

# EFFECTS OF RELIGIOSITY AND PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT ON CAREER SUCCESS: EXAMINING MODERATING ROLE OF ISLAMIC WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

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**Abstract:** The viability of an organization hinges upon the effectiveness of its workforce. Enhanced performance among employees directly correlates with heightened organizational efficacy. Consequently, this study endeavours to investigate the influence of religiosity, perceived social support, and religious work ethics on both career commitment and career success. Moreover, it seeks to scrutinize the mediating impact of career commitment and the moderating role of Islamic workplace spirituality. Data were gathered from employees engaged in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) situated in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) through purposive sampling, yielding 210 valid responses. SPSS 26 served as the analytical tool for data examination. Results underscored the positive relationships between religious work ethics, perceived social support, and religiosity with career commitment, alongside the favourable impact of career commitment on career success. Additionally, the statistical validation of the moderating influence of Islamic workplace spirituality was evident. This research contributes valuable insights for policymakers and scholars, guiding future endeavours in employee-related studies.

**Keywords:** Religiosity, Islamic Workplace Spirituality, Career Success, Career Commitment, SMEs

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The individual's life trajectory is profoundly influenced by the tenets of faith and religious affiliation. Moreover, one's conduct, demeanour, and ethical

framework within professional contexts are intricately intertwined with religious precepts (Héliot et al., 2020). This religiosity manifests diversely across individuals, contingent upon the doctrinal principles of respective religions. Religious doctrines not only prescribe guidelines for familial life but also significantly inform behavioral norms and attitudes in occupational settings. Furthermore, religion serves as a cornerstone of social identity, inherently subject to individual interpretation (Chenot & Kim, 2017). Importantly, religious beliefs exert considerable sway over career selection processes, with employees often perceiving and adhering to religious dictates as guiding principles in career decision-making (Puffer et al., 2023).

Social support exerts a discernible influence on individual workplace performance, with its foundation rooted in familial and social networks (Drummond et al., 2017). Perceived social support significantly impacts self-perception and interpersonal dynamics within the immediate environment, consequently influencing organizational outcomes. Given the innate human inclination towards social connections, the presence of social relationships is indispensable for survival, serving as a vital mechanism for coping with life's stressors. The mental well-being of employees is intricately linked to their perceived social support, with long-term happiness and life satisfaction contingent upon its presence (Gan et al., 2023).

Religion is widely regarded as a pivotal determinant shaping the ethical framework of employees, guiding their responses to workplace challenges and adversities (Singh & Babbar, 2020). Although scholarly exploration of religion's impact on the workplace remains limited, anecdotal evidence suggests that certain employees perceive their work as a form of worship. Religious work ethics advocate for qualities such as cooperation, spontaneity, creativity, innovation, and diligence, aligning with the expectations outlined within religious teachings. Consequently, religiously informed work ethics not only dictate behaviour within the workplace but also contribute to the cultivation of traits such as creativity, social responsibility, cooperation, dedication, and industriousness (Taghavi & Segalla, 2023).

Employee retention holds paramount importance for organizations striving to cultivate a competitive edge within their respective industries. The retention of skilled and proficient employees is instrumental in fostering organizational competitiveness. Central to this endeavour is the cultivation of a workforce characterized by unwavering commitment to their roles and the organization's success. Career commitment delineates the extent to which employees are inclined to remain dedicated to their organizational roles (Lapointe et al., 2019). This commitment not only facilitates the realization of personal aspirations but also

contributes to organizational objectives. Moreover, career commitment serves as a potent resilience-building mechanism, enabling employees to navigate setbacks and persist in their pursuit of career goals. Notably, the religious affiliations and practices of employees play a pivotal role in shaping their commitment levels. Those who exhibit high levels of career commitment demonstrate heightened accountability towards their organizational duties (Herachwati & Rachma, 2018). Such steadfast commitment to one's career path serves as a catalyst for achieving individual career success.

Spirituality constitutes a fundamental dimension of human existence, shaping one's sense of purpose, values, and beliefs. Its influence extends beyond the confines of personal life, permeating into the professional realm. Religious and spiritual beliefs imbue workplace experiences with depth and meaning (Lapointe et al., 2019), thereby impacting employee productivity, engagement, and satisfaction. Moreover, religious workplace spirituality fosters meaningful connections not only among employees but also with clients, ultimately aiming to instil values, a sense of community, and purposeful work within the organizational context. The flourishing of both organization and employees is intricately linked to the cultivation of workplace spirituality, which fosters employee cohesion and satisfaction, consequently bolstering organizational and individual success (Absil et al., 2021; Zaidi et al., 2019).

The trajectory of employee career success is profoundly influenced by the competitive dynamics and globalization prevalent within industries. Contrary to a linear or fixed pathway, individual careers are often characterized by a series of distinct phases, each contributing to goal attainment (Gaile et al., 2022). Hence, it is imperative for employees to embrace values conducive to career advancement and personal fulfilment. By delineating organizational objectives, individuals can chart a course towards achieving their career aspirations (Shockley et al., 2016). Successful career progression reflects not only engagement and perseverance through challenges but also yields financial rewards, promotions, and access to enhanced benefits and opportunities (Koekemoer et al., 2020). Moreover, employees attaining career success play pivotal roles in organizational triumphs, thereby underscoring their significance within the organizational framework (van Vianen et al., 2019).

Hence, it becomes imperative for organizations to discern the factors pivotal in shaping employee career success. The primary objective of this study is to scrutinize the influence of Religious work ethics, perceived social support, religiosity, and career commitment on career success, specifically within the framework of employees operating within the SME sector of the KSA. Additionally, this research endeavours to explore the moderating impact of religious workplace spirituality on

the aforementioned relationships.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

- *Career Commitment and Career Success*

Career commitment refers to the dedication and effort an employee invests in achieving their professional goals, aligned with personal values. It signifies a strong bond between the employee and their work, characterized by positive engagement and involvement (Koekemoer et al., 2020). Career development goals influence an employee's commitment and shape their attitude towards their profession. Career success is defined as the attainment of perceived ambitions and goals over time, influenced by various intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as occupation, hierarchical structure, time, and work environment (Zeng et al., 2022). It is determined by the direction of one's career trajectory and current job responsibilities. Religious involvement and career commitment are among the factors impacting employee career success (Wu et al., 2022).

Previous research by (Pasha et al., 2017) confirmed that the career commitment of employees significantly influences their personal success, thereby impacting both individual and organizational performance in the long term. Similarly, (Van der Heijden et al., 2022) found a positive correlation between career commitment and employee career success. Moreover, these scholars discussed that employees with high levels of commitment tend to exhibit greater life satisfaction. Consequently, we can hypothesize that,

*H1.* Career commitment is significantly and positively related to career success.

- *Religiosity and Career Commitment*

The religious affiliation of an individual significantly influences their behaviour in the workplace, shaping their attitudes towards work-related activities. Researchers have highlighted that various world religions impart positive teachings, principles, and behaviours essential for leading a fulfilling life (Obregon et al., 2022). Several studies have underscored the constructive impact of religion on an individual's professional life. Religiosity, as defined by scholars, encompasses an individual's understanding and familiarity with their religious beliefs (Bal & Kökalan, 2021). Grounded in these beliefs and knowledge, an individual's attitudes and behaviours are moulded.

Religion encourages the cultivation of social networks, reflecting an individual's adherence to the norms and values espoused by their faith. Religiosity emerges as a significant determinant shaping employee commitment {Formatting Citation}. Employees exhibiting high levels of religiosity demonstrate heightened responsibility and commitment, alongside increased tolerance towards their professional duties (Mathew et al., 2018). Religiosity enhances an individual's comprehension of their role within the workforce, thereby positively influencing performance and satisfaction. Moreover, religiosity serves as a motivating factor compelling employees to exert greater effort in their work endeavours.

Past studies have delved into the role of religiosity in fostering employee commitment. (Ekizler & Galifanova, 2020) observed a positive association between religiosity and employee commitment, highlighting religiosity as a pivotal antecedent of commitment. Similarly, scholars such as Scholars underscore the influential role of religiosity in shaping employee commitment. (Farrukh et al., 2016) further emphasize that religiosity influences employee behaviour, subsequently impacting their level of commitment. Hence, the hypothesis of the present study posits that,

*H2: Religiosity is significantly and positively related to employee commitment.*

- *Perceived Social Support and Career Commitment*

Various scholarly inquiries have addressed the concept of perceived social support across diverse contexts. This construct denotes the assistance and backing an individual receives from their team or peers within the workplace milieu (Hartley et al., 2020). Perceived social support encompasses different forms, including instrumental, informational, and emotional assistance. Instrumental support entails aid, task-sharing, and practical assistance (Aliche et al., 2020), while informational support involves access to advice, suggestions, and pertinent information. Emotional support, on the other hand, is characterized by trust, empathy, care, and affection. At the workplace, social support is gauged by the assistance an individual receives in their job from superiors and colleagues, with organizational and familial support also deemed integral components of perceived social support (Hngoi et al., 2023).

Scholarly literature has conceptualized perceived organizational support as the organization's commitment to its employees, fostering a belief among employees regarding the tangible and intangible support extended by the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Positive outcomes at the employee level,

including enhanced individual and group performance and reduced absenteeism and turnover rates, ensue from perceived organizational support. Sources of perceived social support can encompass colleagues, mentors, friends, and family members, exerting direct or indirect influences on an individual's professional capacities. The research conducted by (Yang & Zhou, 2022) underscores the significant impact of perceived social support on employee job commitment.

Furthermore, investigations have examined the role of perceived social support in shaping both organizational and career success among employees. (Setti et al., 2016) elucidated that consistent support from the organization and societal networks positively influenced employee success. Similarly, (Saralita & Ardiyanti, 2020) revealed that perceived social support from colleagues and the organization at the workplace positively affected employee commitment. Thus, the hypothesis of the current study posits that,

*H3. Perceived Social Support is significantly and positively related to employee commitment.*

- *Religious (Islamic) Work Ethics and Career Commitment*

The foundation of Islamic work ethics rests upon the dignity of labour, as dictated by religious teachings, wherein all forms of work are deemed worthy of respect and individuals engaged in various occupations are accorded esteem. (Jangda et al., 2023) define Islamic work ethics as a set of moral principles derived from the teachings of Al-Sunnah or Al-Quran, which intricately intertwine with Islamic practices, beliefs, and values, guiding adherents in discerning right from wrong.

Scholars have extensively explored the nexus between work ethics and employee commitment to their careers and organizations. These inquiries underscore the pivotal role of work ethics in shaping employees' attitudes and behaviours towards their professional trajectories (Nasution & Rafiki, 2020). Religious work ethics, reflective of an individual's religious beliefs, have been perceived to positively influence employee commitment (Udin et al., 2022). (Nasution & Rafiki, 2020) elucidate that religious work ethics instil confidence among employees, fostering commitment towards their careers.

Islamic work ethics hold considerable esteem within business realms, with the belief that employees adhering to Islamic principles will exhibit heightened commitment to their job duties (Abideen et al., 2021). Scholars emphasize the

social and moral implications of Islamic work ethics, which imbue job commitment with strength and worthiness, viewing employment as a means for personal growth and social relationships (Aflah et al., 2021). (Othman et al., 2004) find a positive correlation between Islamic work ethics and employee career commitment, a sentiment echoed by (Nasution & Rafiki, 2020) who report similar findings regarding the positive influence of Islamic work ethics on employee commitment. Hence, the hypothesis of the present study posits that,

*H4.* Religious work ethics is significantly and positively related to employee commitment.

- *Religious Workplace Spirituality as Moderator*

Scholarly attention has been devoted to the concept of religious workplace spirituality, which encompasses both individual and organizational dimensions. The literature explores the facets of workplace spirituality, delineating the experiences and acquisitions of employees within organizational settings (Pariyanti et al., 2022). Employees often seek fulfilment, purpose, and meaning within their respective organizations, as the workplace serves as a primary social network. Workplace spirituality is defined by scholars as the quest of employees to find ultimate purpose and connection in both their work and life, imbuing organizational values with religious significance (Purnamasari et al., 2020).

Religious spirituality in the workplace emerges as a pivotal component of workplace spirituality, influencing an individual's values regarding job performance and deeply held beliefs about the workplace environment. It fosters a profound sense of purpose and meaning for employees, fostering strong interpersonal connections among colleagues to facilitate synergy within the workplace. Some scholars examine religious spirituality through the lens of specific religions, such as Islam (Iqbal et al., 2021). They discuss workplace spirituality in the context of Taqwa, elucidating its impact on employee behaviour (Bhatti et al., 2016). Subsequently, (Adawiyah & Pramuka, 2017) explore similar concepts in their study, examining their influence on workplace behaviour.

Spirituality and religion are intertwined with how individuals perceive the value of their careers and achieve success in the workplace. They have the potential to exert a positive influence on employees' career success and psychological well-being. According to (Hisam, 2021), religious workplace spirituality positively impacts both the career success and career commitment of

employees in their workplace. Thus, the hypothesis of the current study posits that,

*H5.* Islamic workplace Spirituality is a significant moderator between career commitment and career success.

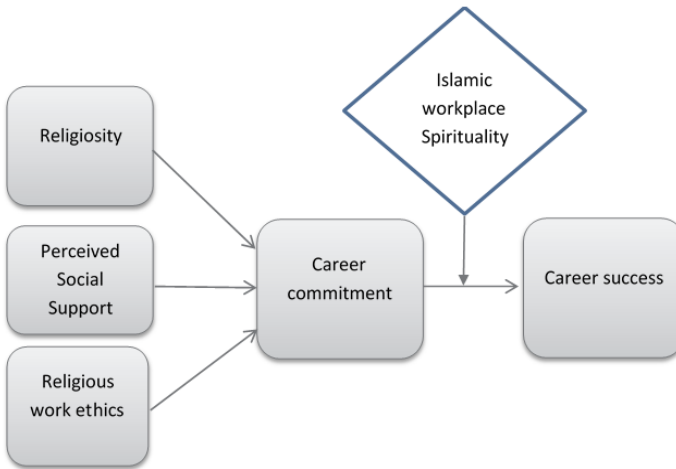


Figure 1: Research Framework

### 3. METHODOLOGY

- *Sample and Data Collection*

In the current study, data were collected in 2023 from participants employed in various SMEs within KSA. The study population comprised employees across different hierarchical levels, ranging from top management to lower levels. The researcher employed purposive sampling to select participants, aiming to access a specific subset of the population possessing adequate knowledge pertinent to the study phenomenon.

A quantitative research design was utilized, and data were gathered through a comprehensive questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised two main sections: the first section encompassed demographic characteristics of the respondents, while the second section included measurement items pertaining to the variables under investigation. Religiosity was assessed using five items adapted from (Zaim et al., 2021), which demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity. This variable was evaluated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Perceived social support was



operationalized as the perception of receiving instrumental support, assessed using a four-item scale adapted from (Shakespeare-Finch & Obst, 2011). The scale demonstrated strong reliability and validity. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) was employed to measure this variable.

Career commitment, defined as an individual's attitude toward their vocation, including their profession (Blau, 1988), was assessed using a seven-item scale adapted from (Blau, 1988). This scale demonstrated strong validity and reliability. It encompasses career orientation and occupational commitment and was rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Career success, conceptualized as job success, was measured using an eight-item scale adapted from (Gattiker & Larwood, 1986). Previous research has established the reliability and validity of this scale. Participants rated their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Workplace spirituality was assessed using a 13-item scale adapted from (Pariyanti et al., 2022). Islamic work ethics were measured using a four-item scale developed by (Ali, 1988) and (Ali, 1992), validated by (Islam et al., 2022) in Pakistan. This scale demonstrated strong reliability and validity. Participants rated their responses on a five-point Likert scale.

- *Data Collection Process*

The researcher visited multiple SMEs to familiarize themselves with the organizational structure. They arranged meetings with both workers and administration to introduce the research concept, discuss the constructs, and clarify the research objectives. After obtaining consent from the respondents and ensuring the confidentiality of the collected data, the researcher assured participants that the data would be used solely for academic purposes. The researcher collected respondents' information, including contact numbers and email addresses. Subsequently, they distributed questionnaires to 300 employees and encouraged them to openly discuss any issues or problems for efficient data collection.

Upon completion of data collection, the researcher conducted a data cleaning process, which included missing value analysis using SPSS. Questionnaires with more than forty percent missing information were excluded from further analysis. Additionally, questionnaires exhibiting similar or

misleading responses (e.g., repeated numbers such as 5 or 3 for all questions) were also discarded. Ultimately, the researcher identified 210 valid responses suitable for subsequent data analysis.

- *Analysis*
- *Demographics of Respondents*

For the analysis of data regression analysis in SPSS was conducted. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomena, it is essential to analyse the demographics of the respondents. In this study, the participants consisted of 85.7% male and 14.3% female. Regarding age distribution, 21.4% of respondents fell within the 19 to 29 years' age bracket, 28.6% were aged between 29 to 39 years, 33.3% were between 39 to 49 years old, and 16.7% were above 49 years old. In terms of educational attainment, 47.6% of respondents were undergraduates, 38.1% were graduates, and 14.3% were postgraduates.

Table 1: Demographics

Variable	Groups	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	180	85.7 %
	Female	30	14.3%
Age	19–29 years	45	21.4%
	29– 39 years	60	28.6%
	39– 49 years	70	33.3%
	> 49 years	35	16.7%
Education	Undergraduate	100	47.6%
	Graduate	80	38.1%
	Postgraduate	30	14.3%

- *Correlation*

Table 2: Correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
RL	3.36	1.19	1					
PSS	3.41	1.19	.47**	1				
IE	3.48	0.94	.56**	.42**	1			
CC	3.31	1.13	.62**	.32**	.59**	1		
SWP	3.33	1.15	.25**	.39**	.44**	.52**	1	
CS	3.37	1.11	.34**	.53**	.41**	.37**	.38**	1

- *Factor Loading*

All factors exhibited loadings greater than 0.68, with the exception of one item related to religious work ethics. Additionally, one item pertaining to career commitment and four items associated with workplace spirituality displayed factor loadings below 0.68. Consequently, these items were excluded from the dataset for subsequent analysis.

Table 3. Loading

Measure	RL	PSS	SWP	CC	CS	RE
Religiosity						
RL1	.849					
RL2	.863					
RL3	.762					
RL4	.828					
RL5	.840					
Perceived Social Support						
PSS1		.784				
PSS2		.795				
PSS3		.825				
PSS4		.820				
Spirituality at Workplace						
SWP1			.750			
SWP2			.694			
SWP3			.703			
SWP4			.680			
SWP5			.674			
SWP6			.750			
SWP7			.897			
SWP8			.789			
SWP9			.823			
Career Commitment						
CC1				.772		
CC2				.176		
CC3				.726		
CC4				.808		
CC5				.799		
CC6				.789		
CC7				.815		
Career Success						
CS1					.726	
CS2					.716	
CS3					.805	
CS4					.715	
CS5					.781	
CS6					.777	
CS7					.798	
CS8					.708	
Religious work Ethics						
RWE1						.851
RWE 2						.825
RWE 3						.724

• *Construct Reliability and Validity*

The values on the diagonal exceed the squared correlation values, confirming construct validity. Furthermore, the reliability of all variables surpasses 0.70.

Table 4: Reliability and Validity

	1	2	3	4	5	6	CR	Alpha
RL	0.67						0.92	0.88
PSS	.22**	0.65					0.88	0.91
RWE	.31**	.17**	0.64				0.84	0.71
CC	.38**	.10**	.35**	0.62			0.91	0.82
SWP	.06**	.15**	.19**	.27**	0.57		0.92	0.70
CS	.12**	.28**	.17**	.14**	.14**	0.57	0.91	0.85

The diagonal represents the AVE, while the values below the diagonal represent the squared correlation between constructs.

The reliability and validity of the data were assessed to ensure compliance with standard criteria. According to (Hair et al., 2013), validity testing requires a significance level of less than 5%. The validity test indicated that all correlations among variables were statistically significant. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with (Hair et al., 2013) recommending a threshold of greater than 0.70. All variables met this criterion, indicating that the questionnaire can be deemed reliable and valid for further analysis.

• *Hypothesis Testing*

Stepwise regression analysis was conducted in SPSS to test the hypotheses. The results revealed that the data supported the hypothesized model.

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing

	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Standardized β	Sig	T value
1	Religiosity	Career Success	0.46	0.000	6.85
	Perceived Social Support		0.28	0.000	3.82
	Religious Work Ethics		0.21	0.000	4.29
2	Career Commitment	Career Success	0.48	0.000	11.68

Table 6: Mediation Results

	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Mediator	Standardized β	Sig	T value
3	Religiosity	Career Success	Career Commitment	0.30	0.000	5.56
	Perceived Social Support			0.18	0.000	3.25
	Religious Work Ethics			0.10	0.090	1.21

From Table 5, it is evident that all independent variables, including religiosity, perceived social support, and religious work ethics, have a significant direct effect on career success. The impact of religiosity on career success is notably significant ( $\beta=0.46$ ;  $P=0.00$ ), as is the impact of perceived social support ( $\beta=0.28$ ;  $P=0.00$ ) and Islamic work ethics ( $\beta=0.21$ ;  $P=0.00$ ). Additionally, career commitment significantly and positively affects career success ( $\beta=0.48$ ;  $P=0.00$ ).

Upon introducing the mediator, the values of all independent variables' effects on the dependent variable decreased. Career commitment positively and significantly mediates the relationship between religiosity and career success, with the effect of religiosity on career success decreasing to ( $\beta=0.30$ ;  $P=0.00$ ). Similarly, career commitment positively and significantly mediates the effect of perceived social support on career success, with an effect size of ( $\beta=0.18$ ;  $P=0.00$ ). However, after the introduction of the mediator, the direct effect of Islamic work ethics on career success becomes insignificant. In conclusion, career success partially mediates the relationship between religiosity and perceived social support on career success, while fully mediating the relationship between Islamic work ethics and career success.

- *Moderation analysis*

Islamic workplace spirituality significantly moderates the positive effect of career commitment on career success.

Table 7: Moderation Results

Relationship	Coefficient	St.Error	T-statistics
CC*SWP-----CS	0.18	2.36	2.77

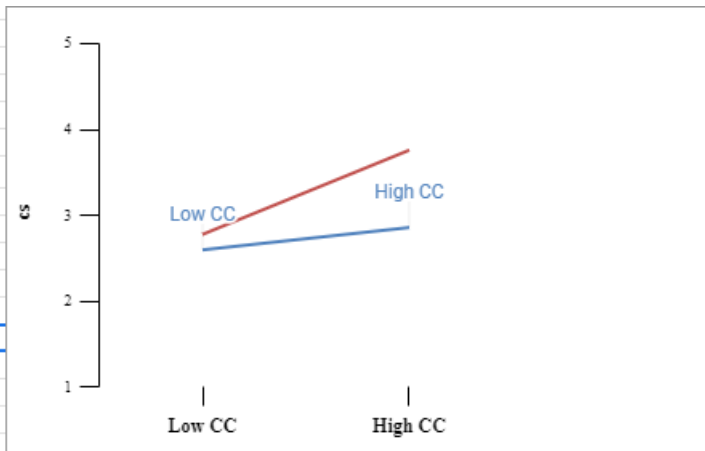


Figure: 2

#### 4. DISCUSSION

SMEs play a crucial role in the economic growth of a country. Within any organization, employees are considered valuable assets, a principle that holds particularly true in the SME sector. Recognizing the significance of employees, organizations must explore factors that can foster career success and commitment among their workforce. Religion emerges as one such influential factor in shaping employee outcomes in the workplace.

Hence, this study delved into the impact of various religion-based variables, such as religious work ethics and religiosity, alongside other Human Resource-related factors like perceived social support and career commitment, on career success. The findings revealed a positive association between religiosity and career commitment. Employees perceive a heightened commitment to their careers when they perceive their managers or leaders as spiritually oriented individuals with a religious inclination. These leaders make organizational and personal decisions guided by religious principles, drawing from diverse religious sources to provide guidance to themselves and others in official matters. Additionally, they refrain from actions that contradict their religious beliefs and are vigilant about their employees' adherence to these beliefs. Respondents also attest to the influence of their religious values on their decision-making processes, attributing the origins of these values to their religious beliefs. Ultimately, managers exhibit a high degree of sensitivity towards religion in their leadership roles. These findings align with previous research by (Farrukh et al., 2016).

The study findings also indicate a significant positive relationship between perceived social support and career commitment. Several plausible explanations can account for these findings. One conceivable reason is that respondents perceive a consistent availability of assistance whenever they encounter challenges. They perceive their fellow employees as readily offering both physical and psychological support. In instances of physical illness, respondents receive necessary aid from their colleagues. Moreover, employers extend financial assistance to employees in genuine need, particularly during periods of inflation or other financial crises. Furthermore, in the absence of respondents, colleagues step in to fulfil work responsibilities, thereby fostering a supportive work environment. These findings parallel those of (Saralita & Ardiyanti, 2020).

The findings of the study corroborated the hypothesis suggesting a positive correlation between religious work ethics and employees' career commitment. These results can be attributed to the emphasis placed by employers on fostering

and nurturing relationships among workers and employees. According to the religious teachings embraced by the respondents, work is regarded as a valuable asset, prompting them to exhibit unwavering dedication to their tasks, considering it a virtue. They derive a sense of fulfilment and accomplishment from their work, with their overall happiness intertwined with their adherence to religious principles. Furthermore, respondents expressed the belief that religion advocates for generosity, hence they strive to embody this value within the workplace. They also underscored the importance of justice in their job roles, viewing it as a fundamental prerequisite for societal well-being. Their commitment to work is deeply rooted in religious teachings and convictions, viewing it as a religious obligation to remain steadfast in their workplace commitments. These findings resonate with those of (Nasution & Rafiki, 2020), thus providing congruent results with prior research.

The findings also underscore the moderating influence of religious workplace spirituality on the relationship between career commitment and career success. This indicates that religion acts as a catalyst in strengthening the link between commitment to one's career and achieving success therein. This phenomenon can be attributed to the wisdom imparted by religious beliefs, aiding employees in adapting to various working conditions. Furthermore, the religious faith of these individuals instils a strong work ethic, motivating them to diligently pursue their tasks with sincerity, seeking spiritual fulfilment in their efforts. Their actions are driven by the belief that their deeds are subject to divine judgment and will be rewarded in the afterlife, thus prioritizing assistance to fellow employees and contributing to the prosperity of the workplace and beyond. Their unwavering faith also prompts them to commence their work with prayer, seeking divine assistance, while maintaining a sense of accountability as they perceive themselves under constant divine scrutiny, thereby prioritizing honesty in their actions. These employees adhere strictly to religious teachings in their conduct, ensuring alignment with religious values in all interactions, both within and outside the workplace. Moreover, they extend their utmost effort in assisting fellow employees, viewing diligent work as a means to expunge sin and attain success, both in the present and the hereafter. Thus, collaboration with colleagues is deemed imperative, echoing the teachings of their religion.

The research findings further highlight the significance of career commitment as a crucial predictor of career success among SME employees. The success of these employees bears significance not only at the individual level but also greatly impacts organizational performance and commitment. Similar

findings were corroborated by (Van der Heijden et al., 2022) in their study. This underscores the steadfast dedication of SME employees to their careers within the sector. Many expressed a profound attachment to their current roles, indicating a reluctance to transition to alternative industries. Some even expressed a preference for retaining their current positions if given the opportunity to start anew. Even in the hypothetical scenario of sudden wealth acquisition, these employees indicated a preference for continuity in their current roles. Their unwavering commitment to their jobs within the SME sector is indicative of a sense of vocation, illustrating their resolute determination to persevere in their chosen career paths. Additionally, these employees perceive their roles within the SME sector as conducive to maintaining a healthy work-life balance, further reinforcing their commitment to their current positions.

## **5. LIMITATIONS, FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

There are several noteworthy limitations inherent in this study. Firstly, the research was conducted exclusively within the context of SMEs operating in KSA. Future studies could enhance the generalizability of findings by replicating the model within the higher education sector of KSA or exploring SME sectors in other Asian countries. Additionally, the present study employed a quantitative research methodology.

To enrich the depth of insights gathered from respondents, future research endeavours may consider incorporating qualitative research methods alongside longitudinal research designs. Moreover, data analysis in this study was conducted using SPSS. While SPSS remains a widely utilized tool, the introduction of newer and more advanced software options such as AMOS and Smart PLS 4 presents opportunities for more efficient and effective analysis. Future studies could explore the comparative efficacy of these tools or opt for their singular use in data analysis. Furthermore, this research employed career commitment as a mediator. It is recommended that forthcoming research endeavours consider utilizing performance as an outcome variable, thereby examining career commitment and career success as sequential mediators within the proposed model. Lastly, future research directions could explore the integration of technological variables such as metaverse and AI alongside religiosity to gain insights into the technological preferences of religious individuals. This would enable a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between religious beliefs and technological advancements. The study



holds theoretical significance by addressing the gap in research on the role of religion within HRM, particularly in the context of Saudi SMEs, which has been underexplored in previous literature. It introduces Islamic workplace spirituality as a moderator, a novel approach in understanding its impact on career success and commitment. Additionally, the study extends the discussion of perceived social support within religious-based firms, diverging from past research focused on conventional organizations. Managerial implications include leveraging religious factors to enhance employee commitment and success, thereby improving overall organizational performance. The study also offers guidance for future research endeavours and presents opportunities for policymakers to enhance organizational performance based on these findings.

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## APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE

Variable	Items	References
Religious workplace Spirituality	<p>My religion supplies me with wisdom in adapting to conditions in the workplace.</p> <p>I believe working hard is the characteristic of strong faith</p> <p>I work sincerely to seek Allah's pleasure.</p> <p>I believe that every effort made at work will be rewarded in the hereafter.</p> <p>I work to bring prosperity on Earth</p> <p>I believe working hard is characteristic of strong faith.</p> <p>God will always guide my work if I start the day with prayer.</p> <p>I know that I am being watched by God; therefore, I have to be honest at work.</p> <p>I only work in a job that does not go against my religion.</p> <p>I follow my religion's law in my interactions at work.</p> <p>I am pleased to give my best effort to help others.</p> <p>I believe exhaustion from work will demolish my sins.</p> <p>I need to cooperate with others at work.</p>	(Pariyanti et al., 2022)
Career success	<p>I am receiving positive feedback about my performance from all quarters.</p> <p>I am offered opportunities for further education by my employer.</p> <p>I have enough responsibility on my job.</p> <p>I am fully backed my managers in my work.</p> <p>I am in a job which offers me the chance to learn new skills.</p> <p>I am most happy when I am at work.</p> <p>I am dedicated to my work.</p> <p>I am in a position to do mostly work which I really like.</p>	(Shockley et al., 2016)
Religiosity	<p>I think my manager is a religious person.</p> <p>My manager uses religious sources as a guide in his work life.</p> <p>My manager avoids actions that his religion prohibits.</p> <p>I believe that my manager's core values originate from his religion.</p> <p>My manager is sensitive about religious practices</p>	(Zaim et al., 2024)
Perceived Social Support	<p>If stranded somewhere there is someone who would get me.</p> <p>I have someone to help me if I am physically unwell.</p> <p>There is someone who would give me financial assistance.</p> <p>There is someone who can help me fulfil my responsibilities when I am unable.</p>	(Shakespeare-Finch & Obst, 2011)
Religious work ethics	<p>Human relations in organization should be emphasized and encouraged.</p> <p>Dedication to work is a virtue.</p> <p>Work is a source of happiness and accomplishment.</p>	(Chaudhary et al., 2023)

	Justice and generosity in the workplace are necessary conditions for society's welfare.	
Career commitment	<p>If I could go into a different industry other than the banking industry which paid the same I would probably do so.</p> <p>I definitely want a career for myself in the banking industry.</p> <p>If I could do it all over again, I would not choose to work in the banking field.</p> <p>If I had all the money I needed without working, I would probably still continue to work in the banking field.</p> <p>I like this vocation (the banking field) too well to give it up</p> <p>This is the ideal vocation (the banking field) for a life work.</p> <p>I am disappointed that I ever entered the banking industry.</p>	(Blau, 1988)