

HR Performance Improvement Model Through Islamic Leadership, with Achievement Motivation as a Mediation Variable

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Abstract. *This study aims to examine and analyze the mediating role of achievement motivation in the relationship between Islamic leadership and human resource (HR) performance. The type of research used is explanatory research, namely research that aims to explain the causal relationship between variables. The assessment of respondents' answers was carried out using a semantic differential scale of 1 to 5. The population of this study was all 203 employees of the Semarang Type A Customs and Excise Supervision and Service Office (KPPBC), who were also used as research samples through the census method. Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach. The results of the study indicate that Islamic leadership has a positive effect on employee achievement motivation and human resource performance. Furthermore, achievement motivation has also been shown to have a positive effect on human resource performance. These findings strengthen empirical evidence that a leadership style based on Islamic values can improve intrinsic motivation and employee performance through the application of the principles of sidiq (honesty), amanah (trustworthiness), tabligh (communicativeness), and fathanah (intelligence). Thus, this study provides a theoretical contribution to the development of an Islamic leadership model and practical implications for public organizations in improving employee work effectiveness by strengthening spiritual values and achievement motivation.*

Keywords: *Achievement Motivation; Human Resource Performance; Islamic Leadership.*

1. Introduction

Customs and Excise, as a customs institution, plays a crucial role in supporting the growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), particularly export-oriented ones, through its role as industrial assistance and trade facilitator. This support aims to encourage increased exports, which are believed to significantly contribute to Indonesia's economic growth. As a strategic institution, Customs and Excise has several primary functions, namely encouraging the growth of domestic industry through the provision of targeted customs and excise facilities, and creating a conducive business and investment climate by simplifying customs and excise procedures and implementing a robust risk management system.

In addition, Customs and Excise also plays a role in protecting the public, local industry, and national interests by monitoring potentially hazardous imported and exported goods. Other functions include effective oversight of customs and excise activities through robust intelligence, investigations, and audits, as well as controlling certain goods that have the potential to harm public health, the environment, and security through fair excise instruments. Furthermore, Customs and Excise also contributes to optimizing state revenue from import duties, export duties, and excise to support national development.

Leadership plays a crucial role in determining the direction of an organization. In this era of uncertainty, organizational members need good leaders who can maintain strong emotional bonds among them and increase their enthusiasm for maintaining and achieving organizational goals.(Nurhidayati, Wijayanti, and Ratnasari 2020). Leaders are expected to provide motivation and direction and foster positive attitudes and behavior among all members of the organization.(Tri Rachmawan and Nita Aryani 2020). According to(Fry 2003)Spiritual leadership is needed to facilitate the transformation process of learning organizations to achieve sustainable success. Spiritual leadership encompasses the values, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to meet the mental and health needs of followers.(Nurhidayati et al. 2020). Spiritual leadership can strengthen the mental strength of employees, has a unique effect in overcoming spiritual problems such as spiritual emptiness, loss of faith and disturbance of values.(Xinyu and Zhihua 2020).

Research examining the role of Islamic leadership on HR performance remains highly controversial. Among these studies, Islamic leadership has a significant influence on HR performance.(Harahap 2016; Jumaing et al. 2017; Kuncoro and Putra 2020)The results of these three studies differ from the results of the study which stated that Islamic leadership does not have a significant effect on improving HR performance.(Ammar 2020; Astuti, Shodikin, and Ud-Din 2020; Widayadi et al. 2021). Furthermore, other researchStudies have shown that spiritual leadership cannot directly influence organizational performance (Supriyanto, Ekowati, and Masyhuri 2019). These results differ from research that found spiritual leadership significantly influences performance (Xinyu and Zhihua 2020). Based on this research gap, this study proposes the role of achievement motivation as a mediating variable in improving HR performance.

Achievement motivation has an important role in improving human resource (HR) performance.(Daumiller et al. 2022; Popoola and Farukuoye 2018)Individuals with high

achievement motivation tend to have an internal drive to perform optimally, complete tasks to high quality standards, and continually strive to achieve better results.(Wigfield, Muenks, and Eccles 2025)Therefore, the existence of strong achievement motivation within human resources greatly contributes to the achievement of overall organizational goals.

2. Research Methods

The type of research used is "Explanatory Research" or research that is explanatory in nature (Effendi, 1995This study explains the causal relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables in work autonomy. Based on the gap phenomenon and differences in previous research (research gap), the variables used are Islamic leadership, achievement motivation, and human resource performance.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Research Findings Based on Interview Themes

This section presents research findings obtained through in-depth interviews with six groups of informants: Kyai, administrators, ustadz/teachers, students, alumni, and guardians. The findings are mapped based on the research's two main theoretical approaches: Prophetic Leadership and Transformational Leadership.

This finding illustrates the real practice of Kyai leadership in maintaining Islamic boarding school traditions while managing the process of modernizing the institution.

1. Prophetic Leadership

Prophetic leadership is analyzed through seven values: Humanization, Liberation, Transcendence, Shiddiq, Amanah, Tabligh, and Fathanah.

a. Humanization (Amar Ma'ruf)

Humanization is reflected in the way the Kyai fosters relationships, guides morals, and shapes the character of the pesantren community. All informants agreed that the Kyai emphasizes morality as the primary foundation of education.

The Kyai emphasized that the relationship between leaders and Islamic boarding school residents must be built on humanitarian values and good manners. He said: *"Relationships in Islamic boarding schools are not just administrative, but spiritual relationships built on manners and compassion."*

The administrators reinforced the statement: *"Kyai always told us: 'Etiquette comes first, then knowledge.' That was a principle he always repeated."*

Students also feel the same way, especially in daily interactions: *"Kyai is very polite to everyone, it would embarrass us if we were unethical."*(Student)

Humanization has proven to be a core value in the Kyai leadership model which has an impact on a harmonious, respectful and exemplary atmosphere.

b. Liberation (Nahi Munkar)

The value of nahi munkar is reflected in the mechanisms of guidance, enforcement of rules, and prevention of deviant behavior by Kyai.

Kyai emphasizes an educational approach when dealing with violations: *"If there is a violation, we will advise you first. Yanglt's important that his heart changes, not just the punishment."*

The administrator describes Kyai's balance between firmness and gentleness: *"He was firm, but never became angry without educating them. His gentleness was what made the students aware."*

Alumni remember the long-term impact of the way Kyai guided his students: *"The Kyai's way of reprimanding was gentle but strong. Now I always remember, it made me more careful."*

This shows that the value of liberation is not just a rule, but is an effective moral development process.

c. Transcendence

Transcendence is seen in the Kyai's spiritual steadfastness and the emphasis that all pesantren activities must be oriented towards God.

Kyai emphasized:

"A leader must be strong in his worship. If his worship is weak, his leadership is weak."

Teachers see this example in action:

"The cleric prays regularly at night. That makes us feel compelled to emulate him, so we don't just demand what our students do."

Students see the role of transcendence in daily motivation: *"Kyai often reminds us: all of this is because of Allah's help, so learning must be done sincerely."*

This transcendent value is what binds all Islamic boarding school activities to the spiritual dimension.

d. Shiddiq (Honesty)

Honesty is a very prominent value in Kyai's leadership.

He said:

"Students see what we do. Therefore, leaders must be honest."

The teacher confirmed Kyai's consistency in terms of honesty: *"Kyai never lies, even about small things. That's what makes us trust him completely."*

The students also gave testimony:

"Kyai always says: honesty brings blessings."

This value of shiddiq creates institutional integrity and collective trust.

e. Trust (Responsibility)

Trust is a major principle that Kyai maintains, especially regarding the trust given to parents. Kyai said:

"Parents entrust their children with their future. It's a trust that must be held accountable."

The guardian of the students acknowledged this:

"I see that my child is really looked after. Kyai doesn't play around with trust."

The teacher shows the form of Kyai's responsibility in managing the Islamic boarding school:

"The Kyai's decisions always take into account the long-term and safety of the institution."

The value of trust is evident in the stability of management and consistency of educational quality.

f. Tabligh (Ability to Convey Directions)

Kyai is known to be very clear in conveying directions.

The administrator said:

"The Kyai's instructions were consistent, clear, and always provided a reason. So we knew where he was going."

Teachers also experience the benefits of open communication:

"If there are new policies, he explains them one by one. Never suddenly."

The students said that Kyai's advice was very memorable:

"The Kyai is gentle when advising, but it sticks in the heart."

This proves that the function of tabligh is not only informative, but also guides behavioral change.

g. Fathanah (Intelligence & Wisdom)

Kyai demonstrated strategic intelligence in seeing the future of the Islamic boarding school.

He said:

"We must prepare Daarul Rahman for the future, not just today."

The management knows that every Kyai policy is through reflection:

"All of Kyai's decisions are mature, always considering many aspects."

Alumni acknowledged that wisdom:

"The progress of Islamic boarding schools today is the fruit of Kyai's long thinking."

The value of fathanah appears dominant in the formulation of the institution's long-term vision.

2. Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is analyzed through four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

a. *Idealized Influence* (Exemplary and Vision)

Kyai is a role model who is respected by all members of the Islamic boarding school.

He conveyed his vision:

"In the next ten years, Daarul Rahman must become a center for superior and modern Islamic education."

The teacher said:

"We follow him because he gives direct examples, not just theory."

Alumni mentioned the consistency of vision since the beginning:

"In the past, Kyai had talked about the development of Islamic boarding schools, now it has been proven."

This example generates a very strong belief.

b. *Inspirational Motivation* (Motivation and Spirit)

Kyai is able to raise collective optimism.

The teacher emphasized:

"Kyai always encourages us, even when we're tired. He knows just the right words."

Students acknowledge its influence on learning:

"When Kyai talks about motivation, we immediately want to study harder."

The administrators felt a moral boost:

"Kyai's words made us feel like we could face any challenge."

The Kyai's motivation becomes the driving force for the modernization of Islamic boarding schools.

c. *Intellectual Stimulation* (Innovation Drive)

Kyai encourages creativity and new thinking.

He said:

"Don't get stuck in old patterns. Teachers and administrators must be innovative."

The management assessed that Kyai was very open to ideas:

"The Kyai asked us to submit any ideas, then he would consider them."

Teachers also often discuss learning innovations:

"Whenever there is a new idea, Kyai is happy to hear it and help develop it."

Innovation is a pillar in the process of modernizing Islamic boarding schools.

d. *Individualized Consideration* (Personal Attention)

Kyai is known to be close personally and provide individual guidance.

The teacher explains:

"Kyai asked about our condition one by one, that made us feel appreciated."

Students feel the same attention:

"If there's a problem, Kyai can be contacted to talk. He's a patient listener."

The management emphasized:

"He not only leads institutions, but also leads hearts."

This approach strengthens loyalty and emotional attachment.

The findings show that:

1. The vision and mission of the Islamic boarding school are well understood by the residents of the Islamic boarding school because they are conveyed effectively by the Kyai.
2. Modernization goes hand in hand with the preservation of traditional values.
3. Prophetic values become the foundation, while transformational values become the driving force of innovation.

Kyai's leadership combines tradition (morals, manners, spirituality) with modernization of curriculum renewal, governance, and program innovation.

3. Ideal Practices in Kyai Leadership (Based on Theory)

This section describes the ideal leadership practices based on the two main theoretical approaches used in the research: prophetic leadership theory and transformational leadership theory. These two theories serve as normative references for assessing the extent to which the Kyai's leadership practices at the Daarul Rahman Islamic Boarding School align with ideal leadership standards according to the literature.

a. Ideal Practices of Prophetic Leadership

Prophetic leadership is rooted in universal prophetic values and is rooted in Islamic teachings. According to Kuntowijoyo, prophetic leadership aims to build humanization, liberation, and transcendence as the foundation for social and moral transformation (Syihabuddin & Huda, 2024). In the institutional context of Islamic boarding schools, the ideal leader must display four prophetic qualities: shiddīq, amanah, tabligh, and fatānah.

1. Humanization (Amar Ma'ruf)

From a prophetic perspective, humanization is an effort to humanize humans through manners, morals, respect, and empowerment. The ideal leader:

- a. respect the dignity of every Islamic boarding school resident,
- b. prioritizing manners before knowledge,
- c. creating healthy emotional relationships,
- d. develop a culture of affection and mutual respect.

Humanization is seen as a moral principle that forms a civilized educational atmosphere (Syihabuddin & Huda, 2024).

2. Liberation (Nahi Munkar)

Liberation in prophetic leadership refers to the effort to free humanity from practices that are morally and spiritually destructive. The ideal leader:

- a. enforce Islamic boarding school rules fairly,
- b. preventing evil through an educational approach,
- c. become the moral guardian of the institution,
- d. provide an example in the courage to speak the truth.

Liberation is carried out not through repression, but through coaching and moral guidance.

3. Transcendence

Transcendence is the highest value in prophetic leadership, namely linking every activity to the divine dimension. The ideal leader:

- a. maintaining the quality of worship,
- b. be a spiritual role model,
- c. emphasizes that the goal of education is to get closer to Allah,
- d. forming awareness of monotheism among Islamic boarding school residents.

This value is the foundation of all actions of the leader as a spiritual authority in the Islamic boarding school.

4. *Siddiq* (Honest)

The quality of shiddiq is a key component of a leader's integrity. Ideally, its practice includes:

- a. be honest in words and actions,
- b. transparent in decision making,
- c. maintain moral and material trust,
- d. be a role model for teachers and students.

Honesty is the basis of trust and stability of an institution.

5. *Trust* (Responsibility)

The nature of trust requires leaders to safeguard the trusts entrusted to them in the form of institutions, teachers, and students. Ideally, leaders:

- a. responsible for the development of students,
- b. carry out the management of the institution professionally,
- c. be responsible for the trust of the guardians of the students,

d. demonstrates a commitment to maintaining the sustainability of the institution.

Trust be proof of the moral and spiritual commitment of the leader.

6. *Tablīgh*(Communicative and Effective in Delivering Directions)

The ideal practice of *tablīgh* includes the leader's ability to:

- convey the message well and clearly,
- provide guidance, direction and institutional fatwas,
- ensure that Islamic boarding school residents understand the vision and policies,
- be communicative and open to dialogue.

In the context of Islamic boarding school management, *tablīgh* is an element of organizational communication.

7. *Fatānah*(Smart and Wise)

The qualities of *fatānah* include intellectual intelligence and strategic wisdom. The ideal leader:

- able to make the right decisions,
- have a long-term vision,
- able to read the situation and needs of the times,
- carry out innovations that remain rooted in traditional values.

Fatānah is a characteristic of a visionary leader who is able to bring Islamic boarding schools forward.

b. Ideal Practices of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a leadership model oriented toward change, inspiration, and human resource development. According to Northouse (2016) and Yukl (2013), the ideal leader must fulfill four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

1. Idealized Influence (Exemplary Behavior and Moral Integrity)

In ideal practice, transformational leaders should:

- be a moral role model for all members of the organization,
- have a strong and inspiring vision,
- demonstrate courage and commitment to values,
- trusted by all residents of the Islamic boarding school.

The ideal leader is respected not because of his position, but because of his character.

2. *Inspirational Motivation* (Motivation and Motivation)

This dimension requires leaders to:

- a. provide motivation that fosters optimism,
- b. instilling the value of collective spirit,
- c. building an enthusiastic and positive work culture,
- d. able to turn challenges into opportunities.

Inspiration is the driving force behind change in educational institutions.

3. *Intellectual Stimulation* (Stimulation of Thought and Innovation)

Ideal practices include the leader's ability to:

- a. encourage creativity and innovation,
- b. open space for new ideas,
- c. facilitate teachers and administrators to think critically,
- d. foster a culture of discussion and problem solving.

Transformational leaders not only lead, but develop the intellectual potential of the organization.

4. *Individualized Consideration* (Personal Attention and Individual Coaching)

An ideal leader should:

paying attention to the needs of each individual,

- a. become a personal mentor and guide,
- b. understand the differences in character and potential,
- c. create positive emotional connections.

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this personal attention is very relevant to forming the character of teachers and students.

Overall, the ideal practice of Kyai leadership according to theory includes:

1. *Spiritual-moral leadership* (prophetic value)
2. *Visionary–innovative leadership* (transformational values)
3. Balance between tradition and modernization
4. Leadership based on manners and exemplary behavior

This section serves as an ideal standard that will later be compared with real practices in the gap analysis in the next section.

3.2. The Influence of Islamic Leadership on Achievement Motivation.

Test results indicate that Islamic leadership has a positive influence on employee achievement motivation. These results support previous research that suggests that the better a leader's leadership style, the higher the employee's work motivation, and vice versa (Afsar and Waheed, 2018).

Islamic leadership in this study is measured from the reflection of four indicators. namely indicators Sidiq (Honest), Amanah (Trustworthy), Tablig (Communicative), and Fathanah (Intelligent). These four aspects have been shown to contribute to increasing achievement motivation. In this study, achievement motivation was measured using five indicators. namely indicators Drive to excel and achieve high standards; Enjoy challenges and demanding tasks; Take full responsibility for their actions; Seek feedback for improvement; and Prefer moderate risks.

The Islamic Leadership variable shows that the indicator with the highest outer loading value is Tabligh (Communicative), while in the Achievement Motivation variable, the highest indicator is Seeking feedback for improvement. These results indicate a strong link between a leader's ability to communicate and the effectiveness of employee motivation to continuously improve performance. This means that the more communicative a leader is, the greater the employee's drive to actively seek feedback to improve their work. Open, two-way communication creates a supportive, transparent, and participatory work environment, where employees feel valued and encouraged to develop. Thus, communicative leadership behavior plays a crucial role in building an organizational culture oriented toward continuous learning and performance improvement.

The Islamic Leadership variable shows that the indicator with the lowest outer loading value is Fathanah (Intelligence), while in the Achievement Motivation variable, the indicator with the lowest outer loading value is Liking challenges and demanding tasks. This finding indicates a relationship between leader intelligence and employee enthusiasm in facing work challenges. This means that the higher the level of intelligence (fathanah) possessed by a leader, reflected through analytical skills, appropriate decision-making, and contextual understanding of organizational situations; the greater the encouragement for employees to feel challenged and motivated in completing demanding tasks. Intelligent leaders are able to create an inspiring work environment, provide clear direction, and foster subordinates' self-confidence to step out of their comfort zones. Thus, intelligence in Islamic leadership not only influences the effectiveness of decision-making but also acts as a psychological driver for employees to dare to face challenges and achieve higher performance.

1. The Influence of Islamic Leadership on Human Resource Performance

The test results indicate that Islamic leadership has a positive influence on HR performance. Previous research indicates that Islamic leadership has a significant influence on HR performance (Harahap 2016; Jumaing et al. 2017; Kuncoro and Putra 2020).

Islamic leadership in this study is measured from the reflection of four indicators. namely indicators Sidiq (Honest), Amanah (Trustworthy), Tablig (Communicative), and Fathanah (Intelligent); these four aspects have been proven to contribute to improving human resource performance. HR performance in this study is measured from the reflection of four indicators. namely indicators Quality, Quantity, Timeliness and Interpersonal Influence.

The Islamic Leadership variable has the highest outer loading value in the Tabligh (Communicative) indicator, while the Human Resource Performance variable shows the

highest value in the Interpersonal Influence indicator. This finding indicates that the higher the level of leadership's ability to communicate effectively, transparently, and persuasively, the stronger the interpersonal influence employees have in the work environment. This means that a leader's open and clear communication style can create harmonious working relationships, increase trust, and encourage productive collaboration between employees. Good communication from a leader can also foster mutual respect and strengthen coordination, thus positively impacting employees' ability to influence, cooperate, and contribute optimally to the achievement of organizational goals.

The Islamic Leadership variable shows that the indicator with the lowest outer loading value is Fathanah (Intelligence), while in the Human Resource Performance variable, the indicator with the lowest outer loading value is Quantity. These results indicate a positive relationship between leadership intelligence and employee ability to produce work output. This means that the higher the level of intelligence (Fathanah) possessed by a leader, both in understanding situations, making strategic decisions, and providing appropriate direction, the greater the quantity of employee work output. An intelligent leader is able to optimize the potential of subordinates, manage workloads efficiently, and create a work environment that supports productivity. Thus, a leader's intelligence not only influences the effectiveness of decision-making but also becomes an important catalyst in improving the collective performance of the organization by increasing the volume and efficiency of employee work output.

2. The Influence of Achievement Motivation on HR Performance

Test results indicate that achievement motivation has a positive influence on employee achievement motivation. Previous research indicates that achievement motivation has a significant influence on HR performance (Van Den Broeck et al. 2021).

Achievement motivation in this study was measured by five indicators namely indicators Drive to excel and achieve high standards; Enjoy challenges and demanding tasks; Take full responsibility for their actions; Seek feedback for improvement; and Prefer moderate risks. These five aspects have been proven to contribute to improving HR performance. HR performance in this study is measured from the reflection of four indicators. namely indicators Quality, Quantity, Timeliness and Interpersonal Influence.

The Human Resources Performance variable shows that the indicator with the highest outer loading value is Interpersonal Influence, which means this indicator has the strongest contribution in reflecting overall employee performance. This finding indicates that the better an employee's ability to build relationships and interact effectively with colleagues, superiors, and external parties, the higher the level of performance achieved. This means that good interpersonal skills not only create harmonious collaboration and a conducive work environment, but also encourage work effectiveness, timely task completion, and increased organizational productivity. Thus, interpersonal influence is a key factor in building team synergy and achieving optimal performance targets in the KPPBC Semarang work environment.

4. Conclusion

This research aims to test and analyze the mediation role employee achievement motivation in the relationship between Islamic leadership and HR performance. 1. Islamic leadership has a positive influence on employee achievement motivation. Leadership styles based on Islamic values, such as honesty (sidiq), trustworthiness (amanah), communication (tabligh), and intelligence (fathanah), have been shown to foster work enthusiasm and encourage employees to achieve higher levels of ethical and responsible performance. 2. Islamic leadership has a positive impact on human resource performance. The application of Islamic leadership values, which emphasize integrity, trust, effective communication, and intelligence in decision-making, has been proven to improve employee performance, reflected in the quality, quantity, timeliness, and interpersonal skills needed to collaborate and achieve organizational goals. 3. Achievement motivation positively impacts employee performance. The drive to achieve high work standards, the enjoyment of challenges, responsibility for work results, openness to feedback, and the courage to take measured risks have been shown to increase employee effectiveness and productivity.

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