“Islamic work ethics and lecturer performance: Mediating roles of person-organization fit and innovation in learning activities”

AUTHORS
Fitri Wulandari
Syaugi Mubarak

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Abstract

This study highlights the performance of lecturers at religious universities. The research gap of the study is the influence of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) on lecturer performance. This study intends to examine the role of IWE in improving lecturer performance by mediating person-organization fit and innovation in learning activities. It is expected that IWE, which is characterized by some behaviors (hard work, responsibility, altruism, as well as worship and blessings as work intention), becomes an important antecedent in improving lecturer performance. The stratified random sampling with disproportionate random sampling was employed as a sampling technique. This study involved 104 respondents from IAIN Surakarta and UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. The data were analyzed using path analysis with IBM SPSS 23 software as a tool of analysis. In this study, all proposed hypotheses have been proven. However, the person-organization fit has the greatest value in increasing innovation in learning activities. Person-organization fit and innovation in learning activities partially mediate the influence of IWE on lecturer performance. The implication of the study describes the role of IWE that are attached to the individual level of a lecturer; thus, IWE is an important aspect in driving lecturer performance. The best strategy proposed from this study is to maximize the role of IWE to encourage innovation in learning activities, which leads to improvement of lecturer performance that has the value of path of 0.1272.

Keywords

Islamic perspective, Islamic ethic, person fit, organization fit, innovation, performance, lecturer

JEL Classification

I23, M14, J23, J28

INTRODUCTION

This study establishes that work ethics can increase employee trust in the organization. Hough et al. (2020) encouraged an optimistic attitude and aligned employee values with the organization, and increased creativity and innovation for boosting performance. Lecturer ethics, such as optimism, hard work, positive outlook, and high altruism are very beneficial for the organization. Ethics is the lecturer's best provision, whose studies are universal (Aldulaimi, 2016). IWE is a norm that does not contradict the Qur'an and Hadith with intentions and blessings as the two essential components. In the Prophet Hadith, the Prophet stated that every action depends upon and is rewarded according to the intention. In this case, a Muslim applies IWE to be rewarded for good intentions for a blessed life. In line with Mohammad et al. (2018), IWE is relevant to study since the Muslim communities are almost 23% of the world population. However, low ethics is a crucial problem for the Muslim community in general. Therefore, ethical issues are relevant for attention in all life aspects, including the ethical role in higher education and their impact on lecturer performance.
Hayati and Caniago (2012), Lau et al. (2017), Meriac (2012), and Mohammad et al. (2018) studied IWE and showed that work ethics influence performance. However, the process of how IWE boosts lecturer performance has not yet been well established in a systematic model. Moreover, IWE role as a booster of employee performance is yet to be explored as a new research area. Therefore, this study proposed a theoretical model to examine IWE influence on employee performance. The person-organization fit and innovation in learning activities are used as intervening variables. Düşmezkalender et al. (2021), Koburtay and Haloub (2020), and Mohammad et al. (2018) explained that IWE can improve person-organization fit. In addition, IWE increases innovation, which is still low among lecturers and teachers (Kumar & Rose, 2012; Supermaine, 2019). Learning innovation is a serious issue for education in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is because online and distance learning requires a distinctive teaching innovation for its effectiveness. It is expected that despite being carried out online, it does not affect the quality of a graduate’s qualification. This study contributes to the development of managerial practice in Indonesian higher education. It is a new paradigm for the development of human resource management study. This study seeks to examine the role of person-organization fit and innovation as mediating variables between IWE on lecturer performance.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of work ethics has received attention from many researchers over the past few decades. The concept was adopted from Weber’s (1958) view, which opened a new view of Protestant ethics. Furthermore, McClelland (1961) expanded Weber’s theory of social psychology studies through Protestantism and Capitalism. McClelland (1961) deeply related Protestant work ethics to the concept of work performance needs. Work ethic is the cultural area incorporating elements of beliefs and work values in line with rules applicable in society (Chanzanagh & Nejat, 2010). Moreover, as an interdisciplinary field, work ethics is described in literary works from philosophical and sociological perspectives. It is also studied by theoretical and empirical management sciences, contributing to the existing literature. Some researchers use different views such as Protestant, Islamic, Confucius, and Australian Work Ethics. However, all of them adopt the work ethics view from a religious or Weber’s Protestant perspective (1958).

The study of work ethics should not disregard the cultural understanding of this concept. Intercognitive concepts should be learned from cultural settings based on the IWE or other non-Protestant ethic criteria (Chanzanagh & Akbarnejad, 2011). From the Protestant perspective, work ethics should be oriented towards worship and religiosity. Furthermore, PWE defines Protestant individuals as hard-working, with a negative view of pleasure and leisure, while ethical work creates independence and good morals. Various religions describe work ethics differently, such as, in Islam, the term Sholeh has a different meaning from the Protestant or Jewish definition (Chanzanagh & Akbarnejad, 2011).

Islamic Work Ethic is a set of moral principles determined in the Qur’an and Sunnah (Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008; Mohammad et al., 2018). Whereas Hayati and Caniago (2012) explained, IWE is Islam’s hope concerning workplace behavior, including effort, dedication, cooperation, responsibility, social relations, and creativity. In essence, IWE leads to an individual’s relationship with Allah, with attitudes and behaviors consistent with al-Quran and Sunnah (Gheitani et al., 2019). Yousef (2001) showed that IWE and PWE have similarities as they both emphasize hard work, commitment, dedication, and creativity. Moreover, these concepts stress avoiding accumulating wealth, enhancing cooperation, competitiveness, and being ethical in the workplace.

Düşmezkalender et al. (2021) and Yousef (2001) described the concept of IWE that concerns hard work and refuses laziness, encourages positive behavior at work, promotes responsibility and helpfulness, holds honesty, and uses energy and thoughts for the betterment of the organization. Empirical studies explain that the role of IWE in suppressing deviant behavior in the workplace is more effective if employee conformity to the organization is high (Düşmezkalender et al., 2021).
Hence, employee conformity to the organization is important to reduce behaviors that are contrary to organizational goals. Nasution and Rafiki (2020) explained that IWE, which is manifested in honesty, trust, and being helpful, creates more satisfaction in the workplace and encourages commitment to the organization. However, it becomes a challenge for organizations to understand and instill IWE in all employees. Kumar and Rose (2010) reinforced the view that hard work and strong trust increase innovation capabilities in public organizations. This strengthens the understanding that commitment to IWE and its impact on innovation capabilities facilitate the role of human resource professionals in designing and implementing all changes in the workplace.

Ali and Al-Owaihan (2008) stated that IWE emphasizes hard work, persistence, responsibility, change and increases employee commitment to the organization. According to Kumar and Rose (2010), IWE provides the power of life balance between work and personal life, a positive attitude towards work. This includes creativity, hard work, responsibility, cooperation, and dedication, which benefit individuals and the organization. Superior work ethics is indicated by values and personal attributes (Abodher et al., 2020); it improves performance in public sector services. IWE is associated with positive individual attitudes towards the organization (Javed et al., 2020). Furthermore, this positive attitude is associated with increased commitment, responsibility, and employee satisfaction with the organization. According to Mohammad et al. (2018), IWE predicts employee support for the organization while increasing their performance. This is because individuals with high IWE work hard and are highly committed to the organization. In addition, Hayati and Caniago (2012) stated that IWE predicts organizational commitment, employee satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, and improved performance.

The multidimensional approach concerning person-organization fit is the suitability of person-to-person, person-to-job, person-to-group, and person-to-organization (Düşmezkalender et al., 2021; Pudjiarti & Hutomo, 2020). Person-organization fit has been discussed to explore the causes of the compatibility relationship between a person and an organization (Farooqui & Nagendra, 2014; Goetz et al., 2021). It is conformity between individuals and organizations due to the trust between the two parties (Goetz et al., 2021). The compatibility is influenced by how the organization supports the humanist relationship. This study focuses on the appropriateness approach between individuals and organizations. Kristof (1996) illustrated the conceptualization of person-organization fit as the relationship between fundamental characteristics of an organization and an individual. Organizational characteristics are culture, climate, values, vision, and norms, while individual traits are values, vision, personality, and attitude. This alignment perception is related to skills, new values, capability, and employees’ perceived organizational support (Düşmezkalender et al., 2021; Pudjiarti & Hutomo, 2020). Therefore, employees stay in an organization with the value of congruity, without which they leave (Choi et al., 2017; Düşmezkalender et al., 2021).

The suitability between employees and organizations is the desire to produce something positive. Value of conformity is indicated by increased job satisfaction, performance, organizational citizenship, and commitment, as well as declining employee turnover. The organization seeks to hire and retain employees with the best competencies. Similarly, employees strive to adjust to the workplace organization environment through contributions (Astakhova, 2016). IWE promotes work motivation and improves employees’ ability to solve complex problems at work. Hence, a high IWE is an opportunity for employees to show their talents in the organization (Düşmezkalender et al., 2021). Compliance and high responsibility show that a person has value of conformity with the organization.

Hough et al. (2020) stated that an ethical environment increases employee trust in the organization as an optimistic attitude, enhancing creativity and innovation. Various multidisciplinary approaches discuss innovation (Kumar & Rose, 2010), which highlighted its importance in organizations. Both innovation and its capability are crucial in promoting superior organizations (Yesil & Dogan, 2012). It is difficult to define the innovation concept because organizational change involves all aspects, including systems, products, services, meth-
ods, and processes (Riana et al., 2020). Helmy et al. (2020) and Yesil and Dogan (2012) stated that innovation focuses on new ideas and their implementation. This study focuses on innovation in the education sector and public organizational characteristics supporting change and lecturers' creativity in learning new methods. Yesil and Dogan (2012) aligned with the view that public organization services are slow, not rigid closely related to high bureaucracy. The new knowledge and ideas should enable organizations to process improvements and service innovations adaptive to change.

There is an influence on IWE importance and its role in increasing innovation capabilities. IWE is obedience to Allah, responsible behavior, loyalty, helping others, and working based on the worship intention. These qualities affect positive behavior in the workplace, such as mobilizing all potential for organizational progress, being optimistic, and increasing satisfaction (Kumar & Rose, 2012; Mohammad et al., 2018). According to Kumar and Rose (2010, 2012), high IWE influences innovation capabilities of the public sector, such as increased service quality. Supermane (2019) confirmed that leadership and organizational knowledge management promote and support innovation in teaching and learning. Therefore, organizations should create a conducive environment for optimum IWE. This study strengthens the opinion that IWE values increase innovation in learning activities.

The person-organization fit results from the relationship between employee’s abilities, skills, and knowledge in line with organizational needs. According to Choi et al. (2019), Farooqui and Nagendra (2014), and Goetz et al. (2021), this conformity increases employee performance. Various innovations drive efficiency and effectiveness and improve learning quality due to high student satisfaction (Santos-Vijande et al., 2013; Sukirno & Siengthai, 2011; Supermane, 2019) Furthermore, new teaching and learning ideas increase performance quality of educational institutions (Supermane, 2019). The person-organization conformity increases learning innovation in evaluation and supervision, as well as a personal responsibility to the organization (Beverborg et al., 2015). This supports the idea that innovation with continuous learning is the key to becoming a professional lecturer (Blass & Hayward, 2014).

2. AIMS AND HYPOTHESES

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of antecedent factors such as IWE, person-organization fit, and innovation in learning activities to improve the performance of lecturers in religious universities.

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **H1**: Increasing IWE increases lecturer performance.
- **H2**: Increasing IWE increases person-organization fit.

![Figure 1. Research framework](http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.19(3).2021.03)
H3: Increasing IWE increases innovation in learning activities.

H4: Increasing person-organization fit increases innovation in learning activities.

H5: Increasing person-organization fit increases lecturer performance.

H6: Increasing innovation in learning activities increases lecturer performance.

3. METHODOLOGY

The sample of this study included lecturers of Surakarta State Islamic Institute and the State Islamic University of Antasari Banjarmasin. Since the samples were not homogeneous, lecturers were selected using probability and stratified sampling techniques, and then divided into categories (Hair et al., 2010; Masud, 2004). Lecturers have heterogeneous ranks, such as instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor, necessitating disproportionate stratified sampling. In this study, only 104 respondents fulfilled the requirements for further analysis. This study used a 7-point Likert scale (1-7) to determine the questionnaire answer. Table 1 shows that from 104 respondents, 60.6% were male. In addition, 26.9% of the respondents were aged 31-35. The main position was the lector with 44.2%, while 28.8% had a teaching experience between 1-5 years. Most of the respondents have master’s degree with 67.3%.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Validity and reliability test

The validity test results are shown in Table 2. By comparing $r_{count} > r_{table}$, the data is valid. In this study, $r_{table}$ has alpha = 0.05, with degrees of freedom $dk = n - 3 = 104 - 3 = 101$. Based on the $r$ product moment value ($r_{table} = 0.195$), all statement items are valid because of the calculated $r$ value $> r_{table}$. However, one question on the variable innovation in learning activities is eliminated.
nated because of invalidity. All variables indicate a reliable Cronbach alpha value at > 0.6.

4.2. The one-way ANOVA

Table 3 presents the one-way ANOVA test that shows that there is no difference in lecturer performance based on gender \((F = 0.336, p > 0.05)\). In terms of age, it shows that there is no difference \((F = 0.636, p > 0.05)\). Furthermore, there is no difference in lecturer performance either based on work experience \((F = 1.125, p > 0.05)\), the academic position of the lecturer \((F = 2.427, p > 0.05)\) or education \((F = 1.125, p > 0.05)\).

4.3. Hierarchical regression analysis

Step 1 in Table 4 explains that only position significantly influences IWE, while work experience and income have a negative and insignificant impact. In step 2, IWE positively influences lecturer performance with a significant level of 1%, \((t = 6.433 > 1.96)\). Therefore, the \(H1\) coefficient is positive with a value of \(\beta = 0.511, p < 0.01\). Step 3 shows that IWE positively influences person-organization fit with a significant level of 1%, \((t = 5.643 > 1.96)\). Therefore, the \(H2\) coefficient is positive with a value of \(\beta = 0.537, p < 0.01\). Step 4 in Table 5 shows that person-organization fit positively influences innovation in learning activities with a significant level of 1%, \((t = 6.510 > 1.96)\). Therefore, the \(H4\) coefficient is positive with a value of \(\beta = 0.537, p < 0.01\).
### Table 3. One-way ANOVA test on gender, age, position, and education on lecturer performance

| Variables          | Frequency | Mean | St. deviation | F-statistics | Prob. |
|--------------------|-----------|------|---------------|--------------|-------|
| Respondents        | 104       |      |               |              |       |
| **Gender**         |           |      |               |              |       |
| Female             | 41        | 30.02| 3.748         | 0.336        | 0.563 |
| Male               | 63        | 30.44| 3.457         |              |       |
| **Age**            |           |      |               |              |       |
| 25-30 years        | 12        | 29.58| 4.010         |              |       |
| 31-35 years        | 28        | 30.18| 3.772         |              |       |
| 36-40 years        | 19        | 29.42| 3.791         |              |       |
| 41-45 years        | 21        | 30.67| 3.498         |              |       |
| 45-50 years        | 12        | 31.50| 2.780         |              |       |
| > 50 years         | 12        | 29.83| 3.834         |              |       |
| **Position**       |           |      |               |              |       |
| Expert assistant   | 35        | 29.03| 4.281         | 2.427        | 0.070 |
| Lector             | 46        | 30.70| 3.047         |              |       |
| Head lecturer      | 21        | 30.62| 3.309         |              |       |
| Professor          | 2         | 34.00| 1.414         |              |       |
| **Work experience**|           |      |               |              |       |
| 1-5 years          | 30        | 29.87| 4.083         |              |       |
| 6-10 years         | 23        | 30.17| 3.601         |              |       |
| 11-15 years        | 19        | 30.21| 3.824         |              |       |
| 16-20 years        | 15        | 28.93| 36.54         | 1.125        | 0.352 |
| 21-25 years        | 12        | 32.00| 1.809         |              |       |
| > 25 years         | 5         | 31.40| 2.510         |              |       |
| **Education level**|           |      |               |              |       |
| Master             | 70        | 29.94| 3.694         |              |       |
| Ph.D.              | 34        | 30.68| 3.479         | 0.937        | 0.335 |

### Table 4. Hierarchical regression analysis of IWE on person-organization fit (POF), innovation in learning activities (ILA), and lecturer performance (LP)

| Independent variables | Step 1 (IWE) | Step 2 (LP) | Step 3 (POF) | Step 4 (ILA) |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
|                       | β  | t | β  | t | β  | t | β  | t |
| Position              | 1.366 | 2.092 | 1.496 | 3.21 | .691 | .557 | .983 |
| Work experience       | - .086 | - .300 | .080 | .328 | .452 | .111 | .601 | .837 |
| Income                | - .423 | - .700 | .467 | - .917 | .598 | .311 | .303 | .505 |
| IWE                   | - | - | 511** | 6.433 | 517** | 5.643 | .364** | 3.921 |
| R2                    | 0.055 | | 0.333 | 0.256 | | 0.153 |
| Δ R2                  | 0.026 | | 0.306 | 0.226 | | 0.119 |
| F                     | 1.933** | | 12.380** | 8.507** | | 4.471** |

Note: N = 104; ** means p < .01.

### Table 5. Hierarchical regression analysis of person-organization fit (POF) on innovation in learning activities (ILA), person-organization fit (POF), and innovation in learning activities (ILA) on lecturer performance

| Independent variables | Step 4 (ILA) | Step 5 (LP) |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|
|                       | β  | t | β  | t |
| Position              | .466 | .938 | .747 | .742 |
| Work experience       | - 202 | - .320 | - .606 | - 1.116 |
| Income                | .049 | .092 | - .147 | | - .322 |
| Person-organization fit | 547** | 6.998 | 241** | 2.935 |
| Innovation in learning activities | - | | 450** | 5.207 |
| R2                    | 0.345 | | 0.479 |
| Δ R2                  | 0.319 | | 0.452 |
| F                     | 13.056** | | 18.016** |

Note: N = 104; ** means p < .01.
Table 6. Mediating person-organization fit and innovation in learning activities

| No | Mediating variable | Sobel test statistic | One-tailed probability | Two-tailed probability | Result |
|----|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| 1  | Islamic Work Ethics → person-organization fit → lecturer performance | 4.20848561 | 0.00001285 | 0.00002571 | Eligible |
| 2  | Islamic Work Ethics → innovation in learning activities → lecturer performance | 3.67186631 | 0.00012039 | 0.00024079 | Eligible |

Organization fit positively influences lecturer performance with a significant level of 1%, \((t = 3.166 > 1.96)\). Therefore, the \(H_5\) coefficient is positive with a value of \(\beta = 0.442, p < 0.01\). Furthermore, innovation in learning activities positively influences lecturer performance with a significant level of 1%, \((t = 5.449 > 1.96)\). Therefore, the \(H_6\) coefficient is positive with a value of \(\beta = 0.442, p < 0.01\).

4.4. Sobel test

Table 6 shows that the mediation role of person-organization fit on the influence of IWE on lecturer performance is significant. Furthermore, the Sobel test results show a value of 4.20848561, with one-way and two-way probability values less than 0.01. Therefore, person-organization fit partially mediates the influence of IWE and lecturer performance.

From Table 6, the mediation role of innovation in learning activities on the influence of IWE on lecturer performance is significant. The Sobel test results show a value of 3.67186631, with one-way and two-way probability values less than 0.01. Therefore, innovation in learning activities partially mediates the influence of IWE and lecturer performance.

5. DISCUSSION

The results showed that IWE had a significant positive influence on lecturer performance, while work ethics improve customer service performance (Lau et al., 2017). This aligns with Mohammad et al. (2018) that Islamic work ethics encourages psychological ownership, perceptions of organizational justice, and employee performance. IWE is closely related to the religiosity values of honesty, responsibility, and persistence, which influence job satisfaction and performance (Kamarudin & Kassim, 2020). Furthermore, this increases extra-role behavior, a strong desire to cooperate, share knowledge and build interactions, positively affecting the organization. Ashraf (2021) stated that working conditions affect education quality. A higher awareness of upholding the moral principles of the Qur'an and Sunnah increases lecturer productivity. This is reflected in increased education and teaching quality, as well as the number of publications and research. Moreover, a working awareness with the worship intention increases innovation, citizenship behavior, and other contributions beneficial to organizations, as well as improves higher education performance quality.

This study shows the influence of IWE on person-organization fit. Organizational support in creating a conducive and comfortable working environment increases the value of conformity between the organization and employees (Yusliza et al., 2020). The organization supports a conducive work climate through ethical standards, upholding honesty, implementing a mandate, and strengthening individual values' conformity with organizational expectations. Furthermore, working with strong intentions encourages professionalism, facilitating shared goals to grow and develop with the organization (Astakhova, 2016; Lau et al., 2017). The value of conformity of employees and organizational increases teamwork, proactive behavior, and creates a conducive work climate that improves performance quality.

There is an influence of person-organization fit on innovation in learning activities. All changes with new ideas and their implementation are the answers awaited by students and stakeholders. Therefore, the demands related to speed, service improvement, as well as an efficient and effective method, are the leading organization tasks in all aspects. According to Lee and Choi (2003), and Kumar and Rose (2010), public organizations should build togetherness and synergize with other parties. This helps increase flexibility, create new knowledge and experiences, as well as adopt new technologies and methods to enhance work innovation.
Innovations in learning activities improve lecturer performance. In line with this, García-García et al. (2016) stated that lecturers have a central role in knowledge transfer and competency development. The results showed that the suitability of teaching methods and the knowledge transfer increase graduate competence in line with output standards (higher education accreditation). This condition could be strengthened when the academic climate encourages the creation of this reciprocal relationship. Supermane (2019) showed that innovations from traditional to modern learning methods are necessary. Learning innovation increases student participation in the teaching process. Therefore, each lecturer should be committed to making innovations through sustainable learning, improving skills, and adapting to information technology.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of IWE on lecturer performance with person-organization fit and innovation in learning activities as mediating variables. The findings of this study indicate that there is a positive and significant influence of IWE on lecturer performance, person-organization fit, and innovation in learning activities. The results of this study also show that there is a positive and significant effect of person-organization fit and innovation in learning activities on lecturer performance. Based on the fourth hypothesis (H4), the influence of person-organization fit on innovation in learning activities has the greatest value. The second greatest value is the influence of IWE on person-organization fit (H2), followed by the direct influence of IWE on lecturer performance (H1), and the fourth is the influence of IWE on innovation in learning activities (H3). If it is compared to the effect of person-organization fit on lecturer performance (H5), innovation in learning activities has a greater direct effect on improving lecturer performance (H6). The strategy used in improving lecturer performance is by looking at the role of IWE, which has a strategic contribution in improving lecturer performance. The first strategy is increasing the role of IWE in improving lecturer performance was conducted by increasing innovation as a mediating variable that has the highest contribution (0.1638). The second strategy is to encourage the role of IWE to drive person-organization fit and innovation that leads to the improvement of lecturer performance (0.1272). The third is to increase the role of IWE in driving person-organization fit, which leads to improved performance (0.1245). The results confirm that IWE influences lecturer performance mediated by innovative learning and person-organization fit. They showed partial mediation since they have a significant influence both directly and indirectly.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Fitri Wulandari.
Data curation: Syaugi Mubarak.
Formal analysis: Fitri Wulandari.
Investigation: Syaugi Mubarak, Fitri Wulandari.
Methodology: Fitri Wulandari, Syaugi Mubarak.
Project administration: Fitri Wulandari, Syaugi Mubarak.
Supervision: Fitri Wulandari.
Validation: Fitri Wulandari.
Visualization: Fitri Wulandari, Syaugi Mubarak.
Writing - original draft: Fitri Wulandari.
Writing - review & editing: Fitri Wulandari.
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