

“Self-rated transformational leadership and perceived project success: The mediating role of psychological empowerment and the moderating role of individual Islamic work ethics”

AUTHORS	Mohamed Ali Hedhili 
ARTICLE INFO	Mohamed Ali Hedhili (2026). Self-rated transformational leadership and perceived project success: The mediating role of psychological empowerment and the moderating role of individual Islamic work ethics. <i>Problems and Perspectives in Management</i> , 24(3), 825–840. doi: 10.21511/ppm.24(3).2026.50
DOI	http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.24(3).2026.50
RELEASED ON	Monday, 28 September 2026
RECEIVED ON	Saturday, 21 February 2026
ACCEPTED ON	Tuesday, 08 September 2026
LICENSE	 This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License
JOURNAL	"Problems and Perspectives in Management"
ISSN PRINT	1727-7051
ISSN ONLINE	1810-5467
PUBLISHER	LLC “Consulting Publishing Company “Business Perspectives”
FOUNDER	LLC “Consulting Publishing Company “Business Perspectives”



NUMBER OF REFERENCES

44



NUMBER OF FIGURES

2



NUMBER OF TABLES

6

© The author(s) 2026. This publication is an open access article.



BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES



LLC "CPC "Business Perspectives"
Hryhorii Skovoroda lane, 10,
Sumy, 40022, Ukraine
www.businessperspectives.org

Type of the article: Research Article

Received on: 21st of February, 2026Accepted on: 8th of September, 2026Published on: 28th of September, 2026

© Mohamed Ali Hedhili, 2026

Mohamed Ali Hedhili, Ph.D., Assistant
Professor, Department of Management
Science, Faculty of Economics and
Management of Sfax, University of Sfax,
Tunisia.



This is an Open Access article,
distributed under the terms of the
[Creative Commons Attribution 4.0
International license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits
unrestricted re-use, distribution, and
reproduction in any medium, provided
the original work is properly cited.

Conflict of interest statement:

Author(s) reported no conflict of interest

Mohamed Ali Hedhili (Tunisia)

SELF-RATED TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND PERCEIVED PROJECT SUCCESS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL ISLAMIC WORK ETHICS

Abstract

Project-based organizations operate under uncertainty and coordination pressures, increasing the importance of leadership for project outcomes. This study examines whether project managers' self-rated transformational leadership is associated with perceived project success through psychological empowerment, and whether this indirect association varies by individual Islamic work ethics. Data were collected from 482 project managers in Tunisia through a cross-sectional online survey conducted between June and December 2025, with all constructs evaluated in relation to one project completed within the previous two years. Regression-based mediation, moderation, and moderated mediation analyses were performed using Minitab 19 and 10,000 bootstrap resamples. Self-rated transformational leadership was positively associated with perceived project success ($B = 0.52, p < 0.001$) and psychological empowerment ($B = 0.49, p < 0.001$). Psychological empowerment was positively associated with perceived project success ($B = 0.64, p < 0.001$) and partially mediated the leadership and success association (indirect effect = 0.31, 95% CI [0.24, 0.38]). Individual Islamic work ethics strengthened the association between self-rated transformational leadership and psychological empowerment ($B = 0.21, p < 0.001$), and the index of moderated mediation was significant (0.13, 95% CI [0.06, 0.23]). The findings integrate psychological empowerment as a mediating mechanism and individual Islamic work ethics as a boundary condition.

Keywords

self-rated transformational leadership, psychological empowerment, individual Islamic work ethics, perceived project success, moderated mediation, project-based organizations, Tunisia

JEL Classification

M12, M14, D23, L25

INTRODUCTION

Project-based organizations operate in complex and uncertain environments where coordination and adaptability are essential for achieving project objectives (Keegan & Den Hartog, 2004; Müller & Turner, 2007). Despite advances in project management methods, many projects continue to experience delays, budget overruns, and coordination difficulties (Maqbool et al., 2017; Nauman et al., 2022). Project success also extends beyond time, cost, and technical requirements to include stakeholder satisfaction, organizational benefits, and longer-term value (Shenhar et al., 2001). Identifying managerial and behavioral factors associated with project outcomes remains critical.

Leadership is a major determinant of project outcomes because project managers must coordinate teams, mobilize resources, and maintain alignment with project goals (Keegan & Den Hartog, 2004; Aga et al., 2016). Transformational leadership is especially relevant because it encourages collaboration, strengthens motivation, promotes new ways of thinking, and reinforces commitment to shared objectives (Aga et al., 2016; Maqbool et al., 2017). Abbas and Ali's (2023) meta-analysis confirmed its relevance to project success while indicating that the association may vary across contexts. Fareed et al. (2023) emphasized psychological empowerment, Han et al. (2025) highlighted team reflexivity and resilience, and Ahmad et al. (2023) associated transformational leadership with engagement and adaptability. However, the psychological process linking project managers' self-rated transformational leadership to perceived project success remains insufficiently clarified.

Psychological empowerment offers one possible explanation. Thomas and Velthouse (1990) conceptualized empowerment as intrinsic task motivation based on meaningfulness, competence, choice, and impact, while Spreitzer (1995) operationalized it through meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. These perceptions may strengthen initiative, adaptability, and the capacity to address uncertain project demands (Seibert et al., 2011; Khan et al., 2020; Khattak et al., 2022). Fareed et al. (2023) suggested that empowerment helps explain the association between transformational leadership and project outcomes, while Huang et al. (2025) reported comparable relationships outside project settings. Here, psychological empowerment refers to the project manager's own state rather than that of employees or team members. Managers who rate their transformational leadership more positively may also report stronger meaning, competence, autonomy, and influence over project activities.

Individual ethical values may further shape this process. Islamic work ethics emphasize productive effort, honesty, responsibility, justice, cooperation, and dedication (Ali & Al-Owaidan, 2008; Murtaza et al., 2016). Yousef (2001) showed that Islamic work ethics can alter workplace relationships, while Javid et al. (2024) described them as a personal resource supporting constructive responses. Recent evidence stresses that Islamic work ethics should be interpreted at their measurement level (Zafar et al., 2026). Accordingly, this study treats Islamic work ethics as the project manager's individual ethical orientation rather than an organizational ethical climate, shared ethical environment, or national cultural characteristic. Stronger individual Islamic work ethics may reinforce the association between self-rated transformational leadership and psychological empowerment by increasing consistency between leadership behaviors and beliefs about responsible work.

These relationships are examined in Tunisia, an emerging economic and institutional setting. OECD (2013, 2016) emphasized the importance of governance, transparency, and accountability, particularly in public and development-oriented activities. Tunisian organizations also face implementation challenges that may influence project managers' assessments of project processes and outcomes. Similar concerns have been observed in emerging economies where institutional conditions affect project implementation (Han et al., 2025). Tunisia therefore provides a relevant context for examining leadership self-perceptions, psychological empowerment, individual ethical orientation, and perceived project success. However, national culture, religious traditions, and organizational ethical values are not measured or treated as explanatory variables.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Perceived project success has become a central concern in project-based organizations operating in dynamic and uncertain environments (Müller & Turner, 2007; Zaman et al., 2019). Such envi-

ronments are characterized by time pressure, resource constraints, changing requirements, interdependent activities, and coordination demands (Maqbool et al., 2017; Nauman et al., 2022). Although traditional assessments emphasize time, cost, and technical specifications, project success is increasingly viewed as multidimensional. It may

also include the achievement of objectives, stakeholder satisfaction, end-user benefits, project impact, organizational value, and longer-term sustainability (Shenhar et al., 2001). Managerial and behavioral factors may therefore influence how project outcomes are evaluated beyond technical criteria (Keegan & Den Hartog, 2004). Because the present study relies on project managers' judgments of one completed project, it focuses on perceived project success rather than independently verified project performance. These judgments may not fully correspond to objective indicators such as schedule variance, budget deviation, quality records, or stakeholder assessments.

Transformational leadership has received considerable attention as a determinant of project-related outcomes. Transformational leaders communicate an inspiring vision, stimulate new ways of thinking, provide individualized consideration, and encourage commitment to shared objectives (Bass & Avolio, 1994). In project settings, these behaviors may support communication, knowledge sharing, collaboration, problem-solving, and alignment with project goals (Maqbool et al., 2017; Zaman et al., 2019). Empirical studies generally support a positive association between transformational leadership and project success. Aga et al. (2016) emphasized team-building, Ahmad et al. (2023) highlighted empowerment and goal clarity, and Fareed et al. (2023) identified psychological empowerment as an explanatory mechanism. Han et al. (2025) further associated transformational leadership with project success through team reflexivity and project-team resilience. A meta-analysis by Abbas and Ali (2023) confirmed its overall relevance while showing that the strength of the association may vary across contexts. However, leadership is often evaluated by followers, whereas the present study examines project managers' self-rated transformational leadership. The relationship therefore concerns leadership self-perceptions and perceived project success rather than an independently observed follower-rated leadership effect.

Psychological empowerment offers a plausible explanation for this association. Thomas and Velthouse (1990) conceptualized empowerment as intrinsic task motivation based on meaningfulness, competence, choice, and impact, while

Spreitzer (1995) operationalized it through meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Meaning refers to the perceived importance of work, competence to confidence in one's ability, self-determination to autonomy in regulating work activities, and impact to the perceived ability to influence work outcomes. These psychological states are especially relevant in project environments requiring initiative, adaptability, rapid decision-making, and continuous problem-solving (Tuuli & Rowlinson, 2009; Khattak et al., 2022). Transformational leadership may strengthen psychological empowerment by communicating meaningful objectives, encouraging participation, recognizing contributions, and supporting independent thinking. Avolio and Gibbons (1988) associated transformational leadership with confidence and internal motivation, while Gong et al. (2009) linked it with creative self-efficacy. Ali et al. (2020), Liu et al. (2019), and Huang et al. (2025) reported associations among leadership, empowerment, and performance-related outcomes. In this study, psychological empowerment refers to the project manager's own psychological state rather than to that of employees or team members.

Psychological empowerment may also be associated with perceived project success. Meaning and self-determination may sustain involvement and persistence, while competence and perceived influence may help project managers respond to difficulties and coordinate project activities. Sun et al. (2012) and Badir et al. (2012) associated empowerment with creativity, communication, and performance-related behaviors. Seibert et al. (2011) identified empowerment as a key mechanism linking leadership practices to performance outcomes. In project settings, Tuuli and Rowlinson (2009) demonstrated favorable performance consequences of empowerment, while Khan et al. (2020) linked psychological empowerment with project success. Project managers who feel capable of shaping project activities may respond more proactively to project demands and consequently evaluate outcomes more favorably. Psychological empowerment may therefore explain part of the association between self-rated transformational leadership and perceived project success. Nevertheless, this mediating mechanism remains insufficiently examined at the individual project-manager level, particularly in emerging project-based contexts.

Individual Islamic work ethics may further shape the association between self-rated transformational leadership and psychological empowerment. In non-Western settings, workplace attitudes and responses to managerial practices may be influenced by personal ethical values (Gheitani et al., 2019; Javid et al., 2024). Islamic work ethics emphasize productive effort, honesty, responsibility, cooperation, justice, dedication, moral conduct, and the social value of work (Ali & Al-Owaidan, 2008; Khan & Rasheed, 2015). Stronger adherence to these principles has been associated with commitment, intrinsic motivation, responsible conduct, and constructive workplace attitudes (Murtaza et al., 2016; Gheitani et al., 2019; Raza et al., 2020). Recent systematic evidence stresses the need to distinguish individual ethical orientation from organizational ethical climate or shared cultural values (Zafar et al., 2026). Accordingly, individual Islamic work ethics in this study represent the project manager's personal orientation toward work. They do not measure an organizational ethical environment, shared workplace values, religious climate, or national culture.

Transformational leadership and individual Islamic work ethics share principles related to meaningful effort, integrity, accountability, collective responsibility, and commitment to beneficial outcomes (Soleman et al., 2020; Raza et al., 2022). Project managers with stronger individual Islamic work ethics may perceive greater consistency between their leadership behaviors and their beliefs about responsible, meaningful work. Such consistency may reinforce purpose, motivation, autonomy, and perceived influence. Yousef (2001) similarly showed that Islamic work ethics can alter relationships among workplace attitudes. Conservation of Resources Theory provides additional support for this reasoning (Hobfoll, 1989). Individuals seek to acquire and preserve resources that sustain motivation and help them cope with demanding conditions. Personal ethical values may function as resources by providing purpose, persistence, responsibility, and a coherent basis for action. Individual Islamic work ethics may therefore strengthen the association between favorable leadership self-perceptions and psychological empowerment (Shaheen et al., 2020; Javid et al., 2024). The positive association between self-rated transformational leadership

and psychological empowerment is consequently expected to be stronger when individual Islamic work ethics are higher.

Because psychological empowerment is expected to explain part of the association between self-rated transformational leadership and perceived project success, the corresponding indirect association may also vary according to individual Islamic work ethics. When project managers hold stronger individual Islamic work ethics, alignment between leadership self-perceptions and personal values may reinforce psychological empowerment and, through it, perceived project success. This reasoning implies a first-stage moderated mediation process in which individual Islamic work ethics strengthen the association between self-rated transformational leadership and psychological empowerment, thereby increasing the indirect association with perceived project success. Prior research supports these constructs, but limited attention has been given to how they operate jointly at the individual project-manager level. Examining these relationships among Tunisian project managers extends evidence to an emerging and non-Western setting. However, Tunisia is treated only as the empirical context because national culture, religious traditions, and organizational ethical values were not measured. Moreover, all focal constructs are evaluated by the same project manager. The proposed relationships are therefore interpreted as within-respondent, perception-based associations rather than follower-rated leadership effects, organizational ethical-climate effects, or objectively verified causal effects.

Although transformational leadership, psychological empowerment, Islamic work ethics, and project outcomes have received considerable attention, they have often been examined separately or at different levels of analysis (Khan & Rasheed, 2015; Ahmad et al., 2022). Limited research has examined whether psychological empowerment mediates the association between project managers' self-rated transformational leadership and perceived project success and whether individual Islamic work ethics strengthen this process. This study addresses this gap by testing a first-stage moderated mediation model among project managers in Tunisia. It examines the direct association between self-rated transformational leadership

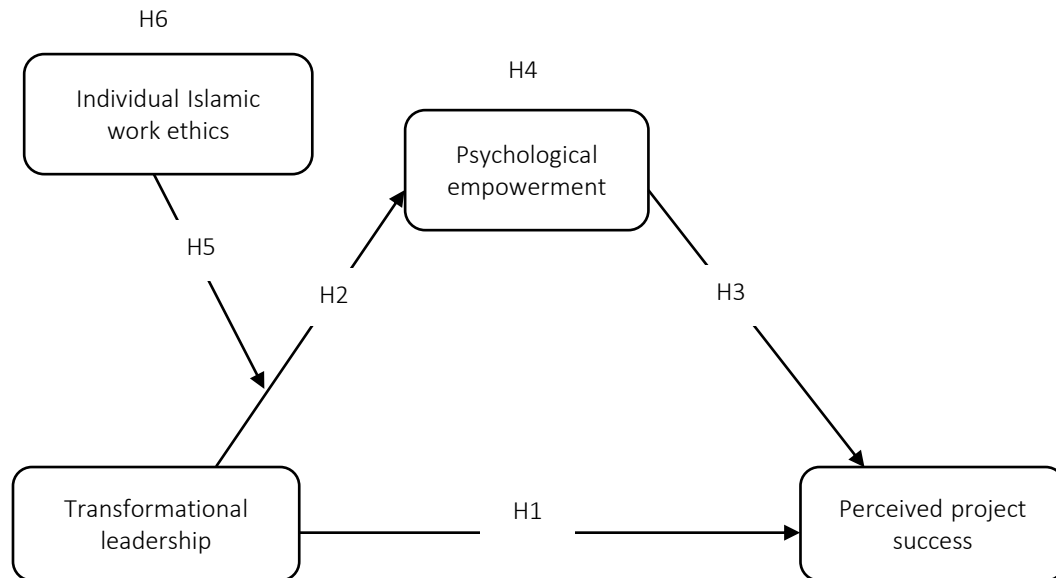


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

and perceived project success, the mediating role of psychological empowerment, and the moderating role of individual Islamic work ethics.

Based on the preceding theoretical arguments, Figure 1 shows the conceptual model, and the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Project managers' self-rated transformational leadership is positively associated with their perceived project success.*
- H2: Project managers' self-rated transformational leadership is positively associated with their psychological empowerment.*
- H3: Project managers' psychological empowerment is positively associated with their perceived project success.*
- H4: Project managers' psychological empowerment mediates the association between their self-rated transformational leadership and perceived project success.*
- H5: Project managers' individual Islamic work ethics moderate the positive association between their self-rated transformational leadership and psychological empowerment, such that this association is stronger at higher levels of individual Islamic work ethics.*

H6: Project managers' individual Islamic work ethics moderate the indirect association between their self-rated transformational leadership and perceived project success through psychological empowerment, such that this indirect association is stronger at higher levels of individual Islamic work ethics.

2. METHODS

This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine associations among project managers' self-rated transformational leadership, psychological empowerment, individual Islamic work ethics, and perceived project success. The survey enabled the four constructs to be assessed within one framework and supported tests of direct and conditional associations (Zaman et al., 2019; Ahmad et al., 2022; Fareed et al., 2023; Hair et al., 2010; Hayes, 2022). Because data were collected at one point in time, the relationships were interpreted as statistical associations rather than causal effects. Tunisia was treated only as the empirical setting (OECD, 2013, 2016). National culture, religious traditions, and organizational ethical values were not measured. Individual Islamic work ethics were therefore conceptualized as project managers' personal ethical orientation rather than as an organizational ethical climate or shared value system.

The unit of analysis was the individual project manager's perception of one project completed during the preceding two years. Respondents answered all items with reference to the same completed project, providing a common frame and reducing ambiguity about the project evaluated (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Project managers were selected because they possess relevant knowledge of leadership practices and project outcomes (Aga et al., 2016; Maqbool et al., 2017). However, the same respondents reported on all focal constructs. Transformational leadership represented the manager's self-assessment of their leadership behaviors; psychological empowerment represented their experience of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact; individual Islamic work ethics represented their ethical orientation; and perceived project success represented their subjective project evaluation. The model therefore captured individual-level, within-respondent associations. Leadership was not rated by followers or other stakeholders, and project success was not verified through budget, schedule, quality, contractual, financial, or client records. The findings should consequently be interpreted as perception-based associations rather than objective project- or organizational-level effects.

Because no comprehensive sampling frame of practicing project managers in Tunisia was available, convenience sampling was used (Zaman et al., 2019; Ahmad et al., 2022). Data were collected from June to December 2025 through an online questionnaire circulated primarily via LinkedIn. Participants had to confirm that they held project-management responsibilities and could answer with reference to one project completed during the previous two years. Ineligible and incomplete responses were excluded. Since the questionnaire link was openly circulated, the exact number of eligible individuals who received, viewed, or began the survey could not be established. The available records could not reliably distinguish survey views, incomplete submissions, duplicate entries, completed questionnaires, and nonresponses. A conventional response rate was therefore not calculated. After applying the eligibility and completeness criteria, 482 usable questionnaires were retained.

Before the main data collection, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with 30 project managers in Tunisia. The pilot test assessed item clarity,

relevance, comprehensibility, instructions, and completion time. Particular attention was given to the instruction that all items had to refer to one completed project. Minor revisions clarified this instruction without changing the meaning or number of the scale items. Pilot responses were excluded from the final sample. As reported in Table 1, 404 respondents were male (83.8%) and 78 were female (16.2%). Regarding age, 121 respondents were between 20 and 30 years old (25.1%), 250 were between 31 and 40 years old (51.9%), and 111 were aged 41 years or above (23.0%). Regarding education, 43 held undergraduate qualifications (8.9%), 215 held bachelor's degrees (44.6%), and 224 held master's degrees or higher qualifications (46.5%).

Table 1. Demographic profiles of the respondents

Demographic profiles	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	404	83.8
Female	78	16.2
Age		
20–30	121	25.1
31–40	250	51.9
41 and above	111	23.0
Education		
Undergraduate	43	8.9
Bachelor	215	44.6
Master or above	224	46.5

All constructs were measured using established instruments and a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1, "strongly disagree," to 5, "strongly agree." Project managers' self-rated transformational leadership was measured using the 13-item scale developed by Aga et al. (2016), covering inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence. The items were answered as self-assessments. Psychological empowerment was measured with Spreitzer's (1995) 12-item instrument. Although the scale covers meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, it was operationalized as one overall reflective construct representing the project manager's personal experience of empowerment. Perceived project success was assessed using 14 items adapted from Aga et al. (2016), covering project efficiency, time and budget expectations, achievement of objectives, end-user satisfaction, and perceived impact. Individual Islamic

work ethics were measured using Ali's (1992) 17-item scale, reflecting responsibility, effort, honesty, cooperation, justice, dedication, and the social value of productive activity. The construct was interpreted exclusively as an individual ethical orientation. The items are presented in Appendix A.

Measurement properties were assessed using Minitab 19. Internal consistency was examined with Cronbach's alpha, using 0.70 as the minimum acceptable threshold (Hair et al., 2010). Maximum-likelihood factor analysis was conducted using the item correlation matrix. Standardized primary loadings of at least 0.50 were required, while items with weak primary loadings or substantial cross-loadings were reviewed before retaining the final measurement structure. All four focal variables were modeled as reflective constructs. Composite reliability was evaluated against 0.70, and average variance extracted against 0.50. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations. Table 2 reports the results. Age, gender, and education were included as controls based on previous project-leadership research (Aga et al., 2016) and interpreted only as statistical adjustments. Sector, project size, budget, duration, complexity, managerial experience, and team size were not consistently available and were not included.

Regression-based analyses were performed using Minitab 19. Unstandardized coefficients were reported, and the same analytical sample, metric, and controls were maintained across the relevant models. Mediation was examined by estimating the association between self-rated transformational leadership and psychological empowerment, the total association between self-rated transformational leadership and perceived project success, and the direct association after psychological empowerment was included. The indirect effect was evaluated using 10,000 bootstrap resamples and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals; mediation was supported when the interval excluded zero. Moderation was tested through hierarchical regression with psychological empowerment as the dependent variable. Self-rated transformational leadership and individual Islamic work ethics were mean-centered before calculating their interaction. Model 1 included age, gender, and education; Model 2 added the main effects; and

Model 3 added the interaction. Moderation was evaluated using the interaction coefficient, the interaction-specific change in explained variance, the *F*-change statistic, and slopes at low, mean, and high levels of individual Islamic work ethics. Moderated mediation was examined as a first-stage conditional process model. Conditional indirect effects and the index of moderated mediation were estimated with 10,000 bootstrap resamples and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals. Moderated mediation was supported when the interval for the index excluded zero.

Because all focal variables were reported by the same project manager at the same time, common method variance, social desirability, consistency motives, and self-enhancement bias could not be excluded. Procedural safeguards included anonymity, confidentiality, neutral instructions, separation of constructs into questionnaire sections, and pilot testing. Harman's single-factor test indicated that the first unrotated factor accounted for less than 50% of total variance, suggesting that no single factor dominated the data. However, this diagnostic cannot conclusively rule out common method bias, and same-source inflation remains possible. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before questionnaire completion. Respondents were informed of the academic purpose, confidentiality procedures, and their right to withdraw before submission. No directly identifiable or sensitive information was collected. Under the applicable institutional requirements, formal ethical approval was not required for anonymous, voluntary, minimal-risk survey research.

3. RESULTS

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics, internal-consistency estimates, correlations, convergent validity, and discriminant validity results for the four focal constructs. Perceived project success had the highest mean score ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.88$), followed by project managers' self-rated transformational leadership ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.72$), individual Islamic work ethics ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.88$), and psychological empowerment ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 0.84$). These results indicate that respondents reported moderately favorable perceptions of proj-

ect success and their own transformational leadership behaviors, while their average psychological empowerment score was comparatively lower.

The correlation analysis showed that self-rated transformational leadership was positively associated with perceived project success ($r = 0.45, p < 0.001$) and psychological empowerment ($r = 0.49, p < 0.001$). Psychological empowerment was also positively associated with perceived project success ($r = 0.64, p < 0.001$), representing the strongest bivariate association among the focal constructs. Individual Islamic work ethics were positively correlated with self-rated transformational leadership ($r = 0.41, p < 0.001$) and psychological empowerment ($r = 0.52, p < 0.001$). However, their direct correlation with perceived project success was weak and did not reach statistical significance at the 5% level ($r = 0.08, p = 0.079$). Thus, individual Islamic work ethics were more closely related to respondents' leadership self-perceptions and psychological empowerment than to their direct evaluations of project success.

The adequacy of the item correlation matrix was examined before assessing the measurement structure. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure was satisfactory ($KMO = 0.81$), and Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1,540) = 12,846.37, p < 0.001$. These tests were conducted using the 56 original questionnaire items and indicated that the correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis. The four-factor solution generated an interpretable loading pattern consistent with the proposed measurement structure. Psychological empowerment was modeled as one overall reflective construct comprising the 12 items related to meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact.

Standardized primary factor loadings ranged from 0.56 to 0.88. Of the 56 original items, 52

were retained, while four were removed because of weak primary loadings or substantial cross-loadings. The largest cross-loading among the retained items was 0.34. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.71 to 0.90, exceeding the adopted minimum threshold of 0.70. Composite reliability values ranged from 0.84 to 0.91, while average variance extracted values ranged from 0.60 to 0.68. These results supported the internal consistency and convergent validity of the four constructs.

Discriminant validity was examined through both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio. The square roots of average variance extracted ranged from 0.775 to 0.825 and exceeded the corresponding interconstruct correlations. In addition, HTMT ratios ranged from 0.19 to 0.78 and remained below the adopted threshold of 0.90. Taken together, these findings provided support for discriminant validity among perceived project success, self-rated transformational leadership, psychological empowerment, and individual Islamic work ethics.

Table 3 reports the mediation analysis. Project managers' self-rated transformational leadership had a positive total association with perceived project success ($B = 0.52, SE = 0.05, p < 0.001$), supporting H1. Self-rated transformational leadership was also positively associated with psychological empowerment ($B = 0.49, SE = 0.05, p < 0.001$), supporting H2. Project managers who evaluated their transformational leadership behaviors more favorably therefore also tended to report stronger psychological empowerment.

Psychological empowerment remained positively associated with perceived project success after self-rated transformational leadership was included in the model ($B = 0.64, SE = 0.04, p < 0.001$), supporting H3. After psychological empowerment was introduced, the direct association between self-rated

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, reliability, correlations, and discriminant validity

Construct	Mean	SD	α	CR	AVE	PPS	TL	PE	IWE
PPS	3.52	0.88	0.90	0.91	0.68	(0.825)			
TL	3.30	0.72	0.89	0.90	0.65	0.45***	(0.806)		
PE	2.70	0.84	0.71	0.84	0.60	0.64***	0.49***	(0.775)	
IWE	3.10	0.88	0.77	0.88	0.61	0.08	0.41***	0.52***	(0.781)

Note: $N = 482$. Diagonal values in parentheses are the square roots of AVE. PPS = Perceived Project Success; TL = Self-Rated Transformational Leadership; PE = Psychological Empowerment; IWE = Individual Islamic Work Ethics. *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 3. Mediation analysis

Path	B	SE	95% CI
Self-rated TL → PPS: total association	0.52***	0.05	—
Self-rated TL → PE	0.49***	0.05	—
PE → PPS, controlling for Self-rated TL	0.64***	0.04	—
Self-rated TL → PPS, controlling for PE	0.21***	0.05	—
Indirect association: Self-rated TL → PE → PPS	0.31	—	[0.24, 0.38]

Note: N = 482. B = unstandardized coefficient; SE = standard error; PPS = Perceived Project Success; TL = Self-Rated Transformational Leadership; PE = Psychological Empowerment. The indirect effect was estimated using 10,000 bootstrap resamples and a bias-corrected 95% confidence interval. *** $p < 0.001$.

transformational leadership and perceived project success decreased but remained positive and statistically significant ($B = 0.21$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < 0.001$). The indirect association through psychological empowerment was 0.31, with a bootstrap SE of 0.04 and a bias-corrected 95% confidence interval of [0.24, 0.38]. Because this confidence interval excluded zero, the indirect association was statistically significant. The continued significance of the direct association indicated partial rather than complete mediation. H4 was therefore supported.

Table 4 presents the hierarchical moderation analysis with psychological empowerment as the dependent variable. Model 1 included age, gender, and education. The control variables jointly explained 5.6% of the variance in psychological empowerment ($R^2 = 0.056$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.050$), and the model was statistically significant, $F = 9.45$, $p < 0.001$. Age was positively associated with psychological empowerment ($B = 0.22$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < 0.001$), while education also had a smaller positive association ($B = 0.11$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < 0.05$). Gender was not statistically significant.

Model 2 added self-rated transformational leadership and individual Islamic work ethics. Both variables were positively associated with psychological empowerment. The coefficient was $B = 0.31$ ($SE = 0.06$, $p < 0.001$) for self-rated transformational leadership and $B = 0.24$ ($SE = 0.06$, $p < 0.001$) for individual Islamic work ethics. The addition of these main effects increased the explained variance to $R^2 = 0.347$, corresponding to $\Delta R^2 = 0.291$ and $F\text{-change} = 106.06$, $p < 0.001$. The adjusted R^2 of Model 2 was 0.340.

Model 3 introduced the interaction between mean-centered self-rated transformational leadership and individual Islamic work ethics. The inter-

action coefficient was positive and statistically significant ($B = 0.21$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < 0.001$). Adding the interaction increased R^2 from 0.347 to 0.368. The interaction-specific increase in explained variance was therefore $\Delta R^2 = 0.021$, with $F\text{-change} = 15.78$, $p < 0.001$. The final model was statistically significant, adjusted $R^2 = 0.360$, $F = 46.10$, $p < 0.001$.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the positive slope relating self-rated transformational leadership to psychological empowerment was steeper at a high level of individual Islamic work ethics (+1 SD) than at a low level (−1 SD). This pattern indicates that individual Islamic work ethics strengthened the positive association between project managers' leadership self-perceptions and their psychological empowerment. H5 was therefore supported.

Table 4. Hierarchical moderation analysis

Predictor	Model 1: Controls B (SE)	Model 2: Main effects B (SE)	Model 3: Interaction B (SE)
Age	0.22 (0.05)***	0.16 (0.05)**	0.14 (0.05)**
Gender	−0.01 (0.03)	−0.02 (0.03)	−0.03 (0.03)
Education	0.11 (0.05)*	0.06 (0.05)	0.04 (0.05)
Self-rated TL	—	0.31 (0.06)***	0.28 (0.06)***
Individual IWE	—	0.24 (0.06)***	0.22 (0.06)***
TL × IWE	—	—	0.21 (0.05)***
Constant	2.10 (0.60)***	1.60 (0.64)*	1.52 (0.65)*
R^2	0.056	0.347	0.368
Adjusted R^2	0.050	0.340	0.360
ΔR^2	—	0.291	0.021
F-change	—	106.06***	15.78***
Overall F-statistic	9.45***	50.59***	46.10***

Note: N = 482. Dependent variable = Psychological Empowerment (PE). Self-rated TL and Individual IWE were mean-centered before calculating the interaction. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 5 presents the first-stage moderated-mediation results. At a low level of individual Islamic work ethics (−1 SD), the conditional indirect asso-

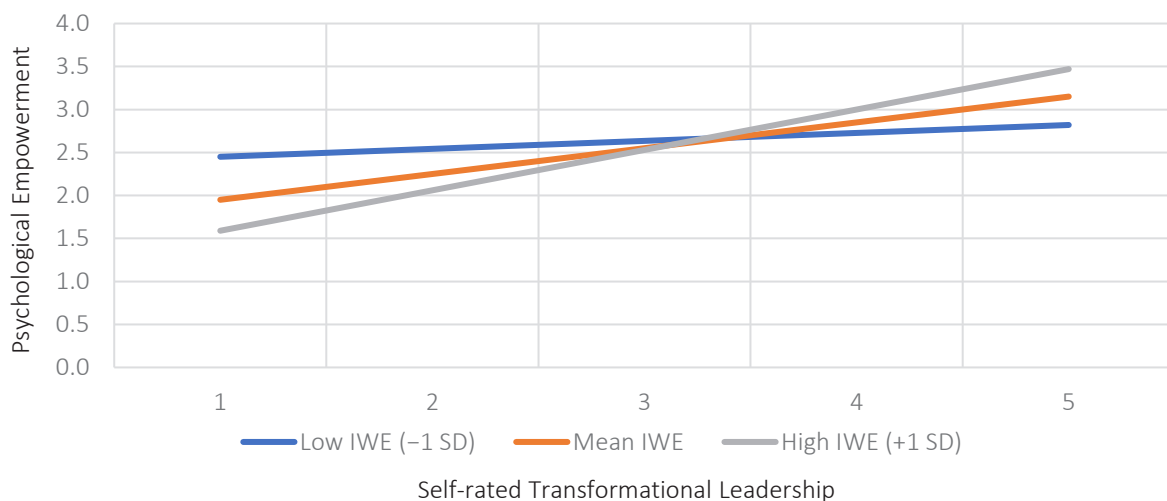


Figure 2. Interaction between self-rated transformational leadership and individual Islamic work ethics in predicting psychological empowerment

ciation between self-rated transformational leadership and perceived project success through psychological empowerment was 0.06, with a bootstrap SE of 0.03 and a bias-corrected 95% confidence interval of [0.01, 0.12]. At the mean level of individual Islamic work ethics, the conditional indirect association increased to 0.18, with a bootstrap SE of 0.03 and a 95% confidence interval of [0.12, 0.24]. At a high level of individual Islamic work ethics (+1 SD), the conditional indirect association increased further to 0.30, with a bootstrap SE of 0.04 and a 95% confidence interval of [0.22, 0.38].

All three confidence intervals excluded zero. More importantly, the index of moderated mediation was 0.13, with a bootstrap SE of 0.04 and a bias-corrected 95% confidence interval of [0.06, 0.23]. Because the confidence interval for the index excluded zero, the indirect association between self-

rated transformational leadership and perceived project success through psychological empowerment varied significantly according to individual Islamic work ethics. The indirect association became stronger as individual Islamic work ethics increased, supporting H6.

Table 6 summarizes the hypothesis-testing results. All six hypotheses were supported. Higher self-rated transformational leadership was associated with greater psychological empowerment and more favorable perceived project success. Psychological empowerment partially mediated the association between leadership self-perceptions and perceived project success. Individual Islamic work ethics strengthened both the association between self-rated transformational leadership and psychological empowerment and the corresponding indirect association with perceived project success.

Table 5. Moderated-mediation analysis

Mediator	Moderator level	Conditional indirect effect				Moderated-mediation effect			
		Indirect effect	SE	Confidence Interval 95%		Index of moderated-mediation	SE	Confidence Interval 95%	
				Lower level	Upper level			lower level	upper level
PE	Low (-1 SD)	0.06	0.03	0.01	0.12	0.13	0.04	0.06	0.23
	Mean	0.18	0.03	0.12	0.24				
	High (+1 SD)	0.30	0.04	0.22	0.38				

Note: N = 482. Estimates were obtained using 10,000 bootstrap resamples and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals. Dependent variable = Perceived Project Success; mediator = Psychological Empowerment; moderator = Individual Islamic Work Ethics.

Table 6. Summary of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Result
H1	Self-rated TL → PPS	Supported
H2	Self-rated TL → PE	Supported
H3	PE → PPS	Supported
H4	TL → PE → PPS	Supported
H5	Self-rated TL × Individual IWE → PE	Supported
H6	Conditional indirect effect of Self-rated TL on PPS through PE moderated by Individual IWE	Supported

Note: PPS = Perceived Project Success; TL = Self-Rated Transformational Leadership; PE = Psychological Empowerment; IWE = Individual Islamic Work Ethics.

4. DISCUSSION

This study examined the associations among project managers' self-rated transformational leadership, psychological empowerment, individual Islamic work ethics, and perceived project success. Self-rated transformational leadership was associated with perceived project success and psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment partially mediated the leadership and success association, while individual Islamic work ethics strengthened the leadership and empowerment relationship and the corresponding indirect association. Because all focal constructs were reported by the same project manager, the findings should be interpreted as individual-level, within-respondent associations rather than independently verified effects on project performance.

The positive association between self-rated transformational leadership and perceived project success is consistent with Aga et al. (2016), Maqbool et al. (2017), Nauman et al. (2022), Fareed et al. (2023), and Han et al. (2025). Project managers who perceive themselves as communicating a clear vision, encouraging participation, supporting problem-solving, and aligning activities with project objectives may also evaluate project outcomes more favorably. However, leadership was assessed through managers' self-ratings rather than follower or stakeholder evaluations. Favorable perceptions of one's own leadership may therefore partly coincide with favorable judgments of the same project. The result supports an association between leadership self-perceptions and perceived project success, but not a causal effect on outcomes.

Psychological empowerment partially mediated this association. This finding aligns with Spreitzer (1995), Seibert et al. (2011), Tuuli and Rowlinson

(2009), Khan et al. (2020), and Fareed et al. (2023), who identify empowerment as a mechanism linking leadership to performance-related outcomes. Project managers who report stronger transformational leadership behaviors may also experience greater meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. These psychological states may help them address project demands with confidence and perceived control. The indirect association indicates that empowerment explains part of the relationship between leadership self-perceptions and perceived project success. Because the direct association remained significant, the mediation was partial. Communication quality, stakeholder coordination, trust, reflexivity, and resilience may also be relevant.

Individual Islamic work ethics strengthened the association between self-rated transformational leadership and psychological empowerment. This result is consistent with research showing that personal ethical values influence workplace attitudes and responses to managerial practices (Murtaza et al., 2016; Gheitani et al., 2019; Raza et al., 2022; Javid et al., 2024). Project managers who value productive effort, honesty, responsibility, justice, cooperation, and dedication may perceive stronger alignment between leadership behaviors and personal beliefs about meaningful work. Such alignment may reinforce purpose, autonomy, competence, and perceived influence. Individual Islamic work ethics had only a weak, non-significant correlation with perceived project success, suggesting that their role is mainly conditional rather than direct.

This interpretation must remain at the individual level. Islamic work ethics were measured as the project manager's ethical orientation, not as an organizational ethical climate, shared ethical en-

vironment, religious organizational culture, or national cultural characteristic. The moderated-mediation finding suggests that ethical orientation shapes how strongly leadership self-perceptions are associated with psychological empowerment and perceived project success. This is consistent with Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), because individual Islamic work ethics may operate as a resource reinforcing responsibility, persistence, purpose, and commitment. Overall,

the study extends project-leadership research by integrating psychological empowerment as an explanatory mechanism and individual Islamic work ethics as a boundary condition within one conditional-process model. Nevertheless, the conclusions remain limited to cross-sectional, same-source, perception-based relationships and should not be generalized to follower-rated leadership, organizational ethical climates, or objectively verified project performance.

CONCLUSION

This study examined whether project managers' self-rated transformational leadership is associated with perceived project success through psychological empowerment and whether this indirect association varies according to individual Islamic work ethics. Based on data from 482 project managers in Tunisia, the findings showed that self-rated transformational leadership was positively associated with psychological empowerment and perceived project success. Psychological empowerment partially mediated this association, while individual Islamic work ethics strengthened both the relationship between self-rated transformational leadership and psychological empowerment and the corresponding indirect association with perceived project success.

The study contributes to project-leadership research by integrating a psychological mechanism and an individual ethical boundary condition within a single first-stage conditional-process model. The findings suggest that project managers who evaluate their transformational leadership behaviors more positively also tend to experience stronger meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. These psychological perceptions are, in turn, associated with more favorable evaluations of project success. The indirect association becomes stronger when project managers report higher individual Islamic work ethics, indicating that personal ethical orientation may shape how leadership self-perceptions relate to psychological empowerment.

These findings should be interpreted at the individual project-manager level. Transformational leadership was self-rated, psychological empowerment represented the manager's own psychological state, individual Islamic work ethics reflected a personal ethical orientation, and project success was subjectively evaluated by the same respondent. The results should therefore not be interpreted as follower-rated leadership effects, organizational ethical-climate effects, or causal effects on objectively verified project performance.

From a practical perspective, project-based organizations may develop leadership practices emphasizing clear vision, participation, independent problem-solving, recognition, and meaningful responsibility. They may also support project managers' empowerment by increasing appropriate autonomy, clarifying responsibilities, providing relevant resources, and involving managers in important project decisions. However, the findings do not establish that creating an organizational Islamic ethical climate would improve objective project outcomes.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design does not establish temporal order or causality, while the same-source measurement of all focal constructs creates risks of common method and self-enhancement bias. Convenience sampling limits statistical generalizability, and the absence of project and organizational identifiers prevented verification of clustering. Perceived project success was also not compared with objective indicators such as schedule, budget, quality, contractual re-

sults, or stakeholder assessments. Future research should adopt longitudinal and multi-source designs, combine subjective and objective outcome measures, collect non-identifying project and organizational codes, and use cluster-robust or multilevel analyses where appropriate.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Mohamed Ali Hedhili.
 Data curation: Mohamed Ali Hedhili.
 Formal analysis: Mohamed Ali Hedhili.
 Funding acquisition: Mohamed Ali Hedhili.
 Investigation: Mohamed Ali Hedhili.
 Methodology: Mohamed Ali Hedhili.
 Project administration: Mohamed Ali Hedhili.
 Resources: Mohamed Ali Hedhili.
 Software: Mohamed Ali Hedhili.
 Supervision: Mohamed Ali Hedhili.
 Validation: Mohamed Ali Hedhili.
 Visualization: Mohamed Ali Hedhili.
 Writing – original draft: Mohamed Ali Hedhili.
 Writing – review & editing: Mohamed Ali Hedhili.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study involved human participants. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before they completed the questionnaire. Respondents were informed about the academic purpose of the study, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw from participation at any stage. No personally identifiable information was collected. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured throughout the data collection and analysis process. The data were used exclusively for academic research purposes. Ethical approval was not formally required according to institutional regulations because the study was based on anonymous voluntary participation and did not involve sensitive personal data.

REFERENCES

1. Abbas, M., & Ali, R. (2023). Transformational versus transactional leadership styles and project success: A meta-analytic review. *European Management Journal*, 41(1), 125-142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2021.10.011>
2. Aga, D. A., Noorderhaven, N., & Vallejo, B. (2016). Transformational leadership and project success: The mediating role of team-building. *International Journal of Project Management*, 34(5), 806-818. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2016.02.012>
3. Ahmad, M. K., Abdulhamid, A. B., Abd Wahab, S., & Nazir, M. U. (2023). Can the project manager's transformational leadership lead to project success? Empowerment, goal clarity, and CR leadership. *International Journal of Information Technology Project Management*, 14(1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJITPM.323206>
4. Ahmad, M. K., Abdulhamid, A. B., Wahab, S. A., & Nazir, M. U. (2022). Impact of the project manager's transformational leadership, influenced by mediation of self-leadership and moderation of empowerment, on project success. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 15(5), 842-864. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMPB-03-2021-0066>
5. Ali, A. J. (1992). The Islamic work ethic in Arabia. *The Journal of Psychology*, 126(5), 507-519. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.1992.10543384>
6. Ali, A. J., & Al-Owaidan, A. (2008). Islamic work ethic: A critical review. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 15(1), 5-19. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13527600810848791>
7. Ali, M., Zhang, L., Shah, S. J., Khan, S., & Shah, A. M. (2020). Impact of humble leadership on project success: The mediating role of psychological empowerment and innovative work behavior. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 41(3), 349-367. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-05-2019-0230>

8. Avolio, B. J., & Gibbons, T. C. (1988). Developing transformational leaders: A life span approach. In J.A. Conger & R.N. Kanungo (Eds.), *Charismatic leadership: The elusive factor in organizational effectiveness* (pp. 276-308). Jossey-Bass. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1988-98415-010>
9. Badir, Y. F., Büchel, B., & Tucci, C. L. (2012). A conceptual framework of the impact of NPD project team and leader empowerment on communication and performance: An alliance case context. *International Journal of Project Management*, 30(8), 914-926. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.IJPROMAN.2012.01.013>
10. Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. SAGE. Retrieved from <https://www.sagepub.com/shop/buy-a-book/improving-organizational-effectiveness-through-transformational-leadership-1-4228>
11. Fareed, M. Z., Su, Q., & Aslam, M. U. (2023). Transformational leadership and project success: The mediating role of psychological empowerment. *Sage Open*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231154796>
12. Gheitani, A., Imani, S., Seyyedamiri, N., & Foroudi, P. (2019). Mediating effect of intrinsic motivation on the relationship between Islamic work ethic, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment in banking sector. *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management*, 12(1), 76-95. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IME-FM-01-2018-0029>
13. Gong, Y., Huang, J.-C., & Farh, J.-L. (2009). Employee learning orientation, transformational leadership, and employee creativity: The mediating role of employee creative self-efficacy. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(4), 765-778. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2009.43670890>
14. Hair, J., Black, W., & Babin, B. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis: A global perspective*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall. Retrieved from https://books.google.tn/books?id=SLRPLgAACAAJ&redir_esc=y
15. Han, H., Ma, C., Yang, D., & Zhao, W. (2025). Transformational leadership and project success: The mediating roles of team reflexivity and project team resilience. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, Article 1504108. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1504108>
16. Hayes, A. F. (2022). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis second edition: A regression-based approach*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press. Retrieved from <https://www.guilford.com/books/Introduction-to-Mediation-Moderation-and-Conditional-Process-Analysis/Andrew-Hayes/9781462549030>
17. Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, 44(3), 513-524. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0003-066x.44.3.513>
18. Huang, Q., Wang, L., Huang, H., Tang, H., Liu, J., & Chen, C. (2025). Transformational leadership, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intensive care nurses' job performance: A cross-sectional study using structural equation modeling. *BMC Nursing*, 24, Article 1025. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-025-03685-7>
19. Javid, F., Gul, A., Naz, I., & Ali, M. (2024). Do Islamic work ethics matter? Impact of aversive leadership on employees' emotional and psychological health through the lens of conservation of resource theory. *Sustainable Futures*, 8, Article 100309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sfsr.2024.100309>
20. Keegan, A. E., & Den Hartog, D. N. (2004). Transformational leadership in a project-based environment: A comparative study of the leadership styles of project managers and line managers. *International Journal of Project Management*, 22(8), 609-617. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2004.05.005>
21. Khan, A. S., & Rasheed, F. (2015). Human resource management practices and project success, a moderating role of Islamic work ethics in Pakistani project-based organizations. *International Journal of Project Management*, 33(2), 435-445. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2014.08.006>
22. Khan, J., Malik, M., & Saleem, S. (2020). The impact of psychological empowerment of project-oriented employees on project success: A moderated mediation model. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, 33(1), 1311-1329. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2020.1756374>
23. Khattak, S. I., Rizvi, T. H., & Khan, M. A. (2022). Unwrapping software projects success in Asia: Assessing the role of authentic leadership, psychological empowerment, and job engagement in project success using a serial-mediation approach. *Sage Open*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221097918>
24. Liu, C., Liu, S., Yang, S., & Wu, H. (2019). Association between transformational leadership and occupational burnout and the mediating effects of psychological empowerment in this relationship among CDC employees: A cross-sectional study. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 12, 437-446. <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S206636>
25. Maqbool, R., Sudong, Y., Manzoor, N., & Rashid, Y. (2017). The impact of emotional intelligence, project managers' competencies, and transformational leadership on project success: An empirical perspective. *Project Management Journal*, 48(3), 58-75. <https://doi.org/10.1177/875697281704800304>
26. Müller, R., & Turner, J. R. (2007). Matching the project manager's leadership style to project type. *International Journal of Project Management*, 25(1), 21-32. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2006.04.003>
27. Murtaza, G., Abbas, M., Raja, U., Roques, O., Khalid, A., & Mushtaq, R. (2016). Impact of Islamic work ethics on organizational citizen-

- ship behaviors and knowledge-sharing behaviors. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 133(2), 325-333. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2396-0>
28. Nauman, S., Musawir, A. U., Munir, H., & Rasheed, I. (2022). Enhancing the impact of transformational leadership and team-building on project success: The moderating role of empowerment climate. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 15(2), 423-447. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMPB-02-2021-0031>
 29. OECD. (2013). *OECD Integrity Review of Tunisia: The public sector framework*. OECD Public Governance Reviews. Paris: OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264194175-en>
 30. OECD. (2016). *Open Government in Tunisia*. OECD Public Governance Reviews. Paris: OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264227118-en>
 31. Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879-903. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879>
 32. Raza, M. A., Ul-Hadi, N., Khan, M., & Mujtaba, B. G. (2020). Empirical evidence of organizational justice and incivility in the tourism industry: Assessing the moderating role of Islamic work ethics and trust in leader. *Journal of Transnational Management*, 25(4), 274-299. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15475778.2020.1854025>
 33. Raza, M. A., Ul-Hadi, N., Khan, M., & Mujtaba, B. G. (2022). Behavioral orientation to organizational justice: Moderating role of Islamic work ethics and trust in leader in tourism industry. *Public Organization Review*, 22, 1279-1296. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11115-021-00582-w>
 34. Seibert, S. E., Wang, G., & Courtright, S. H. (2011). Antecedents and consequences of psychological and team empowerment in organizations: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(5), 981-1003. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022676>
 35. Shaheen, S., Zulfiqar, S., Saleem, S., & Shehazadi, G. (2020). Does organizational cronyism lead to lower employee performance? Examining the mediating role of employee engagement and moderating role of Islamic work ethics. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, Article 579560. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.579560>
 36. Shenhar, A. J., Dvir, D., Levy, O., & Maltz, A. C. (2001). Project success: A multidimensional strategic concept. *Long Range Planning*, 34(6), 699-725. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0024-6301\(01\)00097-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0024-6301(01)00097-8)
 37. Soleman, M., Armanu, A., Aisjah, S., & Sudjatno, S. (2020). Islamic job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to leave: Moderating role of Islamic work ethics. *Management Science Letters*, 10(6), 1359-1368. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2019.11.021>
 38. Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement, and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(5), 1442-1465. <https://doi.org/10.2307/256865>
 39. Sun, L. Y., Zhang, Z., Qi, J., & Chen, Z. X. (2012). Empowerment and creativity: A cross-level investigation. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 23(1), 55-65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.11.005>
 40. Thomas, K. W., & Velthouse, B. A. (1990). Cognitive elements of empowerment: An 'interpretive' model of intrinsic task motivation. *Academy of Management Review*, 15(4), 666-681. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.1990.4310926>
 41. Tuuli, M. M., & Rowlinson, S. (2009). Performance consequences of psychological empowerment. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 135(12), 1334-1347. [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)CO.1943-7862.0000103](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)CO.1943-7862.0000103)
 42. Yousef, D. A. (2001). Islamic work ethic: A moderator between organizational commitment and job satisfaction in a cross-cultural context. *Personnel Review*, 30(2), 152-169. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00483480110380325>
 43. Zafar, M. B., Ali, A. J., & Abu-Hussin, M. F. (2026). Exploring Islamic work ethic in the workplace: A systematic literature review. *Personnel Review*, 55(6), 1441-1471. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-08-2024-0720>
 44. Zaman, U., Nawaz, S., Tariq, S., & Humayoun, A. A. (2019). Linking transformational leadership and "multi-dimensions" of project success: Moderating effects of project flexibility and project visibility using PLS-SEM. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 13(1), 103-127. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMPB-10-2018-0210>

APPENDIX A. Questionnaire

All items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). Respondents were instructed to answer all project-related items with reference to one specific project that they had completed or managed during the previous two years.

Construct	Items	Source
Psychological Empowerment	The work I do is very important to me.	Spreitzer (1995)
	My job activities are personally meaningful to me.	
	The work I do is meaningful to me.	
	I am confident about my ability to do my job.	
	I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities.	
	I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.	
	I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job.	
	I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work.	
	I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.	
	My impact on what happens in my project is large.	
Project Managers' Self-Rated Transformational Leadership	I have a great deal of control over what happens in my project.	Aga et al. (2016)
	I have significant influence over what happens in my project.	
	Team members have complete faith in me.	
	I provide appealing images about the project to my team.	
	I enable team members to think about old problems in new ways.	
	I give personal attention to a team member who seems neglected.	
	Team members are proud of being associated with me.	
	I let my team know that I am confident that the project goals will be achieved.	
	I provide team members with new ways of looking at puzzling things.	
	I help each member of the team to develop his/her strengths.	
Perceived Project Success	I make the team members feel good to be around me.	Aga et al. (2016)
	I help team members find meaning in their work.	
	I get team members to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before.	
	I am attentive to the unique concerns of each team member.	
	I show my team that I am optimistic about the future of the project.	
	The project was completed on time.	
	The project was completed according to the budget allocated.	
	The outcomes of the project are used by its intended end users.	
	The outcomes of the project are likely to be sustained.	
	The outcomes of the project have directly benefited the intended end users, either through increasing efficiency or effectiveness.	
Individual Islamic Work Ethics	Given the problem for which it was developed, the project seems to do the best job of solving that problem.	Ali (1992)
	I was satisfied with the process by which the project was implemented.	
	Project team members were satisfied with the process by which the project was implemented.	
	The project had no or minimal start-up problems because it was readily accepted by its end users.	
	The project has directly led to improved performance for the end users/target beneficiaries.	
	The project has made a visible positive impact on the target beneficiaries.	
	Project specifications were met by the time of handover to the target beneficiaries.	
	The target beneficiaries were satisfied with the outcomes of the project.	
	Our principal donors were satisfied with the outcomes of the project implementation.	
	Laziness is a vice.	
	Dedication to work is a virtue.	Ali (1992)
	Good work benefits both oneself and others.	
	Justice and generosity in the workplace are necessary conditions for society's welfare.	
	Producing more than enough to meet one's needs contributes to the prosperity of society as a whole.	
	One should carry out work to the best of one's ability.	
	Work is not an end in itself but a means to foster personal growth and social relations.	
	Life has no meaning without work.	
	More leisure time is good for society.	
	Human relations should be emphasized and encouraged.	
	Work enables man to control nature.	
	Creative work is a source of happiness and accomplishment.	
	Any person who works is more likely to get ahead in life.	
	Work gives one the chance to be independent.	