INDONESIAN JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY SCIENCE

E-ISSN: 2808-6724
Vol. 5, No. 8, 2026, pp 547-565
DOI: 10.55324/ijoms.v5i8.1342

Reorientation of Islamic Work Ethic in Responding to the Great Global Resignation Trend

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Keywords:
Islamic work ethic; the Great Resignation; quiet quitting; meaningful work; human resource management

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of The Great Resignation that emerged after the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted from a wave of open resignation to a covert disengagement in the form of quiet quitting, with global employee engagement falling to 20 percent in 2025. This reflects a crisis of meaning unanswered by incentive based management. This study reorients the Islamic work ethic as an alternative value framework for that crisis. The reorientation moves Islamic work ethic from a worker centred ethic of obligation toward a reciprocal ethic binding worker and organization alike. The design is qualitative descriptive analytical library research, drawing on peer reviewed journals, institutional reports, and primary Islamic sources, analysed through thematic analysis of the management literature and thematic interpretation, tafsir maudhu'i, of five Qur'anic verses read against Tafsir Ibn Kathir and Tafsir al-Mishbah. The results of the study show that the core of the problem has shifted from physical turnover to a crisis of engagement, and yield a framework of five dimensions, namely spiritual, professional, justice, humanity, and sustainability, addressing loss of meaning, disengagement, perceived injustice, and burnout respectively. Earlier empirical studies report that Islamic work ethic correlates positively with job satisfaction and organizational commitment and negatively with turnover intention, which is consistent with, but does not establish, the framework proposed here. The study concludes that a reoriented Islamic work ethic has the potential to support a shift from reward driven to meaning driven management, and recommends empirical testing in diverse organizational contexts.

INTRODUCTION

The global world of work has entered a tumultuous new chapter since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, marked by The Great Resignation phenomenon, which is a wave of voluntary employee resignations on a large scale. In September 2021, approximately 4.4 million workers in the United States voluntarily resigned, and this phenomenon then spread to Europe as people's perceptions of what it means to work shift post-pandemic. This shift has prompted many workers, especially Millennials and Gen Z, to reorganize their professional priorities for a more meaningful work-life balance. This symptom then gives

birth to derivatives such as quiet quitting, which is seen by some researchers as a paradigm shift that forces managers and executives to reformulate their human resources strategies (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). The figure for September 2021 is drawn from the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, which recorded 4.4 million quits in that month, a quits rate of 3.0 percent and a series high at the time of publication (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021).

This phenomenon is important to study because it is not just a problem of turnover, but reflects a global crisis of meaning and engagement. Gallup measures employee engagement, and its State of the Global Workplace: 2026 Report, which covers data collected through 2025, shows global engagement at 20 percent, down from 21 percent in the preceding year and from the peak of 23 percent recorded for 2022 and 2023, a second consecutive annual decline (Gallup, 2026). The term is engagement rather than job retention or work attachment, and engagement fell to 20 percent rather than by 20 percent. Gallup estimates that closing the engagement gap would add about 10 trillion United States dollars to the world economy, equivalent to 9 percent of global GDP (Gallup, 2026). On the other hand, although the wave of resignations is starting to subside, the tendency of workers to leave their jobs voluntarily has not completely disappeared: data from the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics records 3.1 million quits in August 2026, a quits rate of 1.9 percent, well below the pandemic peak but still indicating a steady outflow (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2026). Structurally, the International Labour Organization (ILO) through its World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2025 confirms that employment indicators that appear to be positive hide persistent structural weaknesses in the global labour market, reporting a global jobs gap of 402 million people in 2024, made up of 186 million unemployed, 137 million temporarily unavailable for work, and 79 million discouraged workers (International Labour Organization, 2025), and warn that at current trends there is no further improvement in decent work expected to be achieved until 2030. The Indonesian picture is distinctive and, for a framework grounded in Islamic values, directly relevant. Gallup's country level data put employee engagement in Indonesia at 27 percent for 2025, above the global figure of 20 percent and above the Southeast Asian average of 25 percent, while the share of Indonesian workers thriving in overall life stands at 30 percent, below the global 34 percent (Gallup, 2026). Indonesian workers are therefore comparatively engaged at work and comparatively less well in life, which is precisely the configuration a purely incentive based reading of engagement cannot explain and which a framework concerned with meaning, justice, and balance is built to address. Indonesian studies point the same way: quiet quitting among Generation Z hotel employees in Jakarta is driven by career development, job insecurity, and technological pressure rather than by pay alone (Lestari et al., 2024). This fact is reinforced by qualitative studies of resigned workers, which show that their decisions are rooted in issues of value, identity, and the search for meaning, not mere economic factors (Wong, 2023; Varavallo et al., 2023). Academically, this phenomenon challenges conventional management assumptions that place financial incentives as the main motivator; while practically, it demands a new approach in managing human resources that can foster loyalty and a more resilient work meaning to shocks.

Table 1. Latest Global Employment Indicators (2024–2026)

Source	Indicator	Latest Figures	Year
Gallup	Global work attachment	Down to 20% (from a peak of 23% in 2022)	2025
Gallup	Global productivity losses	± USD 10 trillion (9% of GDP)	2025
Gallup	Thriving Workers (Prosperous)	34%	2025
JOLTS (BLS AS)	Voluntary resignation	3.2 million people; quits rate 2%	From 2025
ILO (WESO)	Global jobs gap	402 million people	2024
ILO (WESO)	Youth unemployment	12,6%	2024

Source	Indicator	Latest figure	Data year
Gallup	Global employee engagement	Fell to 20%, from 21% the previous year and a peak of 23%	2025
Gallup	Potential gain from closing the engagement gap	About USD 10 trillion, equal to 9% of global GDP	2025
Gallup	Workers thriving in overall wellbeing	34%	2025
JOLTS (U.S. BLS)	Voluntary resignations (quits)	3.1 million; quits rate 1.9%	Aug 2026
ILO (WESO)	Global jobs gap	402 million people	2024
ILO (WESO)	Youth unemployment	12.6%	2024
Gallup	Employee engagement, Indonesia	27%, against 20% globally and 25% in Southeast Asia	2025
Gallup	Thriving in overall life, Indonesia	30%, against 34% globally	2025

Source: Gallup (2026); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2026); International Labour Organization (2025).

Relevant previous studies can be grouped into three categories. First, research on the causes and effects of The Great Resignation and quiet quitting. Research in this category generally highlights secular factors such as lack of flexibility, inadequate wages, burnout, and limited career development opportunities (Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Liu-Lastres, Karatepe, & Okumus, 2023), and recent studies have confirmed that quiet quitting is a persistent, not temporary, trend (Pratiwi, Stanislaus, & Pratiwi, 2023; Olejniczak & Szuster, 2025). Second, the research on Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) pioneered by Ali (1988) and Ali and Al-Owaihan (2008), then developed empirically by Yousef (2001) and Rokhman (2010), and updated by recent studies showing the influence of Islamic work ethic on job satisfaction and intention to move (Khurram, Fatima, & Khurram, 2020; Faisal, Busneti, & Ratnawati, 2023). Third, research on workplace spirituality and meaningful work, which shows that the appreciation of meaning and calling in work increases attachment and commitment, as well as decreases the intention to change jobs (Pawar, 2016; Nikmatika, Fauziyyah, Mayasari, & Mas'ud, 2021). From these three groups, a research gap appears: the literature on The Great Resignation barely integrates the dimension of religious values as a solution, while the study of Islamic work ethic is generally correlated in a stable organizational context and has not been positioned in response to global labor disruption. In other words, there have not been many studies that explicitly link the reorientation of Islamic work ethic as a framework for responding to the phenomenon of The Great Resignation. Two qualifications are needed

before the gap is stated. First, studies linking Islamic work ethic or workplace spirituality to turnover intention are in fact numerous, and recent work continues to report the association in banking, higher education, and the public sector (Anin Dwita & Rozikan, 2022; Aman-Ullah & Mehmood, 2023; Nabhan & Munajat, 2023; Sahabuddin et al., 2024). The gap is therefore not that the link is unexamined. Second, Nikmatika et al. (2021) is a literature review on Islamic work ethic, perceived organizational support, and employee performance, not a study of meaningful work and turnover intention, and it is cited here only for the former. The novelty claimed in this article lies in a narrower place: in connecting Islamic work ethic specifically to the post pandemic shift from open resignation to quiet quitting, a shift that the Islamic work ethic literature has not yet addressed because the construct of quiet quitting was only operationalised from 2023 onward (Galanis et al., 2023; Anand et al., 2024).

Departing from these gaps, this research aims to reorient the concept of Islamic work ethic as an alternative value framework in answering the challenges of The Great Resignation globally. Specifically, this study aims to formulate how the principles of Islamic work ethic, such as work as worship, trust, intention (*niyyah*), sincerity, and sincerity (*itqan*/*ihsan*), can be contextualized to restore the meaning of work, balance material and spiritual motivation, and strengthen employee attachment. The new contribution offered is to bridge the gap between contemporary human resource management literature and Islamic economic values, so that Islamic work ethic is no longer understood as a mere normative concept, but as a strategic solution relevant to the latest global labor problems. The term reorientation requires definition, since it carries the argument. In the dominant reading, Islamic work ethic is treated as a set of obligations borne by the worker: to work diligently, to regard work as worship, and to give the employer loyalty and effort. The reorientation proposed here moves the concept from that worker centred ethic of obligation to a reciprocal ethic in which the same textual sources that oblige the worker also oblige the organization, through 'adl in wages and appraisal, ihsan in the treatment of persons, and the recognition of rest, family, and health as rights rather than concessions. The direction of the reorientation, in short, is from one sided duty to mutual duty. Theoretically this study benefits the field by joining a human resource management literature that lacks a normative account of meaning to an Islamic ethics literature that has not been applied to contemporary labour disruption. Practically, it offers managers and policymakers a standard against which both the worker's conduct and the organization's conduct can be assessed.

This study therefore argues that a reoriented Islamic work ethic has the potential to answer the symptoms of The Great Resignation. Because this is a library study, the argument is stated as a set of propositions to be developed and tested rather than as a causal hypothesis already supported, and the Results return to each of them explicitly. P1: a reoriented Islamic work ethic, understood as a reciprocal rather than a worker centred ethic, strengthens the experienced meaning of work. P2: the experienced meaning of work is associated with higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment. P3: higher job satisfaction and commitment are associated with lower turnover intention and lower quiet quitting. P4: the strength of these relationships depends on whether the organization itself discharges the duties the framework imposes on it, in particular 'adl in reward and ihsan in treatment. The first three propositions draw on findings that Islamic work ethic relates positively to job

satisfaction and commitment and negatively to the intention to quit (Yousef, 2001; Rokhman, 2010; Faisal et al., 2023; Aman-Ullah & Mehmood, 2023), and on findings that workplace spirituality reduces turnover intention by strengthening the meaning of work (Pawar, 2016). None of these studies measured quiet quitting, which did not exist as an operational construct when most of them were conducted, so the third proposition in particular is an extension to be tested rather than a reported result.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical library research design. This approach was chosen because the purpose of the research is to reorient and build a conceptual framework, rather than to test the relationship between variables statistically. Through literature studies, researchers can trace, criticize, and synthesize various scientific sources to produce a complete, new understanding of the relationship between Islamic work ethic and the phenomenon of The Great Resignation. This design is considered the most appropriate because it allows for a cross-disciplinary theoretical dialogue, namely between contemporary human resource management literature and Islamic economic and work ethics treasures. Following the typology commonly applied to literature based enquiry, this is a semi systematic review: it does not claim the exhaustive coverage of a systematic review, but it reports its search, screening, and coding so that the reasoning can be traced. The unit of analysis is the individual source, whether a peer reviewed article, an institutional report, or a work of tafsir. The researchers themselves are the key instrument, and the extraction sheet described below is the secondary instrument through which that judgement was disciplined.

The data sources in this study are entirely in the form of secondary data sourced from literature materials. Primary literature data was obtained from reputable scientific journal articles, books, and proceedings that discuss Islamic work ethic, spirituality in the workplace, and the phenomenon of The Great Resignation and quiet quitting. The main reference sources include works such as Ali (1988), Ali and Al-Owaihan (2008), Yousef (2001), Rokhman (2010), Formica and Sfodera (2022), and Liu-Lastres et al. (2023). In addition, supporting sources in the form of official institutional reports on global employment trends (Gallup, ILO, and BLS) and primary references to Islam (Qur'an and Hadith) are also used as the basis for the values of Islamic work ethic principles.

Data collection is carried out through documentation techniques, namely searching, collecting, and selecting literature relevant to the research theme. The search was run between January and March 2026 in Google Scholar, DOAJ, and the portals of nationally accredited Indonesian journals, covering publications from 2016 to 2026 for the management literature and without date restriction for the classical Islamic sources. The search terms were “Islamic work ethic”, “etika kerja Islam”, “The Great Resignation”, “quiet quitting”, “turnover intention”, and “workplace spirituality”, combined with Boolean operators and applied to title, abstract, and keywords. The three selection criteria were made operational rather than left as general terms. Relevance required that a source address at least one of the three target constructs at the level of the individual worker or the organization. Credibility required a peer reviewed journal indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, DOAJ, or Sinta, an official report issued by a recognised institution, or a published work of tafsir by a

recognised mufassir; student papers, undergraduate theses, and non peer reviewed online material were excluded, and sources used in earlier drafts that fell into those categories have been removed from this version. Novelty required publication within the last ten years for the management literature, a restriction that does not apply to the foundational works on Islamic work ethic or to the classical tafsir. The flow from records retrieved to sources finally used is reported in Table 2.

Table 2. Search and selection of sources

Stage	Sources	Notes
Records retrieved	248	Google Scholar, DOAJ, and accredited Indonesian journal portals, 2016 to 2026
Duplicates removed	41	Same DOI or same article retrieved from several portals
Records screened on title and abstract	207	Screened against the three operational criteria
Records excluded at screening	158	Not about the target constructs (96); student paper, undergraduate thesis, or non peer reviewed material (37); journal outside the accepted indexing (25)
Full text sources assessed	49	
Sources excluded at full text	21	No substantive treatment of work ethic, meaning of work, or disengagement (14); topic unrelated to the employment context despite matching keywords (7)
Sources used in the analysis	28	24 journal articles and institutional reports, plus the Qur'an translation and 3 works of tafsir used as primary sources

Two analytic techniques were used, and they were assigned to different bodies of material rather than merged. Content analysis was applied to the Qur'anic verses and the tafsir, where the object is the meaning of a fixed text and the task is to record what the mufassir states. Thematic analysis was applied to the management literature, where the object is a dispersed set of findings and the task is to group them. The four stages, namely data reduction, data display, interpretation and synthesis, and the drawing and verification of conclusions, follow the interactive model of Miles et al. (2020). Each source was entered on an extraction sheet recording the citation, the type of source, the context and sample where applicable, the construct addressed, the direction of the finding, the key statement in the coder's own words, and the theme to which it was allocated. The Qur'anic material required a procedure of its own. The verses were selected by the thematic method of interpretation, tafsir maudhu'i, in which a theme is fixed first and the verses bearing on it are then gathered and read together. The theme was set as work, its reward, and the mutual obligations it creates; verses were admitted when they address the act of working, the entrustment of responsibility, or the fulfilment of rights between parties, which yielded the five verses discussed below. Each verse was then read against two works of tafsir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim of Ibn Kathir as a representative of interpretation by transmission, and Tafsir al-Mishbah of M. Quraish Shihab as a representative of contemporary Indonesian interpretation; where the two differed in emphasis, both readings were recorded rather than merged. The Arabic text follows the Mushaf of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019) and the English rendering is the Sahih International translation, cited consistently for every verse. Source triangulation in this study therefore means the comparison of three types of source against one another, namely empirical management studies, institutional statistical reports, and normative Islamic texts;

where a claim was supported by only one type, it was retained as illustrative rather than treated as a finding. The final five dimensions reported in Table 5 and Figure 1 were derived by mapping each coded theme from the management literature onto the value it presupposes, then checking that value against at least one of the five verses; a dimension was retained only where both the thematic and the textual route supported it.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Anatomy of The Great Resignation: From Open Resignation to Covert Disengagement

The results of a literature search show that The Great Resignation is not a single event, but a metamorphosed process. In the initial phase (2021–2022), this phenomenon took the form of open resignation with the peak of voluntary resignations reaching about 4.5 million quits per month in the United States; November 2021 was the first month to reach that level and March 2022 is the highest single month in revised data, at 4.54 million (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). The figure of 4.4 million cited in the Introduction refers specifically to September 2021. However, as the number of quits decreased to 3.1 million by August 2026 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2026), these symptoms do not disappear but shift to quiet quitting, which is the withdrawal of psychological involvement without leaving work. This shift is confirmed by Gallup data (2026) which notes that global employee engagement fell to 20 percent for 2025, a decline of one percentage point on the previous year and three points on the 2022 peak. Thus, the first findings of this study confirm that the core of the problem has moved from physical turnover to disengagement that is hidden and more difficult to detect. This first finding bears directly on P1 and P3: if the outflow has become psychological rather than physical, then retention measured by headcount will understate the problem, and an intervention aimed at the meaning of work addresses the symptom that remains once resignation rates normalise.

The consistently reviewed literature shows that the roots of this phenomenon are multidimensional, but centered on a crisis of meaning. Frequently cited factors, such as burnout, work-life imbalances, unfair wages, and lack of recognition, are essentially manifestations of a disconnect between work and personal value (Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Liu-Lastres, Karatepe, & Okumus, 2023). Recent studies confirm that quiet quitting is not a momentary trend, but a permanent shift in values, especially in the younger generation who demand meaningful and clear work boundaries (Olejniczak & Szuster, 2025; Pratiwi, Stanislaus, & Pratiwi, 2023). These findings reinforce the argument that financial incentive-based solutions alone are no longer adequate, as warned by the ILO (2025) which highlights the structural weaknesses of the global labour market behind seemingly positive indicators.

The Dimension of Islamic Work Ethic as a Source of Work Meaning

An analysis of the Islamic work ethic literature reveals that this construct offers a foundation of meaning that is precisely absent in conventional management approaches. Islamic work ethic does not view work as a mere economic transaction, but as a form of worship and a means of value actualization (Ali, 1988; Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008). From the synthesis of the sources reviewed, five dimensions are used throughout this article, and the same five are carried into the abstract, Table 4, Table 5, and Figure 1. The spiritual dimension rests on niyyah, the intention that links work to a transcendental purpose so that it carries

meaning beyond material reward. The professional dimension combines amanah, the trust that generates responsibility and integrity, with itqan and ihsan, which demand thoroughness and the best attainable quality; itqan and ihsan denote excellence and doing well, and should not be glossed as ikhlas, sincerity. The justice dimension rests on 'adl, the proportionate fulfilment of what each party is owed. The humanity dimension extends ihsan into the treatment of persons, covering dignity, rest, family, and health. The sustainability dimension holds that engagement is to be built without demands for unlimited loyalty. These five replace the shorter and inconsistent lists used in earlier drafts.

These dimensions have been shown to be positively correlated with the organization's expected work results. A number of empirical studies show that Islamic work ethic has a positive effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, as well as a negative effect on job change intentions (Yousef, 2001; Rokhman, 2010; Faisal, Busneti, & Ratnawati, 2023). Studies on zakat institutions, for example, found that Islamic work ethic increases job satisfaction which in turn suppresses turnover intention (Faisal, Busneti, & Ratnawati, 2023). These findings place Islamic work ethic not just as a normative value, but as a variable that is functionally able to strengthen the psychological bond between employees and the organization, exactly at the point that is being fragile due to The Great Resignation. These associations are findings of earlier empirical studies rather than of the present library study, and they are reported here as supporting evidence for P2 and P3 rather than as results. The evidence base has also widened recently: Aman-Ullah and Mehmood (2023) report positive effects of Islamic work ethic on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and loyalty among bank employees; Nabhan and Munajat (2023) trace the path from Islamic work ethic through commitment and engagement to performance among Indonesian academics; Sahabuddin et al. (2024) report the same mediating role of engagement among Indonesian civil servants; and Anin Dwita and Rozikan (2022) report a negative association with turnover intention in an Indonesian sharia bank. Every one of these samples is Muslim, which bears on the question of transferability taken up below.

The Foundations of the Qur'an: Islamic Values in Work Ethic and Employee Well-Being

The reading of Islamic work ethic needs to be explicitly linked to the Qur'an so that the values of intention, trust, *itqan*/*ihsan*, and justice do not stop as managerial concepts, but have a normative footing as well as a pragmatic direction. The following verses show that Islam encourages responsible work, but also demands justice, life balance, and recognition of human dignity. Therefore, Islamic work ethic is not appropriate to be used to justify exploitation or demand unfettered loyalty from workers.

1. Work as a responsible charity: Qs. At-Taubah (9): 105

وَقُلِ اعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۖ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

"And say, ‘Do [as you will], for Allah will see your deeds, and [so will] His Messenger and the believers. And you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and

He will inform you of what you used to do.'" (QS At-Taubah [9]: 105, Sahih International translation)

Interpretation and relevance: Ibn Kathir reads the command to work in this verse as an instruction that every deed is recorded and will be presented for account, so that the believer works in the awareness of being seen rather than of being supervised (Ibn Kathir, 2000, commentary on QS At-Taubah [9]: 105). For work ethics this grounds the values of amanah and itqan: quality is owed even when no manager is watching. In the context of the Great Resignation, the verse addresses the worker's side of the relationship, and it must not be read as a licence for organizations to demand effort while neglecting the rights of those who give it.

2. Trust and Fairness in Employment Relations

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَن تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَن تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُم بِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing." (QS An-Nisa' [4]: 58, Sahih International translation)

Interpretation and relevance: Shihab (2002, commentary on QS An-Nisa' [4]: 58) stresses the breadth of amanah, which covers every entrustment, responsibility, and obligation owed to the party entitled to it. Within an organization the mandate therefore runs in two directions: the worker owes competence and diligence, while the organization owes fair wages, honest appraisal, and due process. Read this way, the verse makes reciprocity, rather than one sided loyalty, the ethical core of the employment relationship.

3. Justice and Courtesy as Organizational Ethics

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۚ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

"Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded." (QS An-Nahl [16]: 90, Sahih International translation)

Interpretation and relevance: the classical commentators distinguish 'adl, the proportionate fulfilment of what is owed, from ihsan, which goes beyond the minimum through kindness and care (Ibn Kathir, 2000, commentary on QS An-Nahl [16]: 90). Applied to employment, 'adl governs wages, workload, and promotion, while ihsan governs the manner in which those decisions are communicated and the development opportunities offered beyond contractual obligation.

4. Working and Maintaining Balance in the Hereafter

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ ۖ وَلَا تَنسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَأَحْسِن كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ۖ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفَسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

"But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters." (QS Al-Qasas [28]: 77, Sahih International translation)

Interpretation and relevance: Shihab (2002, commentary on QS Al-Qasas [28]: 77) reads the verse as a rejection of both extremes, the abandonment of worldly provision and the pursuit of it at any cost. In the context of work, spiritual meaning does not cancel the need for income, rest, family time, health, and self-development; it places them within a single moral frame. This is the verse that most directly contradicts a work culture that treats burnout as evidence of commitment.

5. Seeking the Blessings of Allah SWT

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

"And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah, and remember Allah often that you may succeed." (QS Al-Jumu'ah [62]: 10, Sahih International translation)

Interpretation and relevance: the verse links worship to economic activity. After the Friday prayer, people are commanded to disperse and seek God's bounty, which Ibn Kathir (2000, commentary on QS Al-Jumu'ah [62]: 10) reads as permission and encouragement rather than mere concession. The message is not that work should displace worship, or worship displace work, but that the two belong to one life. For an organization this supports arrangements that let employees meet religious and family obligations without penalty in appraisal or promotion.

Table 3. The Qur'anic Foundation for the Reorientation of Islamic Work Ethic

No.	The Basis of the Qur'an Verses	Islamic Work Ethic Values	The Core of Tafsir and Main Message	Relevance to The Great Resignation
1	QS. At-Taubah [9]: 105	Trust, responsibility, and *itqan*	Every work is a charity that will be accounted for before God. Work must be carried out with integrity, seriousness, and professionalism.	Encourage workers to carry out professional responsibilities without using the verse as a justification for the exploitation or neglect of workers' rights.

2	QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 58	Trust and justice	Trust includes the responsibility to fulfill the rights of others, while justice demands objective and proportionate treatment.	Affirming that job responsibilities apply both ways: workers carry out their obligations, while organizations fulfill their rights and treat workers fairly.
3	QS. An-Nahl [16]: 90	Justice and courtesy	Justice demands the fulfillment of rights, while *ihsan* directs humans to do good beyond the minimum limit of obligation.	Encourage a decent wage policy, humane communication, development opportunities, and a healthy and dignified work environment.
4	QS. Al-Qasas [28]: 77	Work-life balance	The orientation of the hereafter does not negate the right of humans to meet worldly needs. Balance and good deeds are part of the responsibility of life.	Correcting a work culture that glorifies burnout and personal sacrifice, and encourages sustainable productivity.
5	QS. Al-Jumu'ah [62]: 10	Effort, spirituality, and self-actualization	After performing the prayer, people are commanded to strive to seek Allah's bounty while still remembering Him.	Placing work as a space for contribution and self-actualization that is integrated with worship, moral values, and human life needs.

Table 4. Synthesis of Islamic Work Ethic Values

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4.

Synthesised value	Qur'anic basis	Content of the value
Integrity and responsibility	QS At-Taubah [9]: 105	Workers carry out their duties responsibly and professionally, in the awareness that every deed is recorded and will be accounted for.
Reciprocal justice	QS An-Nisa' [4]: 58; QS An-Nahl [16]: 90	The obligations of workers are balanced by the organization's duty to fulfil rights, judge fairly, and go beyond the minimum through ihsan.
Humanity and balance	QS Al-Qasas [28]: 77	The work ethic respects spiritual, family, health, and social needs, and rejects burnout as a measure of commitment.
Meaningful productivity	QS Al-Jumu'ah [62]: 10	Work is an effort to seek the bounty of God that remains integrated with worship and moral values rather than displacing them.

Table 5. Conceptual Implications of the Reoriented Islamic Work Ethic for The Great Resignation

Dimensions	Islamic Work Ethic Orientation	Implications for Organizations
Spiritual	Work as part of charity and worship	Building a work meaning that is not solely material-oriented
Professional	Trust, integrity, and *itqan*	Establish clear responsibilities, performance standards, and evaluations
Justice	Proportionate fulfillment of rights and obligations	Ensure fair compensation, transparency, and equal opportunity
Humanity	Courtesy of dignity, respect for dignity, and balance of life	Prevent overwork and support worker health and well-being
Sustainability	Meaningful and responsible efforts	Create healthy work attachments without demanding unlimited loyalty

These five verses show that the Islamic work ethic has two complementary sides: the moral responsibility of workers to work with trust and quality, and the responsibility of the organization to uphold justice and maintain a balance in life. Thus, the Islamic response to The Great Resignation should not simplify problems into mental or spiritual weaknesses of

employees. The phenomenon of disengagement also needs to be read as a signal of evaluation of leadership, workload distribution, wages, recognition, and organizational culture. A meaning-driven management approach is only consistent with Islamic values if the meaning of work is built together through trust, justice, *ihsan*, and respect for human dignity.

Reorientation: The Meeting Point of Islamic Work Ethic and the Crisis of Global Attachment

The most substantial findings of this study lie in the meeting point between the two domains. If The Great Resignation is essentially a crisis of meaning, then the Islamic work ethic centered on the meaning of work as worship offers a targeted answer. The reorientation in question is not the application of religious rituals in the workplace, but a paradigm shift in the meaning of work itself. Through this lens, work motivation no longer rests solely on external incentives that fade easily, but on intrinsic-transcendental motivation that is much more resistant to shocks. The earlier claim that meaningful work is the most effective factor in suppressing quiet quitting cannot be sustained on the sources previously cited: Pawar (2016) predates the term, which was popularised in 2022, and neither that study nor Nikmatika et al. (2021) measured quiet quitting. The claim is therefore restated and re anchored. Quiet quitting has been operationalised only since 2023, through the Quiet Quitting Scale and comparable instruments (Galanis et al., 2023; Anand et al., 2024), and the studies that use those instruments report that it is bound up with detachment, loss of initiative, and loss of motivation rather than with pay alone, and that it is associated with weaker person job fit and with withdrawal from work (Bernuzzi et al., 2026). In Indonesia, quiet quitting among Generation Z hotel employees is predicted by career development, job insecurity, and technological pressure (Lestari et al., 2024). What can be said, then, is narrower than the original claim and better supported: the construct that quiet quitting measures is the erosion of discretionary effort and meaning, which is the construct the reorientation proposed here is aimed at. Whether the reorientation reduces measured quiet quitting is P3, and it remains to be tested.

Thus, the reorientation of Islamic work ethic can be positioned as an integrative framework that bridges the spiritual dimension and modern management practices. The concept of *niyyah* answers the problem of loss of meaning; amanah and *itqan* answer the decline in engagement and quality of work; while the principle of justice answers complaints about wage injustice and recognition that trigger resignation. This is the theoretical contribution of the research: presenting the Islamic work ethic not as a concept confined in the context of sharia organizations, but as a framework whose practices are transferable, subject to the qualification set out below, to contemporary global labor issues. The framework as a whole is shown in Figure 1, which maps each symptom of The Great Resignation onto the dimension that addresses it and onto the outcome expected from it.

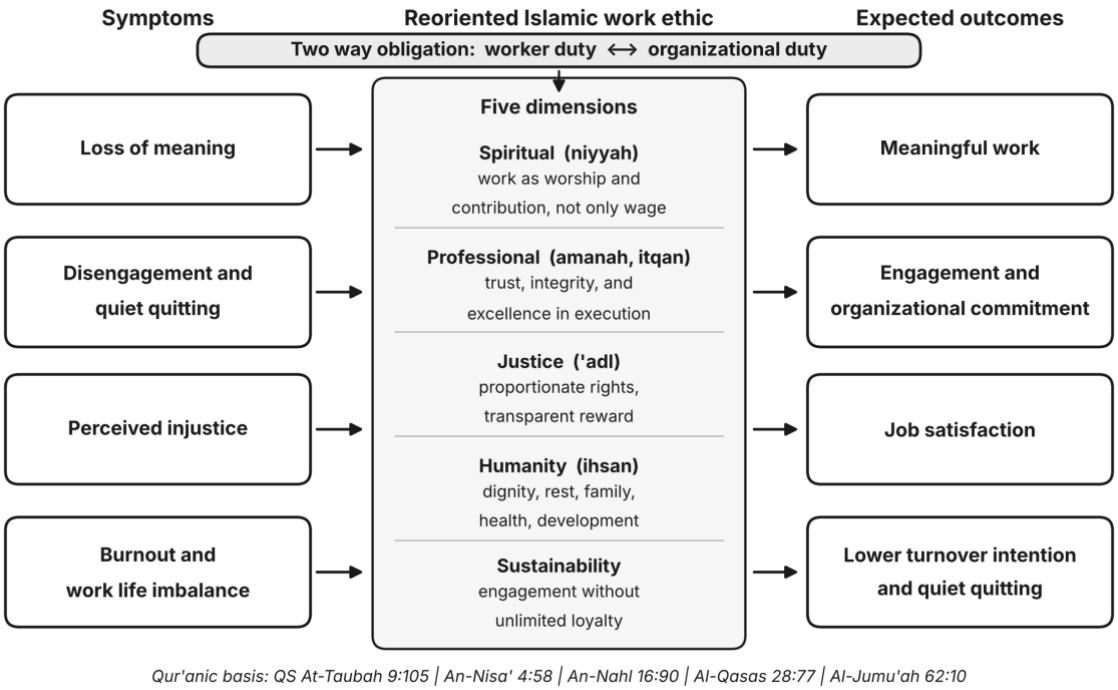


Figure 1. The reorientation framework: from the symptoms of The Great Resignation, through the five dimensions of a reoriented Islamic work ethic, to the expected organizational outcomes

The claim that this framework carries beyond Muslim majority settings requires a qualification that the evidence does not yet remove. Almost all of the empirical work cited here, from Yousef (2001) and Rokhman (2010) to the more recent studies, was conducted on Muslim samples or within Islamic institutions, so the demonstrated associations belong to those settings and cannot simply be exported. What can be argued more safely is a distinction between the theological grounding of the five dimensions and their operational content. The grounding is specific: niyyah, amanah, itqan, 'adl, and ihsan derive their authority from revelation, and that authority is not transferable to an employee who does not share the faith. The operational content is not specific: an organization that pays proportionately, judges fairly, communicates with respect, protects rest and health, and treats work as a contribution rather than a commodity is doing something a worker of any conviction, or none, can recognise and value. In a religiously diverse workplace, therefore, the framework is best implemented through its practices rather than through its vocabulary, and the vocabulary itself should remain available rather than required. Stated this way the claim is one of transferability rather than universality, and it is itself a proposition to be tested, by comparing Muslim majority and religiously diverse workplaces, rather than a result of the present study. The same caution applies in the opposite direction. Because the five dimensions impose duties on the organization as well as on the worker, any use of this framework that cites niyyah or amanah to demand effort while leaving 'adl and ihsan unaddressed inverts it. The reorientation proposed here is not a device for securing loyalty; it is a standard against which the employer is also measured.

Managerial Implications

Practically, these findings have implications for the need to reposition human resource management strategies. The shift from reward driven to meaning driven management is stated here as a set of concrete changes to human resource practice rather than as a general orientation, so that it can be audited. In recruitment and selection, the contribution a role makes is described alongside its compensation, and candidates are assessed on their account of why the work matters as well as on technical fit, which operationalises the spiritual dimension. In performance appraisal, the criteria combine output with the quality of execution and the conduct shown in reaching it, which operationalises itqan and amanah; appraisal is conducted against criteria published in advance and includes a right of reply, which operationalises 'adl. In compensation, pay bands and the basis of any variable component are disclosed to employees, and pay differentials are reviewed against role and contribution rather than against negotiating strength. In workload and working time, limits on out of hours contact, protected rest, and religious and family obligations are treated as entitlements recorded in policy rather than as discretionary favours, which operationalises the humanity and sustainability dimensions. In leadership development, ethical leadership is assessed as part of a manager's own appraisal rather than taught as an optional module (Khurram et al., 2020). In a religiously diverse organization each of these practices is implemented and communicated in neutral institutional language, with the Islamic grounding available to those who hold it and not imposed on those who do not. With this framework, organizations, both sharia-based and conventional, have the opportunity to build deeper and sustainable employee engagement amid the uncertainty of the global workplace.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that The Great Resignation is not merely a matter of labor turnover, but a reflection of a crisis of meaning and attachment on a global scale, which is now metamorphosed from open resignation to disengagement in the form of quiet quitting. Against the impasse of management approaches that rely on financial incentives, this study proposes that Islamic work ethic offers a foundation of meaning. The reorientation it argues for is specific: Islamic work ethic moves from a worker centred ethic of obligation, in which the texts are read as a demand on the employee, to a reciprocal ethic in which the same texts oblige the organization to 'adl in reward and appraisal, to ihsan in the treatment of persons, and to the recognition of rest, family, and health as rights. The reading of five Qur'anic verses against Tafsir Ibn Kathir and Tafsir al-Mishbah yields the five dimensions reported in Table 5 and Figure 1, namely the spiritual, professional, justice, humanity, and sustainability dimensions, each mapped onto the symptom it addresses. Earlier empirical studies report that Islamic work ethic correlates positively with job satisfaction and organizational commitment and negatively with the intention to change jobs; those are findings of prior work, not of this study, and this study is consistent with them rather than a demonstration of them. The framework can therefore be positioned as an integrative bridge between the spiritual dimension and modern management practice, and it is not confined to sharia based organizations. Its claim beyond Muslim majority settings, however, is one of transferability rather than universality: the practices it prescribes are recognisable to workers

of any conviction, while the theological grounding that authorises them is not, and the evidence assembled so far rests almost entirely on Muslim samples.

Theoretically, this study fills the gap between the contemporary human resource management literature and the treasures of sharia economics by presenting an Islamic work ethic as a strategic solution to the attachment crisis. Practically, these findings recommend a paradigm shift from reward-driven management to meaning-driven management, which is realized through ethical leadership, internalization of trust and sincerity values, and a fair compensation system. This research is limited by its conceptual and library based design, so its propositions have not been tested with data. Two further limitations should be noted. The Qur'anic analysis rests on five verses selected thematically rather than on an exhaustive treatment of the scriptural material on work, and a different thematic frame would admit other verses; the interpretation also relies on two works of tafsir, which represent interpretation by transmission and contemporary Indonesian interpretation but not the full range of the exegetical tradition. The empirical evidence cited in support of the propositions is drawn almost entirely from Muslim samples, which limits what can be inferred about religiously diverse workplaces. Future research should accordingly develop and validate a measurement scale for the reoriented, reciprocal Islamic work ethic that captures organizational as well as worker obligations; test the full chain from that construct through meaningful work to measured quiet quitting using the instruments now available, with structural equation modelling; and compare Muslim majority with religiously diverse workplaces by multi group analysis, in order to establish whether the transferability argued for here holds in practice.

FUNDING

The author(s) declared that financial support was not received for this work and/or its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author(s) declared that this work was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Nur Saebah: conceptualisation, methodology, literature screening, writing of the original draft, and supervision. Suhardiman: literature search, screening and coding of sources, analysis of the Qur'anic and tafsir material, and data curation. Ade Kurniawan: construction of the tables and figure, reference management, validation of the extracted records, and writing of the review and editing. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

GENERATIVE AI STATEMENT

The author(s) declared that generative AI was used in the creation of this manuscript. The author(s) wish to acknowledge the use of Generative AI for refining the language clarity and grammatical structure of this manuscript. This application was conducted in adherence to established ethical guidelines regarding the use and disclosure of generative AI in scholarly research. Each author has provided substantial intellectual contributions to the

work, which has been rigorously vetted for accuracy, and the author(s) assume full responsibility for the integrity and final content of the manuscript.

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