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## Islamic Ethics at Workplace and Its Influence on Job Satisfaction of Iranian Employees

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### Abstract

The present study aims analyze the relationship between Islamic work ethics and job satisfaction of Iranian employees in manufacturing companies of Iran. After distribution of questionnaires among employees, 132 usable questionnaires were returned. The research method used for this study is descriptive-correlation and the analysis was carried out utilizing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) methodology by LISREL 8.8 software. The factors analysis and the findings show that Islamic work ethics has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction of employees.

**Keywords:** Islamic Ethics, Job Satisfaction, Iranian Employees.

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## **Introduction**

It is expected that satisfied employees deliver better services (Schmit & Allscheid, 1995) which affects customer confidence positively and contributes to achieving customer loyalty. Moreover, having a loyal base of satisfied customers within such a competitive environment, increases revenues, decreases costs and builds market share (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010). Thus, it should be noted that job satisfaction is a key factor to maintain high performance and efficient service, which will directly increase the productivity of the organization (Gunlu et al., 2010). Job satisfaction is also of considerable importance to business owners and top managers because low levels of job satisfaction are related to increased absenteeism (Porter & Steers, 1973; Scott & Taylor, 1985) and to higher job turnover levels (Korp et al., 1973; Atchinson & Lefferts, 1975; Locke, 1976; Tett & Meyer, 1993; Rust et al., 1996). Therefore, HR and OB scholars try to confirm factors affect employees' job satisfaction. In this study, we tried to illustrate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and job satisfaction.

Work ethic is defined as values and norms that discriminates the right and the wrong ways for employees; and Islamic work ethics are Islamic values and norms and Islamic issues that help employees to do so. Paying attention to Islamic work ethics, employees will be able to decide what is good to be done and what is bad not to be done. As most employees of Iranian Companies are Muslims, it can be inferred that if organizations pay attention and consider Islamic work ethics in their daily activities, employees will be more satisfied with their works and also job their organizations.

There is little attention given to the research on the relationship between Islamic work ethics and job satisfaction. Thus, this paper attempts to propose a framework on the mentioned topic among 150 employees of 10 manufacturing companies in Iran.

## **Islamic Work Ethics**

Islamic work ethics is the set of moral principles that distinguish what is right from what is wrong (Beekun, 1997). Islamic ethics are originally based on Quran, as Quran is the holy book and guidance for Muslims in all period of their life. Islamic work ethics emphasize cooperation in work; and regard consultation as a way of coping with obstacles and avoiding mistakes. Islamic work ethics also focus on creative work as a source of happiness. It's a virtue to work hard and people who are hard-working are more likely to progress in their life.

## **Job Satisfaction**

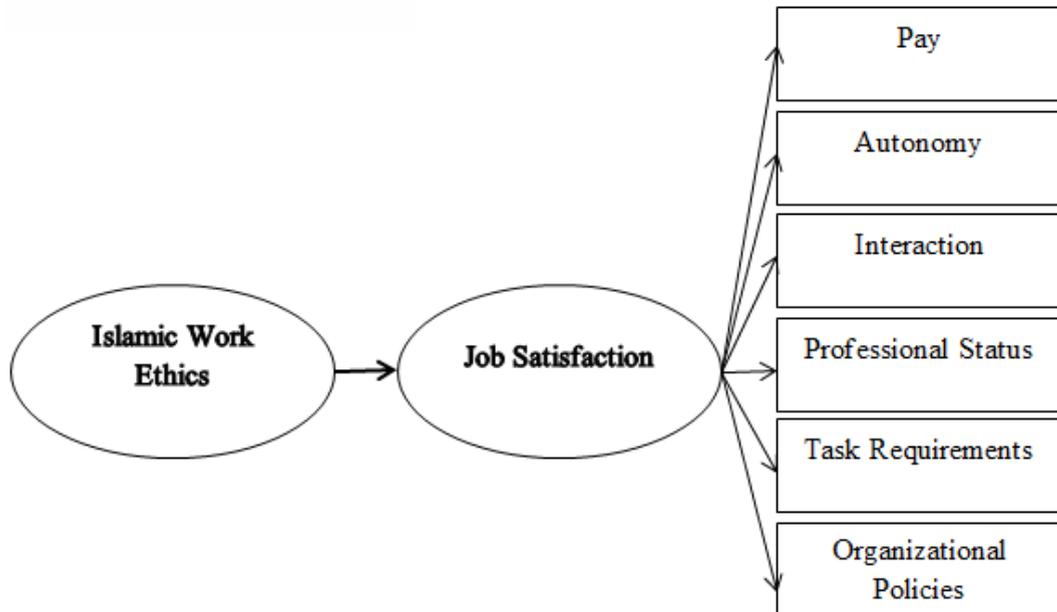
There is no one definition that sums up job satisfaction. According to pool et al. (2006) job satisfaction is an emotional response towards various facets of a job. Moreover, Oshagbemi (2000) has defined job satisfaction as individuals' positive emotional reaction to particular job. Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience. Similarly, Mottaz (1988) regarded job satisfaction as an affective response resulting from an evaluation of the work situation.

Many studies attempt to summarize the various definitions of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction can be defined as the consequence of the individual's perception of what is needed and what is received from different facets of the job. Based on this definition, different dimensions of job satisfaction have been introduced. These dimensions include working conditions (Adamson et al., 1995; Nolan et al., 1995), interactions with patients/co-workers/managers (Lee, 1998; Aiken et al., 2001), the work itself (Lundh, 1999; Adams & Bond, 2000), remuneration (Price, 2002), self-growth and promotion (Tzeng, 2002a, b), praise and recognition (Nolan et al., 1995; Lundh, 1999), control and responsibility (Lee, 1998; Price, 2002), job security (Nolan et al., 1995; Nolan et al., 1998) and leadership styles and organizational policies (Lee, 1998; Tzeng, 2002a,b).

### **Research Proposed Model**

Taking into account the above mentioned literature, figure 1 shows the conceptual model of the study which involved the relationship between Islamic work ethics as independent variable and job satisfaction as dependent variable.

**FIGURE 1. RESEARCH MODEL**



**Research Main Hypothesis**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Islamic work ethics has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction.

**Research Sub-Hypothesis**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Pay has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Autonomy has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Interaction has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Professional status has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction.

**H<sub>5</sub>:** Task requirement has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction.

**H<sub>6</sub>:** Organizational policy has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction.

**Statistical Population**

Statistical population in this research includes 150 employees of 10 manufacturing companies in Iran. After distribution questionnaires among respondents, 133 filled questionnaires were gathered. Table 1 illustrates the Descriptive statistics of the respondents.

**TABLE 1. DESCRIPTION OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Item	Description	Frequency	Percentage
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<b>Gender</b>	Male	98	74%
	Female	34	26%
<b>Age</b>	Below 30	50	38%
	31-50	48	36%
	Above 50	34	26%
<b>Education</b>	Diploma	20	16%
	STP	25	19%
	Bachelor	82	62%
	Master and above	5	3%

### **Instrument**

In order to collect the necessary data, a questionnaire was used to test the hypotheses of the study. The questionnaire consists of three sections. First section includes 3 questions about demographic information of respondents (see table 1). Second section includes 17 questions developed by Ali (2005) for measuring Islamic work ethics. Example for these items include: laziness is a vice, dedication to work is a virtue, and justice and generosity in the work place are necessary condition for society welfare, etc. Third section includes the Index of Work Satisfaction developed by Stamps and Piedmont (1986) to measure job satisfaction. This index has two parts. The second part-more relevant for our study-measures the level of job satisfaction using 44 items reflecting different aspects of the six components of job satisfaction; pay, autonomy, task requirements, organizational policies, interaction and professional status. It is important to note that we eliminated 20 questions and used 24 questions for measuring employees' job satisfaction.

We used five-point Likert type scale for all the items. Response categories range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It should be mentioned that some items that were inapplicable to our culture were eliminated from the original questionnaire.

### **Reliability**

The summary statistics of formal survey are shown in Table 2. For reliability evaluation we utilized Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of all the latent variables are more than 0.7 ( $\alpha > 0.7$ ), which indicates all the scales demonstrate good reliability.

**TABLE 2. THE SUMMARY STATISTICS OF RESEARCH**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Number of Questions</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>Islamic Work Ethics</b>	<b>17</b>	.....	.....	<b>0.883</b>
Pay	4	2.6335	0.89535	0.765
Autonomy	4	2.6483	0.88536	0.798
Interaction	4	3.6297	0.64959	0.812
Professional Status	4	3.8553	0.56089	0.845
Task Requirements	4	3.0827	0.57876	0.832
Organizational Policies	4	3.0545	0.78416	0.752
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>	<b>24</b>	.....	.....	<b>0.866</b>

### **Validity**

For evaluating the validity of the questionnaires, we used content validity and construct validity.

Content validity deals with how representative and comprehensive the items were in creating the scale. It is assessed by examining the process by which scale items are generated (Moon & Kim, 2001). Content validity assured us that all aspects and parameters that impact on main content were evaluated. In order to test the content validity after devising a framework for the questionnaire, we asked 12 experts to modify it if needed. These experts evaluated all the implemented criteria in the questionnaire and modified it.

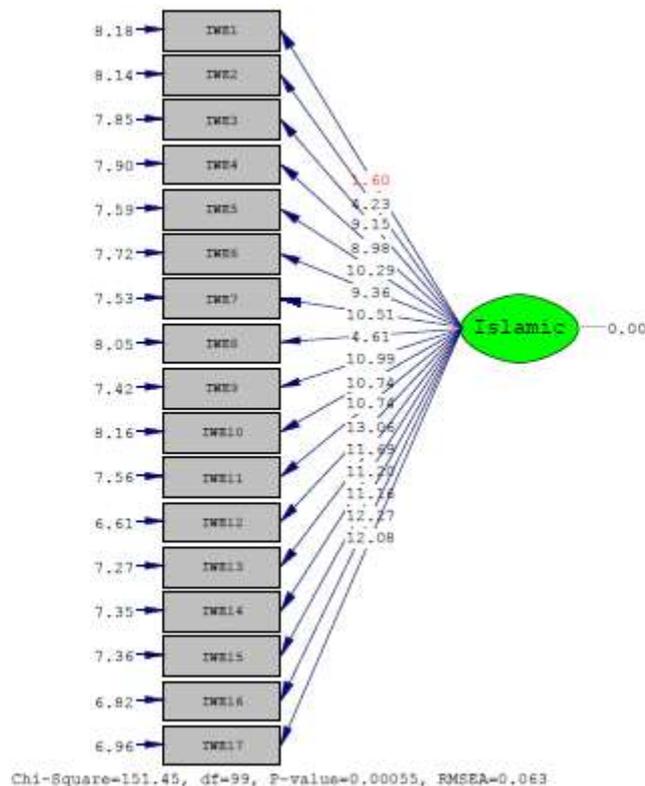
Construct validity determines the extent to which a scale measures a variable of interest (Moon & Kim, 2001). In this research we used factor analysis for considering the structure of research. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to investigate the construction of the questionnaire. Factor analysis depicted that all the mentioned criteria are measured in these questionnaires.

### **Measurement Model of Islamic Work Ethics**

In the initial step, we applied confirmatory factor analysis in LISREL 8.8 and eventually conducted path diagram of X model as per Figure 2. We have tested the relationship between Islamic work ethics and its indicators. Fitness's indices show good fitness of our X model, proving that the selected indicators are good representatives for dimensions of Islamic work ethics. Based on Joreskog & Sorbom (1989),  $\text{Chi-Square}/\text{df} \leq 3$ ,  $\text{RMSEA} \leq 0.10$  show that the measurement model provides a reasonable fit to the data.

As can be seen in figure 2, all questions, except questions number 1, has significant positive relationship with Islamic work ethics. A t-value less that 1.96 is the reason of elimination of question number 1 from Structural Equation Modeling. As shown in figure 2, the mentioned question is illustrated with red color to discriminate it from other questions. Therefore, we continued our analysis with 16 questions of Islamic work ethics

**FIGURE 2. T-VALUE MODEL OF ISLAMIC WORK ETHICS**



### **Measurement Model of Job Satisfaction**

In the next step, we applied confirmatory factor analysis in LISREL 8.8 and eventually conducted path diagram of Y model as per Figure 3. We have tested the relationship between job satisfaction and its indicators. Fitness's indices show good fitness of our Y model, proving that the selected indicators are good representatives for dimensions of job satisfaction. Based on Joreskog & Sorbom (1989),  $\text{Chi-Square/df} \leq 3$ ,  $\text{RMSEA} \leq 0.10$  show that the measurement model provides a reasonable fit to the data.

As can be seen in figure 3, the index "Autonomy" will be deleted from Structural Equation Modeling. As shown, a t-value of 0.94 is the reason of the elimination of this index from analysis. Moreover, third questions of professional status and second questions of task requirements (with t-value of 1.75 and 1.37 respectively) will be eliminated from Structural Equation Modeling. As shown in figure 3, these questions and the mentioned index are shown in red color to discriminate them from others.

**FIGURE 3. T-VALUE MODEL OF JOB SATISFACTION**

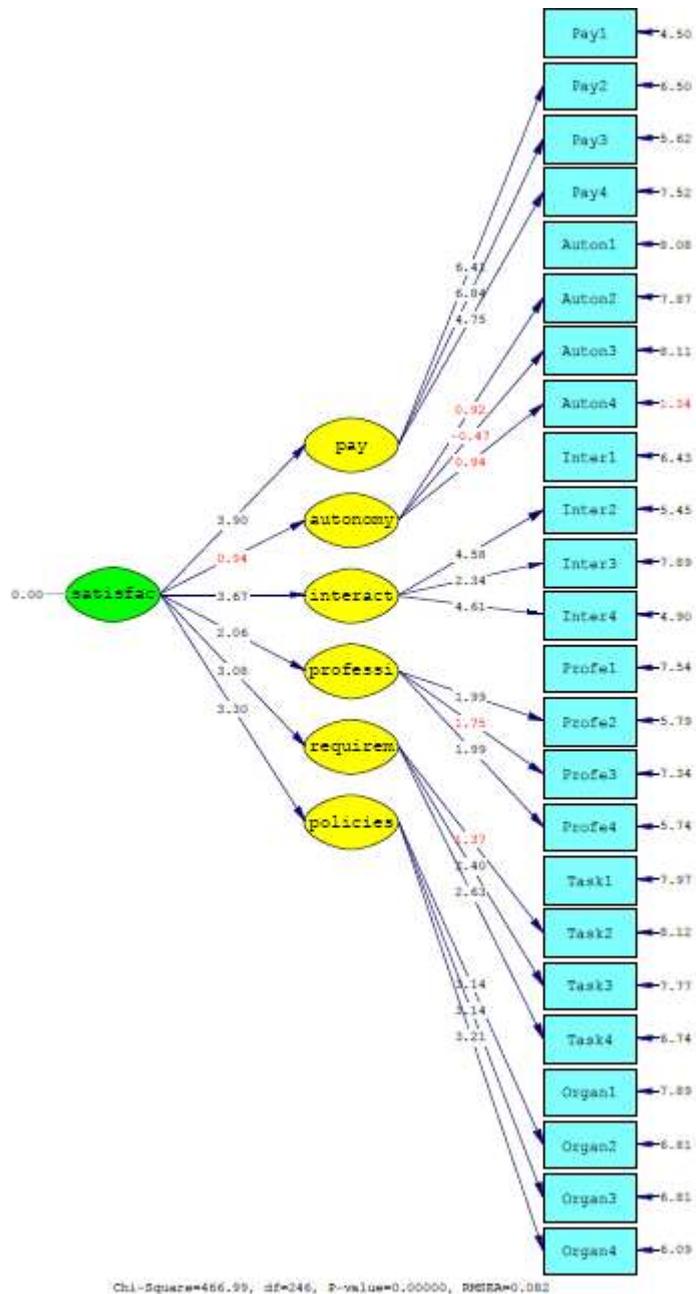


FIGURE 4. STANDARDIZED SOLUTION MODEL OF JOB SATISFACTION

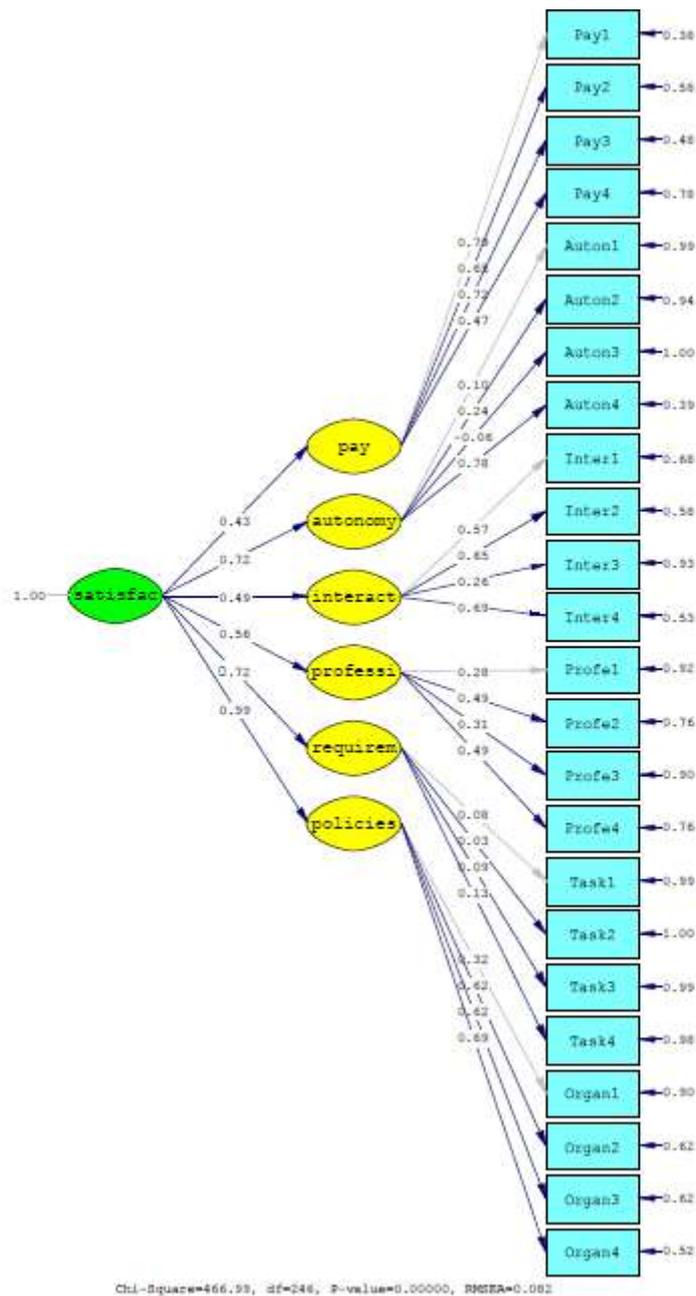


Figure 4 shows the extent each variable describes job satisfaction. The ranking of the variables is as follows: 1. Organizational policies, 2. Task requirements and Autonomy, 3. Professional status, 4. Interaction, and 5. Pay.

Based on figure 3 and 4, six sub-hypotheses of the current research can be discussed as follows: As can be seen in table 3, five hypotheses were confirmed and one was rejected.

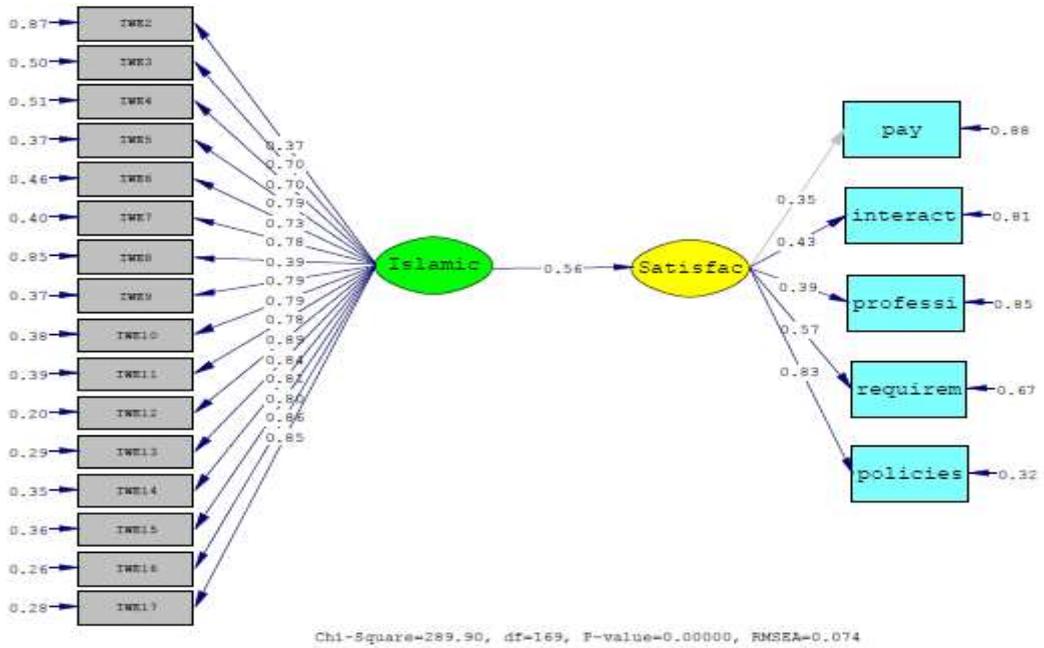
**TABLE 3. THE RESULTS OF THE SUB-HYPOTHESES TEST**

<b>NO</b>	<b>Sub-Hypotheses</b>	<b>Path Coefficient</b>	<b>T-Value</b>	<b>Results</b>
<b>H<sub>1</sub></b>	Pay → Job Satisfaction	0.43	3.90	Confirmed
<b>H<sub>2</sub></b>	Autonomy → Job Satisfaction	0.72	0.94	Rejected
<b>H<sub>3</sub></b>	Interaction → Job Satisfaction	0.49	3.67	Confirmed
<b>H<sub>4</sub></b>	Professional Status → Job Satisfaction	0.56	2.06	Confirmed
<b>H<sub>5</sub></b>	Task Requirements → Job Satisfaction	0.72	3.08	Confirmed
<b>H<sub>6</sub></b>	Organizational Policies → Job Satisfaction	0.99	3.30	Confirmed

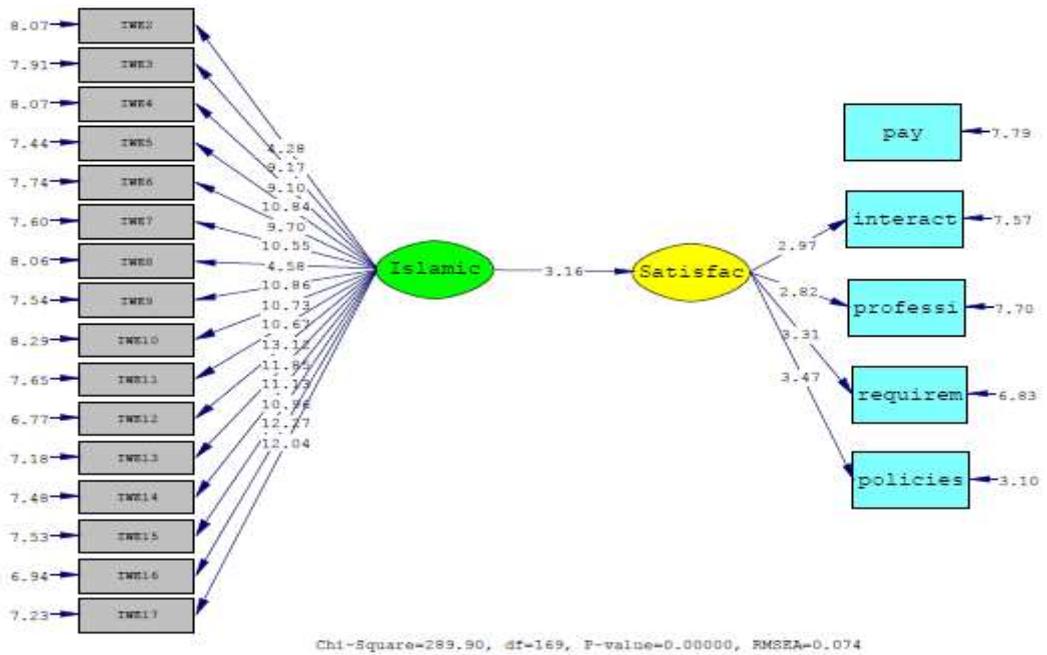
### **Structural Equation Model**

For testing our main hypothesis, we performed our Structural model applying 16 questions of Islamic work ethics and 5 dimensions of job satisfaction. Figure 5 and 6 shows the results of the Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis. Fitness's indices also show good fitness of the Structural Model.

**FIGURE 5. STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL OF RESEARCH**



**FIGURE 6. T-VALUE MODEL OF RESEARCH**



**TABLE 4. THE RESULTS OF THE MAIN-HYPOTHESIS TEST**

<b>NO</b>	<b>Main Hypothesis</b>	<b>Path Coefficient</b>	<b>T-Value</b>	<b>Result</b>
<b>H<sub>1</sub></b>	Islamic Work Ethics → Job Satisfaction	0.56	3.16	Confirmed

### **Discussion**

The aim of the present study is to investigate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and Job Satisfaction of 150 employees in 10 manufacturing companies of Iran. The previous research studies have examined the relationship between Job Satisfaction and other variables; however, lack of sufficient research studying the relationship between Islamic work ethics and job satisfaction with each other was the main reason this research was carried out. It has long been established that job satisfaction leads to reduction in staff turnover, employees' absence rate and improvement in organizational productivity. Therefore, examining the factors that could lead to improvement in employees' level of job satisfaction has always been of particular interest to researchers and scholars in human resource management and organizational behavior, which was another strong reason to carry out this research.

The results of the current study show that Islamic work ethics has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction of employees. The results of the present study imply that managers of organizations should pay enough attention to Islamic issues especially Islamic work ethics in workplace. Moreover, taking into account the results of Standardized Solution Model of job satisfaction (figure 4), organizational policies has the most significant relationship with employees' job satisfaction. Therefore, managers of organization should consider that they shouldn't bound employees with restricted procedures.

The model proposed here, is an initial step which needs to be improved by future research. Thus, authors can consider the mediating role of other variables such as organizational justice, organizational commitment, organizational culture and organizational structure between Islamic work ethics and job satisfaction.

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