Religiosity and work engagement: Workload as a moderator

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Abstract

Based on job demands-resources (JD-R) theory, this study examines the relationship between religiosity-from an Islamic lens-and work engagement, and the moderating role of workload on the relationship between these constructs. The results of a survey of 381 Muslim employees in Jordanian telecoms reveal that religiosity is positively related to work engagement. The findings also illustrate the importance of differentiating between challenge and hindrance demands in stressful contexts where workload influences the benefits of religiosity for work engagement. This study highlights the applicability of JD-R theory and extends the theoretical framework by examining the relationship between religiosity and work engagement. It contributes to work engagement literature by introducing religiosity as a personal resource which enhances work engagement and improves well-being.

KEYWORDS JD-R theory, religiosity, work engagement, workload

1 | INTRODUCTION

As organizations and employees face greater uncertainty, stress and alienation heightened by the current COVID-19 pandemic, achieving work engagement amongst employees has become an increasingly important antecedent of organizational success. Work engagement is a positive affective motivational state where employees are vigorous, dedicated and immersed in their work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Past research has shown that enhanced work engagement as a form of

employee well-being (Schaufeli et al., 2008) benefits both organizations and employees (Mackay et al., 2017; Yalabik et al., 2013) with higher job satisfaction, work-to-life enrichment, organizational citizenship behaviour and job performance (Alfes et al., 2013; Johnson & Jiang, 2017; Saks, 2006; Yalabik et al., 2013). Job demands influence work engagement and can raise stress levels (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Job resources, on the other hand, enhance work engagement and decrease stress (Hu et al., 2017). Within this paper, religiosity, that is an individual's belief in God and behaving according to God's principles (McDaniel & Burnett, 1990), is assumed to be an important personal resource in job demands-resources (JD-R) theory. Here, religiosity is directly positioned as having a positive impact on work engagement that merits managerial attention in a study that views workplace religiosity from an Islamic lens.

Research on work engagement and stress has predominantly focused on the role job resources play in the prediction of work engagement (Agarwal & Gupta, 2018). The effects of personal resources—personal characteristics which promote an individual's ability to control the work environment successfully (Hobfoll et al., 2003)—are often ignored. As such, little attention has been directed to examining the interaction effect between personal resources and job demands in JD-R theory (Grover et al., 2017, 2018). Specifically, management scholars have typically overlooked employee religiosity as a resource in the workplace. According to Garcia-Zamor (2003), many employees seek meaning, an essential characteristic of religiosity (Abu Bakar et al., 2018). This study highlights the importance of gaining a better understanding of the role religiosity plays in predicting work engagement. This in turn can support line managers to focus on individualistic elements of employee motivation and well-being

To address this gap in the work engagement literature, this empirical study in the Jordanian telecoms sector investigated the moderating role of workload on the relationship between

religiosity and work engagement. The study makes five important contributions. First, it builds on recent articles in Stress & Health about the moderating role of work motivation on the relationship between job resources and burnout (Trépanier et al., 2020) and mindfulness as a personal resource to reduce work stress (Grover et al., 2017). Second, this quantitative study complements qualitative research on the relationship between religiosity and work engagement (Abu Bakar et al., 2018). Third, our findings contribute to the literature by examining the interaction effect between personal resources (i.e., religiosity) and job demands (i.e., workload) in predicting work engagement. Fourth, we extend JD-R theory by incorporating religiosity, a significant yet ignored personal resource, to shed light on this under-explored area. Fifth, whilst the majority of studies on religiosity have focused on Western societies with Christian samples (see Tracey, 2012), this study extends work engagement research to an Islamic context in Jordan, a Middle Eastern Muslim majority country.

The following section briefly describes work engagement, JD-R theory, and religiosity. It then presents two hypotheses to conceptualize the relationship between religiosity and work engagement, and the moderating role of workload in the association between these constructs. Following a discussion of the research design and findings, this study highlights the study's core theoretical contributions, practical implications and limitations. This study concludes with an outline of recommended future research avenues.

2 | THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

2.1 | Defining work engagement

Work engagement denotes ‘a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption’ (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). Vigor reflects an employee using a high amount of energy and psychological resilience while performing the work task, readiness to exert effort in the workplace and persistence to deal with difficulties at work (Bakker et al., 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Dedication ’is characterized by a sense of significance,

enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge' (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). Absorption means 'being fully concentrated and greatly engrossed in one's work, a situation where time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work' (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 75). The study adopts Schaufeli et al.'s (2002) definition because of its strong validation across different countries (Mackay et al., 2017).

2.2 | JD-R theory

Theoretically underpinned by JD-R theory, our study investigates the relationship between religiosity and work engagement. It also seeks to explain the interaction effect between religiosity as a personal resource and the moderator, that is workload in predicting work engagement.

According to JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014), job characteristics can be categorized under two main headings namely job demands and job resources. Job demands refer to 'those physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort and are therefore associated with physiological and/or psychological costs' (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 296). Job resources reflect those facets that help to enhance learning and development and employee growth, help employees to deal with job demands, and accomplish work goals (Demerouti et al., 2001; Hakanen et al., 2008). In addition, Xanthopoulou et al. (2007) extended JD-R theory to incorporate personal resources. Personal resources relate to those positive evaluations of self that are connected to how resilient an employee feels regarding his/her ability to control the work environment successfully (Hobfoll et al., 2003). As such, both job and personal resources foster employee well-being, and, therefore, lead to better performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

2.3 | Religiosity and work engagement

Wollard and Shuck (2011) indicated that 13 out of 21 antecedents of work engagement were confirmed by empirical evidence such as core self-evaluations, perceived organizational support and value congruence (Rich et al., 2010). However, the effect of religion, which is an important

part of a person's identity, in enhancing employee well-being is commonly overlooked (Assouad & Parboteeah, 2018; Kutcher et al., 2010; Mellahi & Budhwar, 2010).

Previous studies (e.g., Cavanagh, 1999) have distinguished between religiosity and spirituality, with the latter not necessarily linked to an organized or traditional religion or specific belief system. Spirituality is defined as ‘a tendency to strive for those values and purposes that express whatever the individual person feels is ultimately meaningful’ (Paloutzian et al., 2010, p. 74). Religiosity, on the other hand, denotes an individual's belief in God and behaviours based on God's principles (McDaniel & Burnett, 1990) rather than spirituality, which is a more cosmological/philosophical viewpoint. This study focuses on a Middle Eastern Muslim majority country (i.e., Jordan) using McDaniel and Burnett's (1990) definition of religiosity. Muslims follow principles and procedures established by Islamic teachings from the Quran and hadith (sayings or customs; Wu et al., 2017). Although religiosity can greatly affect the behaviour of individuals (Bloom, 2012; Fathallah et al., 2020; Lynn et al., 2011), few studies have integrated the practices and beliefs of religious individuals with work. Religious practices and beliefs help to enhance collaboration and emotions and to stimulate compassion for others (Bloom, 2012). It follows that religion provides guidance in how people live. For example, Chowdhury (2018) found that religiosity is positively associated with voluntary simplicity.

Not only does religiosity provide employees with psychological support and mental balance at work (Wu et al., 2017), it also reduces workplace stress (Kutcher et al., 2010; Weiß & Süß, 2019). Wu et al. (2017) found that religiosity moderates the relationship between employee well-being and turnover intention. Abdel-Khalek and Lester (2017) observed that religiosity is positively associated with happiness and mental health. Similarly, Domínguez and López- Noval (2020) identified a positive association between religiosity and life satisfaction. According to Abeng (1997), faith-work relationships in the Quran are prominent in many verses. For example, God

says in the Quran (9:105) ‘Work (righteousness): Soon will Allah observe your work, and His Messenger and the Believers’. Hashemi et al. (2020, p. 482) found that ‘engagement in religious activities, and belief in God provide individuals with a sense of significance, positive emotions, self-esteem, positive relations, sense of meaning and purpose in life’. Ai et al. (2013) observed that religious individuals experience better social support through participation in religious activities. In addition, religiosity enhances faith, which helps individuals maintain moral codes (Kashif et al., 2017) that play a role in reducing health risks such as tobacco-related illnesses and alcoholism (Clements & Ermakova, 2012). Abu Bakar et al. (2018) argue that work behaviour which is stimulated to some extent by religion may result in work engagement and thus better work performance. Abu Bakar et al. (2018) consider that being religious promotes engagement at work as employees will be morally obligated to God. Additionally, conceptualizing work as a kind of worship enhances workplace happiness, thus boosting engagement (Abu Bakar et al., 2018). JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) suggests that personal resources play a significant role in predicting engagement in the workplace. Abu Bakar et al. (2018) argue that religiosity is an important personal resource that facilitates work engagement. This study responds to Abu Bakar et al.’s (2018) call for empirical research to examine the relationship between religiosity and work engagement. Hence, it posits:

Hypothesis 1 Religiosity will be positively associated with work engagement.

2.4 | The moderating role of workload

Spector and Jex (1998, p. 358) define workload as ‘the sheer volume of work required of an employee’. According to JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014), job demands (e.g., workload) moderate the relationship between both job and personal resources on the one hand, and work engagement on the other. In this study, workload is considered as a job demand. More specifically, we followed Crawford et al.,'s (2010) classification of hindrance and challenge demands which considered workload as a challenging job demand.

The literature has distinguished between two kinds of job demands namely hindrance and challenge (Crawford et al., 2010). Hindrance job demands can derail personal development and goal achievement (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). They are linked with low motivation (LePine et al., 2005), and increased stress (Beattie & Griffin, 2014). Challenge job demands (e.g., workload) enable workers to learn and grow, enhancing their abilities, and confidence. According to Crawford et al. (2010), this classification of job demands helps to clarify inconsistencies in findings about the relationship between demand and job-related outcomes. Lepine et al.'s (2005) meta-analysis showed that hindrance demands directly and indirectly influence performance negatively when taking into account motivation and strains. In contrast, challenge demands positively influenced performance both directly and indirectly.

Bakker and Sanz-Vergel (2013) argue that this two-way categorization is not straightforward as the relationships between the phenomena depend on occupational sector. Whilst Crawford et al. (2010) considered work pressure to act as challenge demand and emotional demands to act as hindrance, Bakker and Sanz-Vergel (2013) contradict this classification. Bakker and Sanz-Vergel (2013) showed that nurses working under time pressure were frustrated by feeling unable to perform their tasks. Similarly, Andela et al. (2016) found that experiences of high work volume deplete emotional energy and result in burnout.

This study aims to investigate the moderating role of workload on the relationship between religiosity and work engagement. JD-R theory assumes that personal resources increase in importance and add to their motivational potential when workers experience greater challenge demands in their jobs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Consistent with Crawford et al.'s (2010) classification of challenge and hindrance demands, the interaction between religiosity as a personal resource and workload is proposed as a challenging job demand will enhance work engagement. Few studies have investigated the interaction between personal resources and job demands in

predicting work engagement (Grover et al., 2018). To our knowledge, this study is the first to examine the role of workload as a moderator on the association between religiosity as a personal resource and work engagement. We chose workload in the current research as Jordan's population has dramatically increased with increasing numbers of refugees from surrounding countries such as Syria (Department of Statistics, 2019) which has led to high customer demand. In addition, Bakker and Demerouti (2017) mention the necessity to examine the moderators for job demands-resources relationship. This study examines whether workload affects this association. Therefore, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2 The positive association between religiosity and work engagement is moderated by workload, such that this relationship is stronger at higher levels of workload than at lower levels of workload.

Figure 1 presents the two hypotheses developed from our literature review.

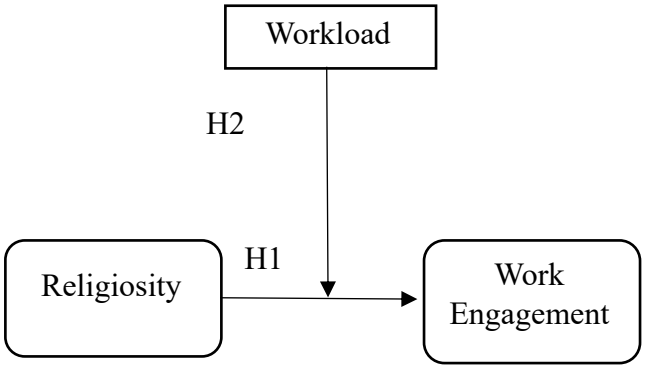

FIGURE 1 Conceptual framework

3 | METHOD

3.1 | Participants and procedure

Data were collected from a sample of employees in Jordan's two main telecommunications companies. As the original measurement scales used in this study were developed in English and the questionnaire was translated into Arabic with back-translation (Brislin, 1970). One research

team member translated the survey into Arabic. Three bilingual experts fluent in Arabic and English back translated the Arabic version into English. A comparison of the original and translated versions ensured that the change in the language did not change the meaning of the survey items. Subsequently, we conducted a pilot study to test the questionnaire items and subsequently refined them. Following personal visits and phone calls with HR departments in telecoms companies, we distributed the survey in the north, south, and middle of Jordan using convenience sampling. The first author's university at the time provided ethical approval to ensure research integrity in data collection and analysis for this study. The names of participants were not identified. It was clearly stated in the consent form which participants signed that participation in the survey was entirely voluntary and anonymity was assured for individuals and organizations. The consent form allowed participants to withdraw from the research without any detriment.

We distributed 700 questionnaires and analysed 381 completed questionnaires, that is 54%. The majority of respondents stated that they had a Bachelor's degree (66.8%), 19.3% graduated with a Master's degree and 11.3% respondents held a 2-year college diploma completed following high school. Respondents included 69% men and 31% women, with 57.9% aged 25–34, 21.4% were 35–44 years old and 5.6% were 45 or older. In the sample, 41.5% respondents had 6–10 years' tenure and 28.6% had worked in their organization for 5 years or less. Additionally, 59.1% participants were single, 39.9% were married and 1% categorized themselves as 'other'.

3.2 | Measures

3.2.1 | Work engagement

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17), developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002), was used to measure work engagement. This scale comprises three sub-scales: vigour (six items, e.g., 'At my work, feel bursting with energy'), dedication (five items, e.g., 'I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose'), and absorption (six items, e.g., 'When I am working, I forget everything else around me'. Items were assessed on a five-point Likert scale range from '1' (strongly disagree)

to ‘5’ (strongly agree). Consistent with previous studies (e.g., Hu et al., 2017; Soane et al., 2013), the sub-scales were combined to gauge the overall level of work engagement (α = 0.94).

3.2.2 | Religiosity

Religiosity was assessed using Kashif et al.’s (2017) five-item scale which measures religiosity from an Islamic lens. Items such as ‘I have a great sense of Allah's presence’ and ‘It is important for me to spend more time on religious activities’ were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from ‘1’ (strongly disagree) to ‘5’ (strongly agree; α = 0.89).

3.2.3 | Workload

Workload was assessed using the Quantitative Workload Inventory (QWI), a five-item scale developed by Spector and Jex (1998). QWI captures the amount of work in a job with participants asked to report their responses on a five-point Likert scale from ‘1’ (never) to ‘5’ (always; α = 0.89). Example items are, ‘How often does your job require you to work very hard?’ and ‘How often does your job require you to work very fast?’ The speed and quantity of work as measured in the QWI are considered challenging job demands, as labelled by Crawford et al. (2010) who link job demands to employee engagement and burnout.

3.2.4 | Control variables

Consistent with other work engagement studies (e.g., Johnson & Jiang, 2017), and to exclude alternative explanations, we controlled for the demographic variables of age, gender, qualification, tenure and marital status.

3.3 | Common method bias

To limit the effect of potential common method bias, we used procedural and statistical remedies (Pavlou et al., 2007; Podsakoff et al., 2003). First, to guarantee participant anonymity and reduce evaluation apprehension, validated and reliable scales were used. Additionally, explanations and instructions at the top of each page of the survey were provided to create psychological separation (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Second, we ran Harman's single-factor test by loading all the items of the

study variables in an exploratory factor analysis in one factor (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The results showed that the single factor accounted for 35.19% of the variance, which therefore, demonstrates that common method bias is unlikely to be a problem in our data. Third, the correlations between the variables in our study are less than 0.90 (Pavlou et al., 2007), indicating that common method bias is unlikely to be a serious issue.

TABLE 1 Means, standard deviations, correlations and Cronbach's alpha of the study variables

	Variable	Mean	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Work engagement	3.99	0.49	0.94	0.71	-	-	-	-
2.	Religiosity	4.25	0.58	0.89	0.21**	0.84	-	-	-
3.	Workload	3.79	0.75	0.89	0.26**	0.18**	0.84	-	-

Notes: n = 381, α- Cronbach's alpha. The diagonal values represent the square roots of the average variance extracted **p < .01.

4 | RESULTS

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations for the variables in this study. As shown, alpha for the variables exceeded the acceptable threshold value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). Furthermore, we checked for the existence of multicollinearity through the variance inflation factors (VIF). The results showed that the highest value was 1.03, which is less than the cut-off point of 5 (Hair et al., 2014), suggesting that multicollinearity is not problematic in our research.

4.1 | Construct validity

Exploratory factor analysis (see Table 2) with varimax rotation shows a clear distinction between the variables as the factor loading for the items of each scale was above the recommended level of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2014). Convergent validity was established by checking the average variance extracted (AVE) of a scale (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As a rule of thumb, AVE should be greater than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2014) and all AVE values exceeded the cut-off point of 0.50. Therefore, convergent validity was confirmed. Table 2 shows the values of AVE.

To verify discriminant validity, previous studies suggest using the square root of the AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). If the square root of the AVE for a variable is greater than the correlation between

that variable and all other ones, then discriminant validity is confirmed. The square root of the AVE is higher than the correlation with other constructs, thus confirming discriminant validity (see Table 1).

4.2 | Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis 1 predicted that religiosity is positively associated with work engagement. The results of the regression analysis demonstrate that religiosity is positively and significantly related to work engagement ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$) thus supporting Hypothesis 1. Hierarchical multiple regression was utilized to examine the moderating effect in our research model. Hypothesis 2 predicted that workload moderates the positive association between religiosity and work engagement such that this relationship is stronger at higher levels of workload than at lower levels of workload. In order to reduce any multicollinearity concern, both variables (religiosity and workload) were standardized (Aiken & West, 1991). In Table 3, hierarchical multiple regression demonstrates that the interaction effect (religiosity x workload) was statistically significant ($\beta = -0.126$, $p < 0.05$), but it undermined the association between religiosity and work engagement, failing to support Hypothesis 2.

We plotted a simple slope to illustrate interaction effects (Aiken & West, 1991). Figure 2 shows that religiosity was stronger when related to work engagement under conditions of low workload (slope = 0.242, $p < 0.001$) compared with higher levels of workload (slope = 0.032; ns). This contradicts our assumption, rejecting Hypothesis 2.

TABLE 2 Factor loadings and AVE values

Variables	Items	Factor loadings	AVE
Work engagement			0.517
	WE1	0.74	
	WE2	0.70	
	WE3	0.70	
	WE4	0.70	
	WE5	0.73	
	WE6	0.75	
	WE7	0.74	
	WE8	0.72	
	WE9	0.71	
	WE10	0.70	
	WE11	0.67	
	WE12	0.63	
	WE13	0.76	
	WE14	0.79	
	WE15	0.69	
	WE16	0.77	
	WE17	0.65	
Religiosity			0.709
	Religiosity1	0.86	
	Religiosity2	0.85	
	Religiosity3	0.83	
	Religiosity4	0.85	
	Religiosity5	0.81	
Workload			0.708
	Workload1	0.81	
	Workload2	0.83	
	Workload3	0.82	
	Workload4	0.87	
	Workload5	0.85	

Abbreviation: AVE, average variance extracted.

TABLE 3 Hierarchical multiple regression analysis for investigating the moderating role of workload on the association between religiosity and work engagement

	Work engagement		
Variables	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
Qualification	0.015	0.041	0.044
Tenure	−0.052	−0.057	−0.049
Age	−0.025	−0.068	−0.073
Marital status	−0.010	−0.020	−0.002
Gender	0.031	0.020	0.019
Religiosity	-	0.198**	0.188**
Workload	-	0.232**	0.290**
Religiosity × workload	-	-	−0.126*
R^2	0.007	0.114	0.140
Adjusted R^2	−0.007	0.098	0.122
F	0.499	6.788**	7.538**

*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$.

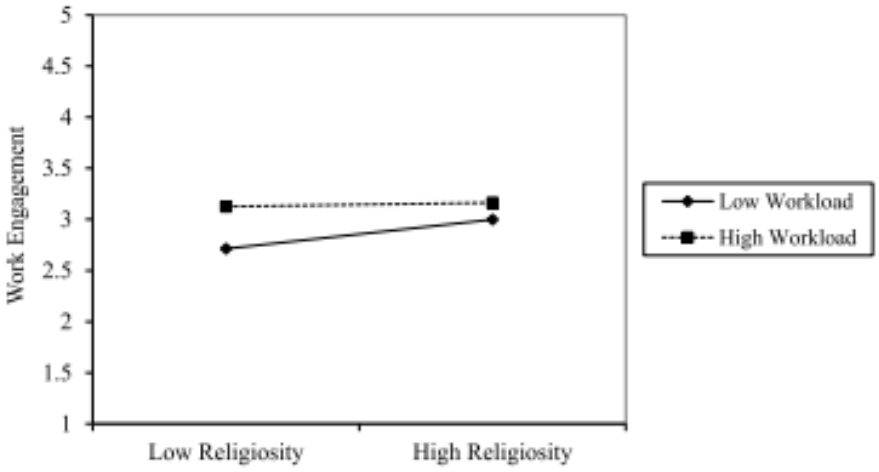

FIGURE 2 The moderating effect of workload on the association between religiosity and work engagement

5 | DISCUSSION

5.1 | Explanations and contributions

The analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship between religiosity and work engagement (Hypothesis 1). This corroborates Abu Bakar et al.'s (2018) findings that employees who conceptualize work as a kind of worship find happiness in work and are engaged with their work (Abu Bakar et al., 2018). Similarly, as an important cultural factor, religiosity motivates employees to perform better in the workplace where work may be perceived as a holy task (Wu et

al., 2017). Islamic teachings (Quran and Hadith) stimulate Muslims to engage in actions that please God such as being responsible, positive, and productive (Abbasi et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2017). According to Syed and Ali (2010), work is important in Islam as it helps individuals to take responsibility and to discover and develop themselves, thus enhancing their well-being. Religiosity helps to reduce workplace stress (Kutcher et al., 2010; Weiß & Süß, 2019) and provides employees with psychological support and mental balance (Wu et al., 2017). This, in turn, enhances work engagement (Abu Bakar et al., 2018).

Additionally, findings showed that workload moderates the relationship between religiosity and work engagement (Hypothesis 2). Contrary to expectations, however, workload weakened the association between religiosity and work engagement. Accordingly, Hypothesis 2 was unsupported

Unlike previous studies that see workload as a challenging job demand (Crawford et al., 2010), our results provide support for Bakker and Sanz-Vergel (2013) who demonstrate that the taxonomy of job demands into hindrance and challenge demands may not be as straightforward as first proposed. Bakker and Sanz-Vergel (2013) argue that the categorization of job demands into challenge and hindrance is not the same for all individuals and it depends on the occupational sector. Moreover, Olugbade and Karatepe (2019) found that challenge stressors undermined work engagement and both stressors (challenge and hindrance) positively related to turnover intention. Mazzola and Disselhorst (2019) found a negative relationship between challenge stressors and employee well-being. An additional possible explanation for this finding is that the participants in this study were employees at lower hierarchical levels. Hence, it may be argued that employees at this particular level who are facing high workloads have little time for feedback and lack control over their work tasks (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Furthermore, God says in the Quran (65:7) ‘God does not burden any human being with more than He has given him’. This means that although the participants in this study considered themselves as religious, God will not blame them

if the amount of their workload is beyond their capability. Similarly, the survey respondents may have other family and social responsibilities which in turn could influence their ability to cope with high workload levels. Overall, our findings extend Bakker and Sanz-Vergel's (2013) study by revealing that workload acts as a hindrance demand in the telecoms sector where it undermined the relationship between religiosity and work engagement.

This empirical study makes important contributions to work engagement scholarship. First, it extends JD-R theory by building on Abu Bakar et al.'s (2018) qualitative work to examine the relationship between religiosity and work engagement. Our findings further address the limitation of Abu Bakar et al.'s (2018) study by investigating this relationship from the perspective of lower level employees. Second, whilst prior studies have neglected the role of religiosity in the workplace (Assouad & Parboteeah, 2018; Mellahi & Budhwar, 2010), this quantitative study is the first (to our knowledge) to examine the relationship between religiosity and work engagement in the context of JD-R theory. Third, in response to Bakker and Demerouti (2017), we examined the role of workload as a moderator in the JD-R model, and this is the first study to examine the moderating role of workload on the relationship between religiosity as a personal resource and work engagement. In addition, our study addresses Bakker and Sanz-Vergel's (2013) interest in challenge and hindrance demands in different sectors. Our findings provide evidence that the categorization of challenge and hindrance is not straightforward as proposed, and it relies on the occupational sector. While most studies on religiosity have focused on Western societies with Christian samples (see Tracey, 2012), this study expands work engagement research to an Islamic context in Jordan.

5.2 | Practical implications

The importance of this study lies in its insights into challenge and hindrance demands that create workplace stress, specifically how workload impacts the relationship between religiosity and work engagement. Using the JD-R model, we show how religiosity as a personal resource enhances

work engagement (e.g., well-being). Since religiosity is positively related to work engagement, managers are encouraged to pay attention to the role of religion by embedding it with the institution's equity, diversity and inclusion policies. This is particularly important for organizations based in Muslim-majority countries. HR managers are encouraged to review HRM policies and practices to reflect religiosity and religious principles, particularly during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Dirani et al., 2020), to support organizational interventions that develop individual coping mechanisms. Additionally, since workload acted as a hindrance demand in the telecoms sector in Jordan where it weakened the religiosity-work engagement relationship, this study encourages the Jordanian telecoms sector to monitor regularly and seek to mitigate high employee workloads. This would ensure that such job demands are not adversely influencing workers' mental health, stress levels, work engagement resulting in sub-optimal organizational outcomes. As Mazzola and Disselhorst (2019) propose, 'mild' workload might challenge and foster employee well-being and enhance performance. On the other hand, 'extreme' workload can result in negative mental and physical health, burnout and underperformance.

5.3 | Limitations and avenues for future research

First, our study uses cross-sectional data and so compromises conclusions regarding causality. Second, this study depends on self- report data which raises concerns about the possibility of common method bias. We followed procedures recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2003) and therefore, this effect is likely to be small. Additionally, the results of Harman's single-factor test and the correlations between the study variables demonstrate that common method bias is not likely to be problematic. Third, our study focused only on one type of job demands, that is workload. Fourth, this single sector study in Jordan limits generalizability. These limitations, however, offer avenues for future research to shed an additional light on the role of religiosity, a significant yet neglected personal resource. It would be interesting for future research to investigate the moderating role of other job demands (e.g., job responsibility) on the relationship

between religiosity and work engagement over time. Further research might examine the mediating role of psychological meaningfulness on the religiosity-work engagement relationship. Studies in other sectors and countries where there is greater religious diversity, multi-level approaches, and comparatives studies also offer interesting avenues to advance scholarship in this field.

6 | CONCLUSION

Underpinned by JD-R theory, this study reveals that religiosity as a personal resource predicts work engagement. The findings illustrate the importance of context in categorizing job demands into challenge and hindrance demands with workload influencing the association between religiosity and work engagement. Our study strengthens claims for the important and under-researched role of religiosity as a personal resource in facilitating work engagement and employee well-being. Our findings contribute to the scant literature on workplace religiosity and within non-Western centric research. Scholarship on workplace religiosity and well-being in a relatively heterogeneous religious setting can contribute to our understanding of general stress and health. This research extends the scope of well- established models such as JD-R theory in different contexts. Importantly, work engagement matters within the context of human resource development and the UN's sustainable development goals for good health, well-being and decent work in a (post)pandemic world (Davies, 2020).

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