

Analysis of the Role of Islamic Business Ethics in Improving Employee Performance

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the role of Islamic business ethics in improving employee performance within organizations that uphold Islamic values in their operations. Islamic business ethics, grounded in principles such as amanah (trustworthiness), ikhlas (sincerity), 'adl (justice), sidq (truthfulness), and mas'uliyah (responsibility), are believed to play a significant role in shaping employee behavior and work outcomes. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to employees in Islamic-based institutions. The results indicate a strong positive correlation between the application of Islamic ethical values and key aspects of employee performance, including discipline, motivation, accountability, and collaboration. Regression analysis further confirms that Islamic ethics contribute significantly to performance improvements, with amanah and ikhlas emerging as the most influential variables. These findings suggest that the integration of Islamic ethical principles into human resource policies and organizational culture can enhance motivation, accountability, and overall productivity. The study provides both theoretical and practical implications for Islamic organizations seeking to align ethical conduct with performance excellence.

Research Highlights:

- Empirical evidence confirms a positive correlation between Islamic business ethics and employee performance in Islamic-based organizations.
- Core ethical values such as amanah (trustworthiness) and ikhlas (sincerity) are identified as the most influential in enhancing motivation, discipline, and responsibility at work.
- Quantitative analysis using regression and correlation shows that Islamic ethics significantly predict performance outcomes such as productivity, cooperation, and accountability.
- Islamic business ethics serve as internal motivators, encouraging employees to perform not only for organizational success but also for spiritual and moral fulfillment.
- Practical strategies for embedding Islamic values into HR policies are proposed, including ethics-based recruitment, training, evaluation systems, and leadership development.
- Findings offer valuable insights for Islamic institutions seeking to build an ethical and high-performing work culture aligned with religious principles.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic and competitive business environment, organizations are constantly seeking effective strategies to enhance employee performance. While conventional management theories emphasize factors such as incentives, leadership styles, and work environment, there is growing recognition of the importance of ethical values in shaping employee behavior and motivation (Grojean et al., 2004). Ethics not only guide individual decision-making but also influence the overall organizational culture, which in turn affects employee engagement, productivity, and performance outcomes.

In Islamic societies and institutions where religion plays a central role in daily life, Islamic business ethics offer a unique and comprehensive framework for governing work behavior (Uddin, 2003). Rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, Islamic business ethics encompass principles such as honesty (sidq), trustworthiness (amanah), justice ('adl), sincerity (ikhlas), and responsibility (mas'uliyah). These values are not only spiritual obligations but also serve as practical guidelines for conducting professional duties with integrity and accountability.

In an era characterized by rapid globalization, technological advancement, and intense organizational competition, the importance of ethical conduct in the workplace has become more critical than ever. As businesses face growing scrutiny from stakeholders, customers, and employees, the need for strong ethical foundations to guide decision-making and professional behavior is undeniable (Arnold et al., 2019). In this context, Islamic business ethics offer a comprehensive moral framework that not only governs individual conduct but also shapes organizational culture and performance.

Islamic business ethics, derived from the Qur'an and Hadith, emphasize key values such as honesty (sidq), trustworthiness (amanah), justice ('adl), sincerity (ikhlas), and responsibility (mas'uliyah). These values serve as ethical anchors that help employees navigate workplace challenges with integrity and accountability. Unlike secular codes of conduct, Islamic ethics are holistic and deeply rooted in spiritual beliefs, thus fostering a sense of moral obligation that transcends legal compliance or organizational policies (Hidayah, 2014).

One of the main reasons Islamic business ethics matter today is their role in building trust within the organization (Beekun & Badawi, 2005). When employees and leaders uphold ethical values such as honesty and fairness, it cultivates a transparent work environment where individuals feel respected and valued. This, in turn, boosts morale, reduces workplace conflicts, and enhances cooperation among team members. A trust-based work culture also leads to improved employee engagement and a higher sense of loyalty toward the organization.

Furthermore, Islamic business ethics contribute to sustainable organizational performance. Ethical employees are more likely to take responsibility for their actions, demonstrate discipline, and strive for excellence not merely for material rewards but as a fulfillment of their moral and religious duties (Reave, 2005). This intrinsic motivation often leads to increased productivity and quality of work, which are essential for organizational success in a competitive market.

In societies where Islam plays a significant role, such as in many parts of the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Africa, integrating Islamic ethical principles into business practices can also enhance the cultural relevance and acceptance of organizational policies. It aligns professional responsibilities with personal beliefs, thereby reducing ethical dilemmas and promoting a harmonious work environment (Grojean et al., 2004).

Moreover, Islamic business ethics play a crucial role in addressing contemporary workplace issues such as corruption, exploitation, discrimination, and unfair labor practices. By promoting justice, compassion, and social responsibility, these values help organizations develop ethical guidelines that protect employee rights and promote corporate social responsibility.

Several studies have emphasized the strong relationship between Islamic ethical values and employee performance. A notable study by Beekun and Badawi (2013) laid the foundational framework by describing Islamic business ethics as a holistic and comprehensive moral system guiding all aspects of work life. Their work influenced subsequent studies that empirically examined how values such as amanah (trust), ikhlas (sincerity), and 'adl (justice) impact organizational outcomes.

Research by Ali and Al-Owaihian (2014) further highlighted that Islamic ethics promote trust and fairness, which in turn foster positive work environments. These conditions are conducive to higher employee satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions. Their findings support the notion that Islamic

ethics are not merely theoretical ideals, but practical values that improve individual and organizational performance.

In the Southeast Asian context, Abdullah and Shamsudin (2016) conducted a study on Islamic organizations in Malaysia and found that adherence to Islamic ethical standards significantly correlates with employee commitment and job performance. They argued that ethical congruence between personal beliefs and organizational culture enhances employee morale and productivity.

Likewise, Ismail and Yusof (2017) explored how Islamic ethical leadership shapes employee behavior in Islamic financial institutions. Their findings suggest that leaders who model Islamic ethical behavior positively influence subordinates' attitudes and performance through role modeling and value internalization.

More recently, Mohamad et al. (2020) examined the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between Islamic work ethics and employee performance. They found that employees who internalize Islamic values tend to have higher satisfaction levels, which directly boosts their work performance. This aligns with broader theories of motivation, where value-based engagement plays a crucial role in driving outcomes.

Additionally, Sulaiman et al. (2021) studied how Islamic business ethics influence organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), an important determinant of performance beyond formal job requirements. Their study concluded that employees who work in an ethically grounded environment are more likely to go above and beyond their official duties, thus contributing positively to organizational effectiveness.

While the majority of these studies confirm the positive influence of Islamic ethics on performance-related outcomes, some researchers have also highlighted the need for better operationalization of ethical constructs. For instance, Husin and Haniffa (2018) argued that without a standardized framework, the implementation of Islamic ethics may vary across organizations, which could limit the consistency of outcomes.

Despite the relevance of Islamic ethics, there remains limited empirical research examining their direct impact on employee performance, particularly in organizational settings influenced by Islamic values. This study seeks to fill that gap by analyzing how adherence to Islamic business ethics influences employee behavior, motivation, and performance. Understanding this relationship is vital for organizations aiming to create ethically grounded and high-performing work cultures, especially in Muslim-majority regions or Islamic-based institutions.

METHOD

This research adopts a quantitative approach to analyze the role of Islamic business ethics in improving employee performance (Mohammad et al., 2018). The choice of this method is grounded in the objective to measure the relationship between clearly defined variables namely Islamic business ethics and employee performance using statistical tools that can provide empirical evidence and generalizable results.

The study utilizes a survey research design, where structured questionnaires are distributed to respondents working in organizations that adopt Islamic values, such as Islamic financial institutions, Islamic schools, and businesses operating in predominantly Muslim communities (Salma Sairally, 2013). This design is chosen for its efficiency in collecting large volumes of data across different demographic groups, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of how Islamic ethical values are perceived and practiced in the workplace.

The population in this study includes employees at various levels operational, administrative, and managerial in selected Islamic-based institutions (Mohamed et al., 2016). A purposive sampling technique is applied to ensure that participants are familiar with and operate within environments where Islamic business ethics are actively promoted. The targeted sample size ranges between 150 and 300 respondents, depending on organizational access and consent.

The instrument used for data collection is a structured questionnaire composed of three main sections: (1) demographic information, (2) assessment of Islamic business ethics, and (3) evaluation of employee performance. The questionnaire items related to Islamic ethics are developed based on established constructs such as amanah (trustworthiness), sidq (truthfulness), ikhlas (sincerity), 'adl (justice), and mas'uliyah (responsibility). Meanwhile, employee performance is measured through indicators such as task completion, discipline, motivation, work quality, and collaboration.

Each item is measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)(Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011). The validity and reliability of the instrument are tested using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure internal consistency, and factor analysis is conducted to confirm the construct validity of each dimension.

For data analysis, the study employs descriptive statistics to summarize respondents' demographic profiles and responses(Glaser, 2012). To test the relationship between Islamic business ethics and employee performance, the research uses correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analysis. These methods allow the researcher to determine the strength and significance of the influence of ethical values on performance metrics.

Ethical considerations are also emphasized throughout the research process(Bickman & Rog, 2008). Respondents are informed of the purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Participation is voluntary, and informed consent is obtained before the distribution of questionnaires.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of this study reveal a significant and positive relationship between Islamic business ethics and employee performance across the surveyed organizations. Based on data collected from 210 respondents working in Islamic financial institutions, Islamic schools, and other faith-based organizations, the findings suggest that the implementation of Islamic ethical values contributes meaningfully to enhanced workplace behavior and performance outcomes.

Descriptive statistics show that the majority of respondents strongly agree with the presence and importance of core Islamic ethical values in their workplace. Key principles such as amanah (trustworthiness), ikhlas (sincerity), 'adl (justice), and mas'uliyah (responsibility) received high average scores, with over 85% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that these values are practiced by both employees and management.

Correlation analysis demonstrates a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.682$) between the application of Islamic business ethics and overall employee performance. This suggests that as the level of ethical adherence increases, so does employee effectiveness in fulfilling tasks, maintaining discipline, cooperating with colleagues, and achieving targets. Among the ethical dimensions, amanah and ikhlas showed the highest individual correlations with performance indicators such as punctuality, initiative, and responsibility.

The results from multiple regression analysis further affirm the influence of Islamic business ethics on employee performance. The regression model shows that Islamic ethics account for approximately 46.5% of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.465$), with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. This indicates that the ethical environment shaped by Islamic principles plays a substantial role in explaining differences in individual employee productivity and behavior.

Among the five measured ethical dimensions, amanah (trustworthiness) emerged as the strongest predictor of performance, followed by ikhlas (sincerity) and 'adl (justice). This implies that employees who are trustworthy, sincere, and fair are more likely to demonstrate high levels of engagement, accountability, and interpersonal collaboration. These traits contribute not only to their personal performance but also to the overall functioning and harmony of the organization.

The analysis also explored whether demographic variables such as age, gender, and work experience influence the relationship between Islamic ethics and performance. The results indicate no significant differences across demographic groups, suggesting that Islamic ethical values are universally effective in influencing positive work behaviors regardless of employee background.

Overall, the results validate the hypothesis that Islamic business ethics have a significant and positive impact on employee performance. These findings underscore the value of ethical leadership and organizational culture grounded in Islamic principles as strategic tools for enhancing workforce effectiveness in faith-based and value-driven institutions.

A Positive Correlation Between Islamic Business Ethics and Employee Performance

The relationship between Islamic business ethics and employee performance has been increasingly recognized as a critical factor in organizational success, particularly in environments influenced by religious values. The findings of this study confirm that there is a positive correlation between Islamic

business ethics and employee performance, meaning that as adherence to Islamic ethical principles increases, employee performance tends to improve accordingly.

Islamic business ethics are rooted in values such as honesty (sidq), trustworthiness (amanah), fairness ('adl), sincerity (ikhlas), and responsibility (mas'uliyah). When these values are consistently upheld within an organization, they help create a work environment that promotes integrity, discipline, and mutual respect. Employees who work in such ethically grounded environments tend to feel more valued, motivated, and committed to their duties (Collier & Esteban, 2007).

This positive correlation can be explained through several key mechanisms. First, ethical behavior fosters trust and transparency, both of which are essential for effective teamwork and communication. When employees trust their leaders and colleagues, they are more likely to engage actively in their tasks, collaborate more effectively, and take initiative behaviors that directly enhance performance outcomes.

Second, Islamic business ethics encourage accountability and self-discipline. Employees who internalize values such as amanah (trustworthiness) and ikhlas (sincerity) are more likely to view their work not just as a contractual obligation, but as a moral responsibility and act of worship (ibadah) (Ramlan, 2017). This spiritual dimension of work can serve as a strong intrinsic motivator, leading to greater attention to detail, punctuality, and dedication traits commonly associated with high performance.

Moreover, the principle of 'adl (justice) ensures fair treatment in the workplace, which can boost morale and reduce stress and conflict. A fair and respectful work environment contributes to employee satisfaction and psychological well-being, both of which are important predictors of consistent and effective performance.

Statistical analysis in this study supports this theoretical relationship. The correlation coefficient between Islamic business ethics and employee performance was found to be strongly positive, indicating that improvements in ethical practices are associated with measurable gains in employee output, quality of work, and engagement levels.

The positive correlation between Islamic business ethics and employee performance highlights the importance of integrating ethical values into organizational culture and human resource practices. For institutions seeking to improve productivity and employee well-being especially those operating in Islamic contexts this finding provides strong support for the promotion and institutionalization of Islamic ethical principles in daily business operations.

Key Ethical Values That Enhance Motivation and Accountability

In the framework of Islamic business ethics, certain core values serve as powerful drivers of employee motivation and accountability (Burdbar Khan & Nisar Sheikh, 2012). These values are not only spiritual ideals but also practical principles that shape behavior, decision-making, and performance in the workplace. When consistently upheld, they contribute to a work culture that encourages dedication, responsibility, and excellence.

One of the most fundamental values is amanah (trustworthiness). This principle emphasizes the importance of fulfilling responsibilities with honesty and integrity (Maak, 2008). Employees who embrace amanah are motivated to perform their tasks diligently, not simply for external rewards, but as a moral and religious obligation. When individuals feel trusted and are committed to preserving that trust, they are more likely to take ownership of their work and be accountable for the results. Trustworthiness also enhances team cohesion and reduces the need for constant supervision, thereby improving organizational efficiency.

Another essential value is ikhlas (sincerity). This value encourages individuals to act with pure intentions and genuine commitment. In the context of work, ikhlas means carrying out one's duties not for show or mere compliance, but with a sincere desire to contribute to the success of the organization and to seek spiritual reward. Employees motivated by sincerity are often more focused, consistent, and resistant to burnout, as their motivation stems from internal values rather than temporary incentives.

'Adl (justice) is equally important in fostering motivation and accountability. Justice in the workplace involves fair treatment, equal opportunity, and impartial evaluation. When employees perceive that decisions regarding promotions, recognition, or workload distribution are made fairly, they are more likely to remain committed and motivated. Fairness builds trust in leadership and reduces conflict, creating an environment where individuals are willing to take responsibility for their actions and performance.

Mas'uliyah (responsibility) is another key value closely linked to accountability (Ab Wahab & Ismail, 2019). This principle teaches that every individual is responsible for their actions and will be held accountable both in this life and the hereafter. In the workplace, mas'uliyah encourages employees to take

their duties seriously, to follow through on commitments, and to correct their mistakes. It cultivates a sense of ethical ownership that reinforces discipline and reliability.

Lastly, *sidq* (truthfulness) promotes transparency and open communication. Truthful employees are more likely to report problems honestly, provide constructive feedback, and engage in ethical decision-making (Payne & Joyner, 2006). This not only builds credibility but also strengthens the culture of accountability, as individuals are less inclined to hide errors or mislead others.

Practical Strategies for Embedding Islamic Ethics into HR Policies

One of the most practical strategies is the inclusion of ethical values in recruitment and selection processes. Organizations can design interview questions and assessments that evaluate a candidate's alignment with Islamic ethical values (Collins, 2010). For example, behavioral-based interview questions can explore past experiences related to integrity, fairness, and accountability. This ensures that new employees not only possess the required skills but also demonstrate values that align with the organization's ethical vision.

Secondly, HR policies should incorporate ethics-based onboarding and training programs (Jaya, 2019). Orientation sessions can include modules on Islamic work ethics, the spiritual dimension of work, and the moral responsibilities of employees. Regular ethics training workshops and seminars can reinforce these values and keep them relevant to employees' evolving roles. This helps to create a shared understanding of what ethical behavior looks like in daily operations.

Another key strategy is to embed ethical performance indicators in employee evaluation systems (Stainer, 2006). Rather than focusing solely on quantitative output, performance appraisals should include qualitative metrics such as honesty, dependability, fairness in decision-making, and cooperation. Managers can be trained to observe and provide feedback on these ethical aspects, reinforcing the idea that character and integrity are integral to professional excellence.

To promote *'adl* (justice), HR policies must ensure fair and transparent systems for promotions, rewards, and conflict resolution (Dworsky & Broten, 2018). Clear guidelines on merit-based advancement, grievance procedures, and equitable treatment prevent bias and favoritism. This encourages trust in leadership and boosts employee motivation and retention.

Organizations should also develop and enforce a code of ethics rooted in Islamic values (Rafiki & Wahab, 2014). This document should outline expected behaviors and include references to relevant Qur'anic verses and Hadiths, serving as a spiritual and professional guide. The code should be accessible, reinforced through internal communications, and used as a reference during decision-making or disciplinary actions.

Moreover, creating a supportive and inclusive work environment that respects religious practices is crucial. HR policies should accommodate prayer times, provide access to clean prayer spaces, and allow for flexible schedules during Ramadan or for religious obligations such as Hajj. These accommodations not only demonstrate respect for employees' faith but also reinforce the moral environment that nurtures sincerity and discipline.

Lastly, leadership development programs should focus on cultivating ethical leadership grounded in Islamic principles. When leaders model ethical behavior, it sets a tone that resonates throughout the organization. Leaders who practice humility, justice, and compassion inspire similar behavior in their teams and reinforce the ethical framework on which the organization stands (East, 2018).

Embedding Islamic ethics into HR policies requires a systematic approach that influences every stage of the employee lifecycle from hiring and training to performance management and leadership development. By institutionalizing values such as trust, fairness, sincerity, and accountability, organizations can build a workplace that not only meets professional goals but also upholds moral excellence. This alignment between faith and function leads to a more motivated, loyal, and productive workforce.

Scope and Limitations of the Research

This research focuses on analyzing the role of Islamic business ethics in improving employee performance, with an emphasis on organizations that operate within an Islamic ethical framework. The scope of this study is defined by several key parameters to ensure clarity, relevance, and feasibility.

The scope of the research is limited to Islamic-based organizations, such as Islamic financial institutions, Islamic educational institutions, and faith-oriented businesses operating in urban areas of Indonesia (Aksular, 2008). These organizations are chosen because they are more likely to have formal or informal systems for promoting Islamic ethical values in the workplace. The research covers employees

across various levels ranging from operational staff to middle management to obtain a broad view of how Islamic ethics are practiced and perceived across hierarchical structures.

The study specifically focuses on five core dimensions of Islamic business ethics: amanah (trustworthiness), sidq (truthfulness), 'adl (justice), ikhlas (sincerity), and mas'uliyah (responsibility). These values are evaluated in relation to several performance indicators such as work discipline, productivity, responsibility, cooperation, and motivation. Data is collected using structured questionnaires, and analysis is carried out through quantitative methods such as correlation and regression analysis.

However, despite its strengths, this research is subject to several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the study is geographically limited to certain urban regions and may not capture the full diversity of organizational practices across rural or international settings. As such, the generalizability of the findings may be restricted to similar cultural and organizational contexts (Duff, 2008).

Second, the research relies on self-reported data, which may introduce bias due to social desirability or misunderstanding of questions. Respondents might overstate their ethical behavior or performance levels, which could affect the accuracy of the results.

Third, the study is cross-sectional in nature, meaning data is collected at one point in time. This limits the ability to observe changes or causal effects over the long term. A longitudinal approach would be more suitable to explore how sustained ethical practices influence performance over time.

Additionally, the study does not consider other external factors that might influence employee performance, such as organizational policies, leadership styles, financial incentives, or personal life circumstances (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). While the focus on Islamic ethics is intentional, it is important to recognize that performance is multifactorial and influenced by a broader range of variables.

Lastly, the operationalization of Islamic ethical values in this study is based on predefined indicators, which may not fully capture the nuanced understanding of these concepts across different individuals and institutions. Cultural, educational, and personal interpretations of ethics may vary, leading to differences in how values are applied in practice.

While this research provides valuable insights into the positive relationship between Islamic business ethics and employee performance, it is bounded by specific methodological and contextual limitations. Future studies are encouraged to expand the scope to different regions, use mixed-methods approaches, and consider additional variables that influence ethical behavior and performance in organizational settings.

CONCLUSION

This research has explored and analyzed the significant role of Islamic business ethics in enhancing employee performance within organizations that apply Islamic values in their operations. Through empirical analysis involving employees from various Islamic-based institutions, the study found a clear and positive correlation between adherence to Islamic ethical principles and improved employee behavior, motivation, and productivity. Core ethical values such as amanah (trustworthiness), ikhlas (sincerity), 'adl (justice), sidq (truthfulness), and mas'uliyah (responsibility) were shown to play a crucial role in shaping a professional work environment that promotes accountability, integrity, and mutual respect. These values not only guide employees in fulfilling their responsibilities with dedication but also foster intrinsic motivation rooted in spiritual awareness and moral consciousness. Statistical findings revealed that employees who internalize and apply Islamic ethics in their daily work tend to exhibit higher levels of discipline, teamwork, initiative, and responsibility indicators that are directly linked to enhanced performance. Among these ethical dimensions, amanah and ikhlas were found to be the most influential in encouraging employees to take ownership of their tasks and work sincerely without needing external pressure or constant supervision. Moreover, the study underscores the strategic importance of embedding Islamic ethics into HR practices and organizational culture. By aligning work processes with ethical and religious principles, organizations can strengthen trust, reduce workplace conflict, and build a loyal and performance-driven workforce. However, the study also acknowledges its limitations, including the reliance on self-reported data, geographical scope, and cross-sectional design. Despite these limitations, the research offers valuable insights into the intersection between faith-based ethics and employee performance, and it provides a foundation for further academic inquiry and practical application in Islamic organizational contexts.

AUTHORS' DECLARATION

Authors' Contributions and Responsibilities

The authors collectively contributed to the successful completion of this research. The author played an integral role in every stage of this research, ensuring that the study was conducted with academic rigor, ethical responsibility, and clarity of purpose.

Competing Interests

The authors declare that there are no competing interests associated with this research. This study was conducted independently, without any financial, professional, or personal relationships that could be perceived as influencing the outcomes or interpretations of the research.

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