

## Prophetic leadership and employee well-being: Gratitude as a mediator

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of gratitude as a mediator in the relationship between prophetic leadership and employee well-being. The participants comprised 146 employees (118 males; 28 females) from a sharia financial institution in Yogyakarta. Measurement instruments included the prophetic leadership scale, the Islamic Gratitude Scale (IGS-10), and the Employee Well-Being Scale (EWBS). Mediation analyses were employed for data examination. Results indicated that gratitude fully mediates prophetic leadership and employee well-being (indirect estimate = 0.12;  $p < 0.01$ ). Employees who perceive their leaders as embodying prophetic qualities tend to experience higher levels of gratitude, enhancing their well-being within the organization. These findings have significant practical implications, suggesting that organizations can foster employee well-being by promoting gratitude and improving their leaders' prophetic leadership capacities.

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### Introduction

Employee well-being within an organization is critical due to its positive impact on employee performance. Research findings indicate that employee well-being positively influences work engagement ([Astuti & Dhaniala, 2022](#); [Garg & Singh, 2019](#); [Koon & Ho, 2021](#)), organizational commitment ([Ariva et al., 2023](#); [Kolakowski et al., 2020](#); [Pertiwi et al., 2023](#)), organizational citizenship behavior ([AlZgool et al., 2023](#); [Ansong et al., 2024](#); [Pelealu, 2022](#); [Rossouw & Rothmann, 2020](#)), and employee performance ([Abdullah et al., 2021](#); [Johari et al., 2019](#); [Rafifah et al., 2022](#); [Sofyanty & Setiawan, 2020](#); [Yan et al., 2020](#)). Additionally, employee well-being negatively impacts absenteeism ([Coelho et al., 2023](#); [Medina-Garrido et al., 2020](#)), burnout ([Coelho et al., 2023](#); [González-Rico et al., 2022](#)), social harm of work ([Chillakuri & Vanka, 2021](#)), and turnover intentions ([Khairunisa & Muafi, 2022](#); [Nae & Choi, 2022](#); [Samad et al., 2022](#)).

Studies on employee well-being have been reported in several constructs, including employee well-being, workplace well-being, employee subjective well-being, and employee psychological well-being ([Budiharto & Athirah, 2024](#)). In this study, employee well-being refers to the conceptualization by Zheng et al., ([2015](#)), who define it as an employee's positive perception of their life, encompassing three aspects: workplace well-being, psychological well-being, and life well-being. Workplace well-being encompasses employees' perceptions of their work, including factors such as the work environment,

workload, management practices, and relationships with colleagues. Psychological well-being refers to employees' perceptions of their mental state, encompassing self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, and positive relationships with others. This perception reflects employees' ability to grow psychologically, achieve personal goals, and maintain confidence in life and work. Life well-being pertains to employees' overall perception of their lives, including their relationships with family, living conditions, and personal achievements, all of which contribute to their well-being as members of their organization (Zheng et al., 2015).

Previous studies have shown that both internal and external factors influence employee well-being. The internal factors affecting employee well-being include gratitude (Badri et al., 2022; Firdiansyah et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2023), resilience (Calvo et al., 2022; Siswanto & Mangundjaya, 2024; Wut et al., 2022), self-efficacy (Dinarwati & Purba, 2023; Straus et al., 2023; Yan et al., 2020), self-esteem (Dose et al., 2023; Vanisri & Chandrapadhy, 2023; Zhang et al., 2021), and spirituality (Fitria & Suryani, 2023; Hassan et al., 2022; Salem et al., 2023). The external factors influencing employee well-being include job satisfaction (Abdullah et al., 2021; Hayat & Afshari, 2022), leadership (Bashir & Hussain, 2023; Koon & Ho, 2021; Satryo et al., 2023), organizational justice (Ali et al., 2023; Fransiska et al., 2023; Septyarini & Pratiwi, 2020), organizational support (Hong et al., 2024; Mihalache & Mihalache, 2022; Sefnedi et al., 2023), work-life balance (Kurnia & Widigdo, 2021; Nabawanuka & Ekmekcioglu, 2022; Stankevičienė et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2021), work feedback (Johari et al., 2019; Tian et al., 2021), workplace bullying (Farley et al., 2023; Mehmood et al., 2024; Hayat & Afshari, 2021), work-related conflict (Huo & Jiang, 2023; Kuriakose et al., 2020; Putri & Etikariena, 2020), and work stress (Desiana et al., 2024; Schmidt et al., 2019; Sindu Bharathi & Sujatha, 2024). According to the conceptual framework developed by Mazzetti et al. (2023), employee's well-being can be influenced by several variables, including 1) personal resources, such as self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, and proactivity; 2) development resources, such as feedback and development opportunities for employees; 3) work resources, such as job control, task variety, and integration of employee resources; 4) social resources include coworker support, supervisor support, work teams, role clarity, and integration of social resources; 5) the type of leadership exhibited by the employee's supervisor.

Gratitude is one of the internal factors that impact employee well-being. Previous studies have reported that employee gratitude positively influences well-being (Badri et al., 2022; Firdiansyah et al., 2023; Utomo & Widyastuti, 2023; Zhao et al., 2023). Badri et al., (2022) conducted a study on 272 millennial employees working in the service industry in Malaysia, finding that gratitude and workplace friendships enhance the well-being of millennial employees. Firdiansyah et al., (2023) researched 68 production employees at a company in East Java, finding that gratitude is a positive predictor of employee well-being. Utomo and Widyastuti (2023) reported a study involving 118 employees, which found a significant positive relationship between gratitude and employee well-being. Zhao et al., (2023) reported a study on 300 employees of a biomedical company in Northeast China, finding that dispositional gratitude was positively related to employee well-being, mediated by leader-member exchange and coworker exchange.

Gratitude, in this context, originated from the concept of *syukur*, which is the way humans express appreciation for Allah's blessings or contentment with the gifts from Allah (Rusdi, 2016). It serves as a foundation for virtuous behavior through words and actions (Rusdi et al., 2021). Therefore, in this study, gratitude is understood as an employee's positive attitude in expressing Allah's blessings, which underlies virtuous behavior through words and deeds. According to Rusdi et al., (2021), there are two main aspects of employee

gratitude, firstly, intrinsic gratitude, which arises from the employee's understanding that all blessings and goodness received come from Allah. Employees recognize that every gift they receive is a blessing from Allah. Intrinsic gratitude involves a sense of appreciation, pleasure, and satisfaction that employees feel through their knowledge and heart, accepting and enjoying the blessings given by Allah. Secondly, extrinsic gratitude, which is expressed verbally by acknowledging the blessings provided by Allah through the use of phrases such as "*Alhamdulillah*" and by living a life that adheres to Allah's commands and avoids His prohibitions. Extrinsic gratitude is expressed through words and actions, not only by expressing thanks to Allah and offering gratitude to others but also by engaging in both ritual and social acts of worship as expressions of that gratitude (Rusdi et al., 2021).

Leadership is one of the external factors that influence employee well-being (Bashir & Hussain, 2023; Septyarini & Pratiwi, 2020). Types of leadership reported to have an impact on employee well-being include authentic leadership (Koon & Ho, 2021), ethical leadership (Sarwar et al., 2020), leader-member exchange (Zhao et al., 2023), servant leadership (Syahda & Handoyo, 2022), and transformational leadership (Samad et al., 2022; Firdiansyah et al., 2023; Satryo et al., 2023). Research on the role of prophetic leadership in employee well-being remains limited. In this study, prophetic leadership refers to employees' perception of their supervisors as leaders who sincerely control themselves and influence others to achieve goals by emulating the prophets' mindset, attitudes, and behaviors, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Prophetic leadership is a concept within the study of authentic leadership from the perspective of Islamic psychology, particularly in the context of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, which emphasizes that every individual is a leader who will be held accountable for their leadership (Budiharto, 2021). Prophetic leadership comprises four interrelated aspects: 1) *Sidik*: employees perceive their leader as honest with Allah, themselves, and the universe, adhering to their conscience and truth in understanding problems and making decisions; 2) *Amanah*: employees perceive their leaders as loyal to Allah, His Messenger, and their conscience, acting justly and thus being trustworthy; 3) *Tablig*: employees perceive their leader as open to ideas and feedback from others and communicating assertively and empathetically; 4) *Fatanah*: employees perceive their leader as intelligent due to their piety towards Allah, making them a part of the solution to problems (a problem solver) rather than a part of the problem (a troublemaker) (Budiharto, 2021).

Employees' perceptions of their supervisor's prophetic leadership had been reported to have positive role on employee well-being, as evidenced by Sari and Shohib (2023) involving hospital managers and staff. Leaders perceived by employees as practicing prophetic leadership create an inner experience that makes employees feel comfortable and at ease, allowing them to focus better on their tasks to achieve targets and goals. Problems are handled wisely, leading to increased job satisfaction and employee well-being.

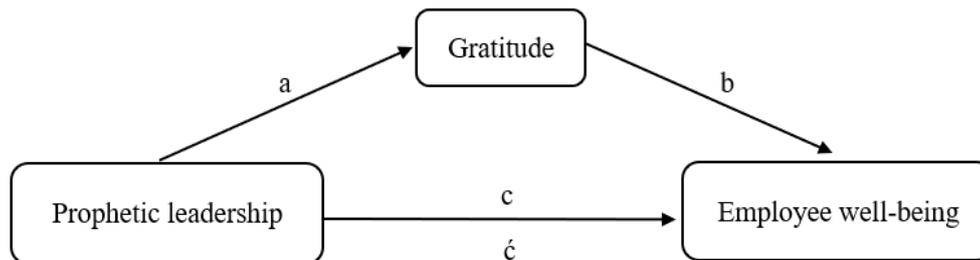
Employees' perceptions of their supervisor's leadership positively impact their gratitude (Baykal et al., 2018; Xia et al., 2024; Zheng & Wang, 2024). A study by Baykal et al., (2018) involving 527 employees in Marmara, Turkey, found that employees' perceptions of their supervisor's leadership had a positive role on empowerment and gratitude, which in turn affected their innovation and performance within the organization. Xia et al., (2024) researched 270 small and medium-sized enterprises employees from various provinces in China, finding that the perceptions of supervisors' inclusive leadership could enhance employees' gratitude, increasing their proactive behavior. Zheng & Wang (2024) researched 678 university students in Zhejiang Province, China, and found that perceived positive teacher leadership predicted their gratitude, which in turn improved subjective well-being and academic performance. Currently, there is no specific research reporting on the role of

prophetic leadership in employee gratitude, making this a necessary area of study. Figure 1 presents the theoretical framework of this research.

Based on the theoretical framework shown in Figure 1, the following hypotheses were proposed: (a) H1: Prophetic Leadership was positively associated with employee gratitude; (b) H2: Gratitude was positively associated with employee wellbeing; (c) H3: Prophetic Leadership was positively associated with employee wellbeing; (d) H4: Gratitude mediated the relationship between Prophetic Leadership and employee wellbeing.

**Figure 1**

*The theoretical framework of the research*



## Method

### *Participants*

The participants in this study were 146 employees (118 males and 28 females;  $M = 32.9$ ;  $SD = 8.38$ ) of a Baitul Maal wat Tamwil (BMT) organization headquartered in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. BMT is a microfinance institution functioning as a vital financial intermediary for underserved communities, particularly in Indonesia, that provides accessible financial services to economically disadvantaged groups, thereby fostering economic development and improving social welfare.

### *Instruments*

The study employed a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey method. Psychological scale were distributed to participants to collect data.

### *Employee Wellbeing*

Conceptually, employee well-being in this study referred to the framework proposed by Zheng et al., (2015), which included three aspects: workplace well-being (e.g., "I am satisfied with my work responsibilities"), life well-being (e.g., "I feel satisfied with my life"), and psychological well-being (e.g., "I feel I have grown as a person"). Operationally, employee well-being was measured by the scores obtained from the Employee Well-Being Scale (EWBS), which had been adapted into Indonesian by Rahmi et al., (2021). High scores indicated greater employee well-being, and lower scores indicated lesser well-being. The Indonesian version of the EWBS consisted of 18 items with response options ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7), with a reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.94. In this study, the EWBS has Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.93.

### *Gratitude*

Gratitude was conceptually defined as the employees' understanding and acceptance of Allah's blessings, encompassing two aspects: intrinsic (e.g., "I can be satisfied with a little

pleasure”) and extrinsic gratitude (e.g., “I pray for others who have given me benefits and convenience”). Operationally, gratitude was measured using the Islamic Gratitude Scale (IGS-10) developed by Rusdi et al., (2021). Higher scores indicated greater levels of gratitude among employees, while lower scores indicated less gratitude. The IGS-10 consisted of 10 items with response options ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (6), with a reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) of 0.86. In this study, the IGS-10 has a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.87.

### ***Prophetic Leadership***

Prophetic leadership was conceptually defined as the employees’ perceptions of their supervisors’ ability to control themselves and influence others sincerely to achieve organizational goals by emulating the prophets' mindset, attitudes, and behaviors (Budiharto, 2021). Operationally, prophetic leadership was measured by participants’ responses to a modified version of the Prophetic Leadership Scale (PLS), originally developed by Budiharto and Himam (2006). Higher scores indicated stronger prophetic leadership, and lower scores indicated weaker leadership. The PLS consisted of four aspects: *sidik* (conscience-centered), *amanah* (trustworthy and highly committed), *tablig* (communication skills), and *fatanah* (problem solver) which included 24 items (e.g., “My leader is honest in his work”). The response options range from “never” (0) to “always” (6), with a reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) of 0.96. In this study, the Prophetic Leadership Scale has a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient also 0.96.

### ***Procedures***

This study received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Psychology and Socio-Cultural Sciences at Universitas Islam Indonesia with number 474/DEK/70/DURT/II/2024. Data was collected online, with participants invited to join through the Zoom platform. Participants were provided with an explanation of the research objectives, the potential benefits of the research for both the participants and the organization, and the nature of their involvement in the study. Participants were given the option to either consent to or decline participation. Those who agreed to participate proceeded to complete the research scales, while those who declined could choose whether to complete the scales. Data analysis was conducted only on the responses of participants who consented to participate in this study.

### ***Data Analysis***

The statistical analysis technique used in this study was mediation analysis and regression analysis by Jamovi. version 2.3 (The Jamovi Project, 2022). The basis of mediation analysis is regression analysis, so the normality test used is the residual data of each path rather than the variables (Li et al., 2023). Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov standard, on path a (prophetic leadership & gratitude:  $p = 0.28$ ), path b (gratitude & employee well-being:  $p = 0.87$ ), and path c (prophetic leadership & employee well-being:  $p = 0.39$ ), the data are normally distributed.

### **Results**

As shown in Table 1, the means, standard deviations, and correlations between variables revealed that the correlation coefficients between prophetic leadership (*sidik*, *amanah*, *tablig*, and *fatanah*), gratitude (extrinsic and intrinsic), and employee well-being (life well-

being, workplace well-being, and psychological well-being) were significant. However, the correlation between gratitude and employee well-being was found to be stronger than the correlation between prophetic leadership and employee well-being. There were no significant correlations between prophetic leadership (*sidik*, *amanah*, *tablig*, and *fatanah*) and life well-being.

**Table 1**  
*Means, standard deviations, and correlations between variables*

	Mean	SD	EWB	LWB	WWB	PWB	Gratitude	Extrinsic	Intrinsic	PL	<i>Sidik</i>	<i>Amanah</i>	<i>Tablig</i>	<i>Fatanah</i>
EWB	5.64	0.69	(0.93)											
LWB	5.51	0.86	0.91 ***	(0.86)										
WWB	5.71	0.77	0.92 ***	0.74 ***	(0.88)									
PWB	5.71	0.67	0.88 ***	0.68 ***	0.75 ***	(0.82)								
Gratitude	5.39	0.45	0.56 ***	0.53 ***	0.44 ***	0.56 ***	(0.87)							
Extrinsic	5.52	0.45	0.46 ***	0.37 ***	0.38 ***	0.51 ***	0.93 ***	(0.88)						
Intrinsic	5.08	0.66	0.55 ***	0.61 ***	0.41 ***	0.47 ***	0.81 ***	0.53 ***	(0.77)					
PL	5.05	0.85	0.21 *	0.13	0.26 **	0.19 *	0.27 ***	0.26 **	0.22 **	(0.96)				
<i>Sidik</i>	5.18	0.84	0.20 *	0.11	0.24 **	0.21 *	0.29 ***	0.29 ***	0.19 *	0.89 ***	(0.82)			
<i>Amanah</i>	5.18	0.91	0.19 *	0.11	0.26 **	0.16	0.22 **	0.22 **	0.16	0.937 ***	0.87 ***	(0.86)		
<i>Tablig</i>	4.98	0.99	0.21 *	0.15	0.26 **	0.17 *	0.27 ***	0.25 **	0.22 **	0.89 ***	0.69 ***	0.76 ***	(0.87)	
<i>Fatanah</i>	4.87	0.98	0.17 *	0.10	0.20 *	0.15	0.22 **	0.18 *	0.22 **	0.93 ***	0.76 ***	0.80 ***	0.81 ***	(0.85)

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , EWB: Employee Well-Being, LWB: Life Well-Being, WWB: Workplace Well-Being, PWB: Psychological Well-Being, PL: Prophetic Leadership, (...) : Cronbach’s alpha

As shown in Table 2: (a) Prophetic leadership positively influences employee gratitude (Estimate = 0.14;  $p < 0.001$ ; H1 is supported); (b). Gratitude positively influences employee well-being (Estimate = 0.84;  $p < 0.001$ ; H2 is supported); and (c) Prophetic leadership does not have a significant direct impact on employee well-being (Estimate = 0.05;  $p = 0.382$ ; H3 is rejected). These findings indicate that employees’ positive perceptions of their supervisor’s prophetic leadership significantly enhance their gratitude. The more positive perception of prophetic leadership, the more likely it is to predict an increase in gratitude. Additionally, gratitude positively enhances employee well-being; the more grateful employees feel, the greater their well-being. Conversely, lower levels of gratitude are associated with decreased well-being. This study also indicates that employees’ perceptions of their supervisor’s prophetic leadership do not directly influence their well-being. In other words, employee well-being is not determined by their perception of prophetic leadership alone but is mediated by gratitude.

**Table 2**  
*Path Estimates*

	Label		Estimate	SE	Z	p
Prophetic leadership	Gratitude	a	0.14	0.04	3.41	< 0.001
Gratitude	Employee well-being	b	0.84	0.11	7.66	< 0.001
Prophetic leadership	Employee well-being	c	0.05	0.06	0.87	0.38

Table 3 further reveals that gratitude acts as a mediator in the relationship between prophetic leadership and employee well-being (Indirect Estimate = 0.12;  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming Hypothesis 4. The mediating role of gratitude is a full mediator, meaning that employees who have a positive perception of their supervisor’s prophetic leadership feel

more grateful, and this gratitude positively contributes to their well-being as members of the organization.

**Table 3**  
*Mediation Analysis*

Effect	Label	Estimate	95% Confidence Interval		Z	p	% mediation	
			SE	Lower				Upper
Indirect	a x b	0.12	0.04	0.04	0.19	3.12	0.00	70.4
Direct	c	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.16	0.88	0.38	29.6
Total	c + a x b	0.17	0.07	0.04	0.30	2.59	0.01	100.0

Further analysis, as shown in Table 4, reveals that among the four aspects of prophetic leadership, only the aspect of *Sidik* (conscience-centered) predicts gratitude (Estimate = 0.22;  $t = 2.39$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This implies that employees' perceptions of their supervisors' honesty positively contribute to their level of Islamic gratitude.

**Table 4**  
*Model Coefficients - Gratitude*

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	4.53	0.23	19.83	< 0.001
Sidik	0.22	0.09	2.39	0.02
Amanah	-0.13	0.09	-1.37	0.17
Tablig	0.12	0.07	1.89	0.06
Fatanah	-0.04	0.07	-0.59	0.56

As indicated in Table 5, both intrinsic (estimate = 0.45;  $t = 5.42$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and extrinsic aspects (Estimate = 0.35;  $t = 2.83$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) of gratitude significantly predict employee well-being. This indicates that employees who feel more intrinsically and extrinsically grateful contribute positively to enhancing their well-being.

**Table 5**  
*Model Coefficients – Employee Well-being*

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	1.39	0.59	2.37	0.019
Extrinsic	0.35	0.12	2.83	0.005
Intrinsic	0.45	0.08	5.42	< 0.001

## Discussion

The findings show that prophetic leadership can be a positive predictor of employee gratitude. Employees who have a positive perception of their supervisor's prophetic leadership feel more grateful. This finding strengthens the research conducted by Baykal et al., (2018) in Turkey, and Xia et al., (2024) in China which found that employees' perceptions of their superiors' leadership had a positive effect on increasing their sense of gratitude. It was also found that gratitude plays a positive role in employee well-being. This finding aligns with the research by Badri et al. (2022) in Malaysia, Firdiansyah et al. (2023), Utomo and Widyastuti (2023) in Indonesia, and Zhao et al. (2023) in China which reported that gratitude positively influences employee well-being. The study also revealed that prophetic leadership does not significantly impact employee well-being. This result contrasts with the findings of Sari and Shohib (2023), who reported that perceptions of supervisors'

prophetic leadership positively influence Islamic job satisfaction, a component of employee well-being.

The findings also show that gratitude fully mediates the relationship between prophetic leadership and employee well-being. Employees with a positive perception of their leader's prophetic leadership feel more grateful, which increases their well-being as members of the organization. This finding aligns with the research by Zheng & Wang (2024) which reported that gratitude mediates the relationship between leadership and well-being. This study contributes new insights by positioning gratitude as a full mediator in the relationship between prophetic leadership and employee well-being.

The findings reveal that employees' perceptions of prophetic leadership do not directly enhance their well-being; rather, this effect occurs through increased gratitude. These results diverge from prior research that primarily emphasizes the direct effects of various leadership styles on employee well-being such as authentic leadership (Koon & Ho, 2021), ethical leadership (Sarwar et al., 2020), leader-member exchange (Zhao et al., 2023), and transformational leadership (Samad et al., 2022). Within the context of Islamic financial institutions, this study is distinctive as it applies an Islamic psychology approach that links the values of prophetic leadership with employee well-being. This approach provides a fresh perspective on managerial practices aligned with Islamic values, offering meaningful implications for organizations within this sector.

This study addresses the importance of understanding the psychological life of employees in Islamic financial institutions through the lens of Islamic psychology, particularly regarding employee well-being. In this context, prophetic leadership emerges as a significant topic due to its emphasis on integrity, honesty, and exemplary conduct aligned with Islamic values. The influence of prophetic leadership on employee well-being is examined through the mediating role of gratitude. Gratitude is seen as crucial in fostering psychological well-being, ultimately enhancing performance (Zheng & Wang, 2024) and commitment to the organization (Zhao et al., 2023). This study underscores that, within Islamic financial organizations, a deep understanding of employees' psychological dynamics can support a more harmonious and productive work environment.

These findings imply the importance of organizations enhancing employee well-being by fostering both intrinsic and extrinsic gratitude. Intrinsic gratitude can be strengthened by encouraging employees to express gratitude for both painful and pleasant experiences, recognizing that all occurrences happen by the will of Allah (Rusdi et al., 2021). Employees tend to find it easier to be grateful for positive or desired outcomes but are less accustomed to expressing gratitude or patience for less pleasant or undesired outcomes. However, both pleasant and unpleasant experiences are ultimately blessings and tests from Allah. Pleasant experiences are blessings and tests of gratitude, while unpleasant experiences are also blessings and tests of patience (Budiharto, 2021). Extrinsic gratitude can be enhanced by frequently expressing thanks to Allah, engaging in ritual worship with sincerity, and expressing gratitude to others through social acts of kindness, such as helping others and other creatures, as an expression of gratitude to Allah (Rusdi et al., 2021).

The findings also suggest that organizations should focus on enhancing employee gratitude by developing the prophetic leadership capacities of their leaders. This can be achieved by cultivating the qualities of *sidik*, *amanah*, *tablig*, and *fatanah*. Developing *sidik* involves fostering gratitude for outcomes that align with the leader's expectations and strengthening patience for outcomes that do not. *Amanah* can be enhanced by reinforcing leaders' sincerity in exhibiting positive behavior aligned with work ethics and organizational goals and by promoting repentance for negative behavior that contradicts these standards. The development of *tablig* can be achieved by encouraging assertive and empathetic

communication among leaders while reducing passive, aggressive, or passive-aggressive communication styles. Finally, *fatanah* can be cultivated by encouraging leaders to practice and become accustomed to being part of the solution (problem solver) rather than part of the problem (troublemaker) (Budiharto, 2021).

This study has limitations including the homogeneity of the samples that were recruited from a single organisation, which limits the generalizability of the results. Future research should evaluate a broader range of samples, including employees from non-financial organisations, or government and non-government organisations. Secondly, the current sample also contained a disproportionate number of males compared to females, which may potentially lead to bias. Future research may confirm the identified relationships using a sample that more accurately reflects the gender distribution in the population. Finally, this study was cross-sectional, the direction of causality cannot be confirmed. Future research should examine the model over time to investigate reciprocal causation, wherein prophetic leadership fosters gratitude, subsequently enhancing wellbeing, as well as reverse causation, where wellbeing promotes gratitude, which in turn encourages prophetic leadership. Future research should investigate conditional variables or moderators, that may affect the strength of the relationships between leadership, gratitude, and well-being.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrated that gratitude fully mediates the relationship between prophetic leadership and employee well-being. Thus, prophetic leadership positively influences employee gratitude, which in turn, positively affects employee well-being. These findings highlight the importance of organizations enhancing employee well-being by promoting employee gratitude and improving their leaders' prophetic leadership capacities. Organizational leaders and management are urged to develop and implement intervention programs emphasizing gratitude and prophetic leadership, given their proven effectiveness in enhancing employee well-being. Similarly, employees are encouraged to nurture and strengthen both intrinsic and extrinsic gratitude in their professional and personal lives, as these practices play a vital role in fostering overall well-being.

## Declarations

**Author contribution.** The first author contributed to designing the research design, analyzing data, writing, revising, and finalising the manuscript. The second author contributed to preparing the measurement tools and collecting research data.

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**Conflict of interest.** The authors declare no conflict of interest which can influence this study.

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