effect on work engagement. This is supported by the research of Tuckey, Bakker, and Dollard (2012) which found that firefighting leaders with empowering leadership increase job engagement in three dimensions: enthusiasm, dedication, and absorption. Saks and Gruman (2014) suggest that empowering leadership can affect employee involvement with tasks, jobs, groups and companies through job resources, job demands, and psychological conditions.

H4: Empowering leadership will be positively related to job engagement

### **Job Engagement as Mediator**

Job engagement shows an individual's attitude to invest his cognitive, physical, and emotional resources in work. The concept of job engagement is often described as a mechanism for why individuals want to engage in proactive behavior (Parker, et al., 2010).. First, if the leader behavior implements the values of autonomy, then an employee will arise an impulse to bring out his cognitive, emotional, and physical abilities on the job. Second, if employees feel attached to their work, it will be able to encourage them to take the initiative to solve issues concerning work and organization. Several studies have made job engagement as a mediator in the relationship between leadership and proactive behavior (Den Hartog & Belschack, 2012)

Social identity theory explains that individuals who work in groups who instill spiritual values will be able to generate high enthusiasm, dedication, and enthusiasm for work. When employees already have an attachment to work, then they take their own initiative to always provide innovative ideas at work. Several studies have made work attachment as a mediator in the relationship between psychological climate and

proactive behavior (Eldor & Harpaz, 2016; Parker & Griffin, 2011).

H5: Job engagement mediate the relationship between workplace spirituality and proactive behavior

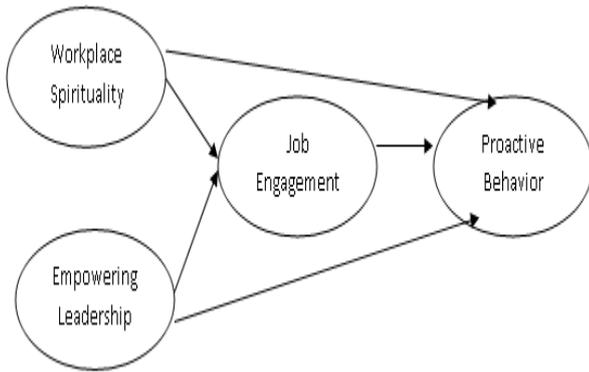


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

## 2. METHODS

The sample of this study was 200 respondents who came from the employees of four Islamic banks in the city of Padang. The distribution of research questionnaires was assisted by the HR department.

### Measures

**Proactive behavior**, measurement of proactive behavior using a scale developed by Escrig-tena et al. (2018). The indicators are troubleshooting, employee innovation, issue an opinion, and take over. This scale used a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to respond to survey items.

H6: Job engagement mediate the relationship between empowering leadership and proactive behavior

**Workplace spirituality**, measurement of workplace spirituality using a scale developed by Milliman et al, (2018)). The indicators are meaningful work, sense of community, alignment of values. This scale used a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Empowering leadership**, measurement of empowering leadership using a scale developed by Zhang (2010). The indicators are increase the meaning of work, fostering participation in decision making, express confidence in high performance, provides autonomy from bureaucratic constraints. This scale used a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Job engagement**, measurement of job engagement using a scale developed by Buil, Martínez, and Matute (2019). The indicators are vigor, dedication, absorbtion. This scale used a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis is an analysis used to measure how perfect the observed variables are in measuring the underlying latent variables. Theory testing with SEM closely follows the way measurement theory is tested using CFA. The process is conceptually similar in that a theory is proposed and then tested based on how well it fits the data. When we deal with theoretical relationships between constructs, greater attention is focused on the different types of relationships that may exist.

**Table 1.** Goodness of Fit Indices of Measurement Model

Size Index Criteria	Results*	Reference Value	Description
Chi Square	741,622	little	Marginal fit
Probability	0,00	$\geq 0,05$	Poor fit
CMIN/df	1,535	$\leq 2$ atau $\leq 3$	Good Fit
GFI	0,832	$\geq 0,90$	Marginal fit
AGFI	0,781	$\geq 0,90$	Marginal fit
TLI	0,930	$\geq 0,90$	Good fit
CFI	0,943	$\geq 0,90$	Good fit
RMSEA	0,052	0,05 – 0,08	Reasonable Fit

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To evaluate the validity of the structural model, it is done by assessing the fit of the model (goodness of fit). The structural model to be evaluated has no difference with the full structural model that has been tested at the measurement model evaluation stage. Furthermore, the Good of

Fit test is carried out, based on the results of the GOF test that almost all of the criteria are not yet fit, modification is made to get a fit model. The results of the GOF modification can be seen in the following Table 2.

**Table 2.** Goodness of Fit Indices of Structural Model

Size Index Criteria	Results*	Reference Value	description
Chi Square	393,1	Little	<i>Marginal fit</i>
Probability	0,092	$\geq 0,05$	<i>Good fit</i>
CMIN/df	1,101	$\leq 2$ atau $\leq 3$	<i>Good Fit</i>
GFI	0,892	$\geq 0,90$	<i>Marginal fit</i>
AGFI	0,860	$\geq 0,90$	<i>Marginal fit</i>
TLI	0,977	$\geq 0,90$	<i>Good Fit</i>
CFI	0,981	$\geq 0,90$	<i>Good Fit</i>
RMSEA	0,023	0,05 – 0,08	<i>Reasonable Fit</i>

#### Tests of Hypotheses

We also need to evaluate the significance value of each indicator. The p-value is seen as a value of  $\leq 0.01$  ( $\alpha = 1\%$ ) or a p-value of  $\leq 0.05$ . The CR value >

1.96 must be accompanied by a significant p-value before it can be said that an item has sufficient strength.

**Table 3.** Hypothesis Testing

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Job Engagement	<---	Workplace spirituality	,168	,080	2,373	,018
Job Engagement	<---	Empowering leadership	,279	,132	2,059	,040
Proactive Behavior	<---	Job Engagement	,157	,027	2,113	,035
Proactive Behavior	<---	Workplace spirituality	,060	,024	2,488	,013
Proactive Behavior	<---	Empowering leadership	,149	,064	2,332	,020

The results of the H1 test show that workplace spirituality has a positive and significant effect on proactive behavior ( $\beta = 0,60$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ) So that the Hypothesis is supported. H2 test show that empowering leadership has a positive and significant effect on proactive behavior ( $\beta = 0,149$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ) This means that the better empowering leadership, the more proactive behavior will be increased. So that the H2 is supported. The results of H3 test show that workplace spirituality has a positive and significant effect on work engagement ( $\beta = 0,168$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ). This means that the better the employee's spiritual workplace, the more work engagement increases. So that the hypothesis is supported

The H4 test results show that empowering leadership has a positive and significant effect on job engagement ( $\beta = 0,279$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ). This means that the better empowering leadership will increase work engagement. So that the hypothesis is supported. H5 and H6 examine the role of job engagement as a mediator. Based on the sobel test  $Z = 1,975 > 1,96$  for H5 and  $Z = 1,98 > 1,96$  for H6, these two hypotheses are supported

**Discussion**

This research shows that social context plays an important role in enhancing proactive behavior. In accordance with the results of the study, workplace spirituality and empowering leadership are the determinants of active behavior of Islamic Bank employees. This means that the better the workplace spirituality in Islamic Bank can improve

behavior of troubleshooting, employee innovation, issue an opinion, and take over.

The results also show the role of leadership. If the leader can empower subordinates, the subordinates will try to provide creative solutions for the organization. Leaders at Islamic banks show the importance of autonomy to subordinates by giving responsibility, fostering participation in decision making, express confidence in high performance.

Very interesting results from this research indicate that job engagement is an important mechanism in the process of proactive behavior. Job engagement is a psychological atmosphere that can be triggered by workplace spirituality and empowering leadership.

**4. CONCLUSIONS**

Behavior in the workplace can be triggered by social context. Proactive behavior can be caused by a work environment such as a workplace spirituality. Besides that, it can also be caused by empowering leadership. Job engagement as a mechanism in that relationship is very significant. Organizations must create a work environment based on spiritual values and encourage leaders to be able to empower their subordinates.

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