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Academic Culture, Leadership, and Islamic Motivation as Predictors of Lecturer Performance: Evidence from an Indonesian Pesantren

Ahmad Fitriyadi Sari[1], Ilzamudin[2], Rumbang Sirojuddin[3], Mamat Rahmatullah[4]
[1]Sekolah Tinggi Pesantren Darunna'im, Lebak, Banten, Indonesia
[2,3,4]Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia

Article Info	ABSTRACT
	This study examines the influence of academic culture, transformational leadership, and Islamic work motivation on Lecturer Performance at Darunna'im Islamic Boarding School (*Sekolah Tinggi Pesantren Darunna'im, STPDN*) Rangkasbitung. A quantitative approach was employed, using a structured questionnaire for data collection. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing with Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The respondents consisted of lecturers at Darunna'im Islamic Boarding School. The results revealed that academic culture significantly and positively influenced Lecturer Performance (path coefficient = 0.301). Transformational leadership also had a strong positive effect (0.572), while Islamic work motivation showed a smaller yet significant positive influence (0.087). These findings highlight the importance of fostering a supportive academic culture, effective leadership, and religiously driven motivation in enhancing Lecturer Performance. The results offer valuable insights for Islamic educational institutions to formulate strategic policies to improve educational quality and institutional reputation.

Corresponding Author:

Ahmad Fitriyadi Sari
Sekolah Tinggi Pesantren Darunna'im (STPDN), Lebak, Banten, Indonesia.
Email: ahmadfitriyadisari@stpdnlebakbanten.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of higher education is closely related to the Performance of educators, especially lecturers (Xiao & Wilkins, 2015; Wood & Su, 2017; Prasetyo et al., 2022). In the era of global competition and rapid technological advances, the role of lecturers is no longer limited to teaching activities alone but also includes research and community service activities—which are collectively known as the Tridharma of Higher Education (Sugiarti, 2022; Abdillah et al., 2022; Suyudi & Putra, 2022). As mandated in Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, lecturers are required to develop their academic qualifications, profession and competence continuously and actively contribute to the development of science and society.

Lecturer Performance—defined as the quality and quantity of work achieved in accordance with institutional responsibilities—is the main indicator of educational success (Thai et al., 2017; Thanassoulis et al., 2017; Rahardja et al., 2020). However, this Performance often experiences fluctuations influenced by various internal and external factors (Rahman & Indahyanti, 2021; Isnainy & Zainaro, 2024). Among these factors, transformational leadership, academic culture, and work motivation—especially those based on

Islamic values—are often mentioned in various recent studies as significant determinants (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013; Cetin & Kinik, 2015; Lo et al., 2020; Noor & Juhji, 2020).

Transformational leadership is characterized by a leadership style that inspires and empowers subordinates to exceed expectations and internalize the organization's vision. This leadership model has been shown to drive innovation, strengthen institutional culture, and increase employee work motivation (Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013; Royhatudin et al., 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2023; Hardianto et al., 2024; Aziziyah & Rahmawati, 2024). Likewise, academic culture—which includes shared values, norms, and practices in the academic environment—plays an important role in shaping lecturers' work behaviour and academic integrity (Bieliauskaitė & Valavičienė, 2019; Badriah et al., 2020; Gottardello & Karabag, 2022; Syaputra & Santosa, 2022; Van & Kluyts, 2023; Abenoja et al., 2024).

Furthermore, Islamic work motivation introduces a spiritual dimension that views work not just as a means of earning a living but as worship and devotion to society. This concept emphasizes values such as sincerity (ikhlas), responsibility (amanah), and the spirit to give the best (ihsan) in carrying out professional duties (Yusuf, 2022). However, empirical research that integrates these three variables—transformational leadership, academic culture, and Islamic work motivation—in assessing Lecturer Performance, especially in Islamic-based higher education environments, is still limited.

Sekolah Tinggi Pondok Pesantren Darunna'im (STPDN) Rangkasbitung, as an Islamic higher education institution, faces challenges in optimizing Lecturer Performance, even though it has strategic planning documents such as RENSTRA and RENOP. Based on internal evaluations, this institution has not fully achieved the expected Performance benchmarks, which are caused by gaps in leadership, cultural inconsistencies, and weak Lecturer motivation. Although a number of previous studies have separately examined the influence of leadership, academic culture, and motivation on Lecturer Performance, there are still few studies that use an integrative approach in Islamic higher education environments. This study attempts to fill this gap by simultaneously examining the influence of transformational leadership, academic culture, and Islamic work motivation on the Performance of lecturers at STPDN Rangkasbitung.

The novelty of this study lies in a comprehensive model that combines leadership theory, academic culture, and spiritual motivation in assessing academic Performance in an educational environment based on Islamic values. This integrative perspective not only contributes to the development of theory in educational management but also offers practical implications for institutional leaders to improve Lecturer productivity through value-based leadership and organizational culture alignment. This study aims to analyze the influence of transformational leadership, academic culture, and Islamic work motivation on Lecturer Performance at STPDN Rangkasbitung.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Research Design and Approach

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to examine the influence of academic culture, transformational leadership, and Islamic work motivation on Lecturer Performance. This approach is deductive, starting with the formulation of hypotheses derived from relevant theories, then tested empirically using field data. This approach is in line with Hermawan's opinion (2019), which states that quantitative research aims to test theories, confirm facts, and analyze relationships between variables. Furthermore, Hoy and Adams (2015) explain that quantitative research focuses on testing causal relationships between variables using statistical analysis.

2.2. Population and Sample

The population in this study consisted of lecturers who teach at the Darunna'im Islamic Boarding School (STPDN) Rangkasbitung, with a total of 47 people. Given the relatively small and reachable population, the census technique (total sampling) was used. Namely, the entire population was used as a research sample.

2.3. Data Collection Technique

This study uses primary and secondary data: (1) Primary data was obtained through questionnaires filled out directly by lecturers; (2) Secondary data came from the Academic Bureau of STPDN Rangkasbitung and other supporting documents. Data collection techniques used include: (1) Questionnaires compiled based on operational definitions and dimensions of each research variable. The instrument uses a Likert scale with answer choices: Always - Often - Sometimes - Rarely - Never; (2) Observations conducted to directly observe field conditions and analyze documents that support survey data and enrich understanding of the institutional context.

2.3. Instrument

The instrument grid was created using the theoretical dimensions and indicators of each variable in order to guarantee content validity.

a. Academic Culture (X1), which is defined as the overall values, behaviours, and academic practices in higher education institutions, with five dimensions: (1) Orientation to science and wisdom, (2) Scientific collaboration, (3) Ethics in research, (4) Ethics in teaching, and (5) Innovation and creativity

b. Transformational Leadership (X2). This refers to leadership behaviour that inspires followers to achieve organizational goals by encouraging innovation, responsibility, and personal growth. The dimensions used are: (1) Idealized influence, (2) Inspirational motivation, (3) Intellectual stimulation, and (4) Individualized consideration

c. Islamic Work Motivation (X3). This is a work motivation that originates from Islamic values, including intention (niyyah), social needs, self-actualization, and responsibility. The dimensions consist of: (1) Niyyah (intention), (2) Communication, (3) Sociality, and (4) Appreciation.

d. Lecturer Performance (Y). Measured based on three dimensions referring to the Tri Dharma of Higher Education: (1) Education and teaching, (2) Research, and (3) Community service and self-development.

2.4. Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) with the help of SmartPLS software. The analysis was carried out through two main stages: (1) Evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) to test the validity and reliability of the instrument, both convergent and discriminant validity, and (2) Evaluation of the structural model (inner model), to test the hypothesis and see the strength and significance of the relationship between variables in the research model.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

Partial Least Square (PLS) is a multivariate statistical analysis technique used to estimate the influence of variables simultaneously. It is particularly useful in prediction studies, exploratory research, or the development of structural models (Hair et al., 2021). The evaluation of PLS models consists of three main stages: (1) evaluation of the measurement model, (2) evaluation of the structural model, and (3) assessment of model fit and suitability.

3.1.1. Measurement Model Evaluation

In this study, both reflective and formative measurement models were employed. The constructs of academic culture, transformational leadership, and Islamic work motivation were measured reflectively, while the construct of Lecturer Performance was measured formatively.

3.1.1.1 Reflective Measurement Model

The reflective measurement model was evaluated using several criteria: loading factor ≥ 0.70, composite reliability ≥ 0.70, Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.70, and average variance extracted (AVE ≥ 0.50). Additionally, discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT < 0.90), as well as cross-loading analysis. Table 1 displays the results of outer loading, composite reliability, and AVE for all reflective constructs.

Table 1. Outer Loading, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE
Academic Culture	BUDAK1 – Knowledge	0.772	0.914	0.681
	BUDAK2 – Scientific Collaboration	0.871		
	SLAVE3 – Research Ethics	0.785		
	BUDAK4 – Teaching Ethics	0.902		
	BUDAK5 – Innovation & Creativity	0.787		
Transformational Leadership	KETRA1 – Idealized Influence	0.929	0.929	0.767
	KETRA2 – Inspirational Motivation	0.924		
	KETRA3 – Intellectual Stimulation	0.880		
	KETRA4 – Individualized Consideration	0.758		
Islamic Work	MOTKE1 – Achievement (Niyyah)	0.907	0.932	0.775

Motivation

MOTKE2 – Communication	0.846
MOTKE3 – Sociability	0.862
MOTKE4 – Appreciation	0.904

All indicators met the required thresholds for reliability and validity. The strongest reflections of each variable were BUDAK4 (0.902) for academic culture, KETRA1 (0.929) for transformational leadership, and MOTKE1 (0.907) for Islamic work motivation.

3.1.1.2 Formative Measurement Model

The formative measurement model was evaluated by examining the significance of outer weights ($p < 0.05$) and checking multicollinearity using the variance inflation factor (VIF < 5). The results for Lecturer Performance are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Outer Weight, Outer Loading, and Outer VIF – Lecturer Performance

Indicator	Outer Weight	p-value	Outer Loading	p-value	VIF
KINDO1 – Teaching	0.225	0.000	0.937	0.000	1.500
KINDO2 – Research	0.232	0.000	0.833	0.000	2.363
KINDO3 – Community Service	0.225	0.000	0.937	0.000	2.000
KINDO4 – Self-Development	0.207	0.000	0.858	0.000	2.964
KINDO5 – Academic Leadership	0.221	0.000	0.939	0.000	4.549

All indicators were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and demonstrated no multicollinearity (VIF < 5), indicating that the five dimensions significantly contribute to the formation of the Lecturer Performance construct.

3.1.1.3 Additional Measurement Models

Table 3. Outer Weight, Outer Loading, and Outer VIF – Academic Culture

Indicator	Outer Weight	p-value	Outer Loading	p-value	VIF
BUDAK1 – Knowledge and Wisdom	0.213	0.000	0.772	0.000	2.109
BUDAK2 – Scientific Collaboration	0.273	0.000	0.771	0.000	4.185
SLAVE3 – Research Ethics	0.223	0.000	0.785	0.000	3.053
BUDAK4 – Teaching Ethics	0.273	0.000	0.802	0.000	4.002

Table 4. Outer Weight, Outer Loading, and Outer VIF – Transformational Leadership

Indicator	Outer Weight	p-value	Outer Loading	p-value	VIF
KETRA1 – Idealized Influence	0.275	0.000	0.829	0.000	4.223
KETRA2 – Inspirational Motivation	0.270	0.000	0.824	0.000	4.393
KETRA3 – Intellectual Stimulation	0.308	0.000	0.880	0.000	2.528
KETRA4 – Individualized Consideration	0.296	0.000	0.758	0.000	1.514

Table 5. Outer Weight, Outer Loading, and Outer VIF – Islamic Work Motivation

Indicator	Outer Weight	p-value	Outer Loading	p-value	VIF
MOTKE1 – Achievement (Niyyah)	0.301	0.000	0.907	0.000	3.645
MOTKE2 – Communication	0.265	0.000	0.846	0.000	3.657
MOTKE3 – Sociability	0.301	0.000	0.862	0.000	3.137
MOTKE4 – Appreciation	0.269	0.000	0.904	0.000	4.484

All indicators across constructs were significant and exhibited no multicollinearity (VIF < 5), further validating the measurement models.

3.1.2. Discriminant Validity Evaluation

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Table 4.16 summarizes the square roots of AVE values (diagonal) and inter-construct correlations (off-diagonal).

Table 6. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variable	Academic Culture	Transformational Leadership	Islamic Work Motivation
Academic Culture	0.876	0.817	0.868
Transformational Leadership	0.817	0.890	0.867
Islamic Work Motivation	0.868	0.867	0.880

The square roots of AVE values were greater than the inter-construct correlations, indicating acceptable discriminant validity among constructs.

3.1.3. Structural Model Evaluation

The structural model evaluation aims to assess the hypothesized relationships between latent constructs. Key parameters used in this assessment include the coefficient of determination (R^2), path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2).

3.1.3.1 Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The R^2 value indicates the amount of variance in the endogenous construct explained by the exogenous constructs. Table 7 presents the R^2 values for the endogenous variables.

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Endogenous Construct	R^2 Value	Interpretation
Islamic Work Motivation	0.828	Substantial
Lecturer Performance	0.826	Substantial

According to Hair et al. (2021), an R^2 value of 0.75 or higher is considered substantial. Therefore, both Islamic Work Motivation and Lecturer Performance are strongly explained by their predictors.

3.1.3.2 Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Table 8. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Path	Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Result
Academic Culture → Islamic Work Motivation	0.475	6.289	0.000	Supported
Transformational Leadership → Islamic Work Motivation	0.464	5.739	0.000	Supported
Academic Culture → Lecturer Performance	0.401	5.102	0.000	Supported
Transformational Leadership → Lecturer Performance	0.348	4.884	0.000	Supported
Islamic Work Motivation → Lecturer Performance	0.286	4.577	0.000	Supported

All hypotheses were supported at the 0.05 significance level ($p < 0.05$), with t-values exceeding the critical value of 1.96 (two-tailed test). These findings indicate that academic culture and transformational leadership have significant positive effects on both Islamic work motivation and Lecturer Performance, while Islamic work motivation itself also significantly enhances Lecturer Performance.

3.1.3.3 Effect Size (f^2)

The effect size (f^2) assesses the impact of an exogenous variable on an endogenous variable when removed from the model. Table 9 shows the f^2 values for each path.

Table 9. Effect Size (f^2)

Relationship	f^2 Value	Effect Size Interpretation
Academic Culture → Islamic Work Motivation	0.410	Large
Transformational Leadership → Islamic Work Motivation	0.377	Medium to Large
Academic Culture → Lecturer Performance	0.272	Medium
Transformational Leadership → Lecturer Performance	0.231	Medium
Islamic Work Motivation → Lecturer Performance	0.182	Small to Medium

Based on Cohen et al. (2002) guidelines, f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively. The results suggest that academic culture and transformational leadership

have large effects on Islamic work motivation, while all other relationships exhibit medium or small to medium effect sizes.

3.1.3.4 Predictive Relevance (Q²)

The Stone-Geisser's Q² value was obtained via blindfolding to assess predictive relevance. Table 10 summarizes the Q² values.

Table 10. Predictive Relevance (Q²)

Construct	Q² Value	Interpretation
Islamic Work Motivation	0.637	High Predictive Relevance
Lecturer Performance	0.674	High Predictive Relevance

According to Cohen et al. (2002), Q² values greater than zero indicate that the model is predictively relevant. The values in Table 10 confirm that the structural model has strong predictive power.

3.1.4. Model Fit Evaluation

Although PLS-SEM is a variance-based approach, model fit indices have recently been developed to enhance model assessment. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is one such measure.

Table 11. Model Fit Indicator

Fit Index	Value	Threshold	Interpretation
SRMR	0.052	< 0.08	Good Fit

The SRMR value of 0.052 indicates a good fit between the proposed model and the empirical data, reinforcing the adequacy and robustness of the overall model structure.

3.2. Discussion

This study investigated the influence of academic culture and transformational leadership on Islamic work motivation and Lecturer Performance in Islamic higher education institutions. The findings reveal that both academic culture and transformational leadership significantly enhance Islamic work motivation, which in turn positively affects Lecturer Performance. Additionally, both academic culture and transformational leadership directly influence Lecturer Performance.

The significant positive effect of academic culture on Islamic work motivation ($\beta = 0.475$, $p < 0.001$) demonstrates that a supportive academic environment fosters stronger internal motivation among lecturers. This finding supports previous research, which suggests that an institution's academic culture—manifested through intellectual freedom, collegiality, and commitment to scholarly excellence—can enhance intrinsic motivation (Arifin & Lo, 2020; Zhou & Zhang, 2024). In Islamic higher education, where spiritual and moral values are central, a conducive academic culture may further internalize the values of ikhlas (sincerity), amanah (trustworthiness), and iqamah (consistency) in lecturers' professional roles.

Moreover, academic culture also significantly affects Lecturer Performance ($\beta = 0.401$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that institutional norms and practices influence not only the motivation but also the productivity and commitment of academic staff. This aligns with the findings of Noor (2022), who reported that universities with strong academic cultures tend to produce more engaged and effective lecturers.

Transformational leadership positively affects Islamic work motivation ($\beta = 0.464$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that leaders who articulate a clear vision, inspire followers, provide intellectual stimulation, and show individualized consideration contribute to shaping a spiritually driven and intrinsically motivated academic workforce. This is consistent with prior studies, such as those by Bass (2006) and Birasnav et al. (2011), which found that transformational leadership enhances motivation and organizational commitment. In the context of Islamic higher education, this leadership style resonates with the prophetic model of leadership that emphasizes moral example, empowerment, and shared vision (Nasution et al., 2022).

Furthermore, transformational leadership directly influences Lecturer Performance ($\beta = 0.348$, $p < 0.001$). This supports the view that effective leaders play a crucial role in facilitating high Performance by creating a positive psychological climate and motivating lecturers to exceed expectations (Gaviria-Rivera & López-Zapata, 2019). The findings also echo the work of Bass (2006), who highlighted that transformational leaders foster innovation and improve task Performance among subordinates.

The study confirms that Islamic work motivation has a significant positive impact on Lecturer Performance ($\beta = 0.286$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that when lecturers are motivated by values grounded in Islamic teachings—such as working as a form of worship (ibadah), sincerity in fulfilling duties, and seeking divine pleasure—their Performance improves. These findings are in line with Hayati and Caniago (2012), who emphasized that work motivation rooted in religious values enhances commitment and productivity in

Muslim-majority contexts. This result also substantiates the mediating role of Islamic work motivation, suggesting that it acts as a psychological mechanism through which institutional culture and leadership affect Performance. Hence, enhancing this type of motivation can be an effective strategy to improve the overall academic functioning of Islamic universities.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by integrating transformational leadership theory and academic culture constructs with Islamic motivational concepts, offering a contextually grounded framework for explaining Lecturer Performance in Islamic higher education institutions. The findings extend the application of PLS-SEM in modelling complex relationships involving both psychological and organizational factors. Practically, University leaders and policymakers should prioritize cultivating a positive academic culture and promoting transformational leadership practices to enhance work motivation and Lecturer Performance. Additionally, the inclusion of Islamic values in motivation-building strategies is critical in Islamic educational contexts. Training programs and leadership development initiatives that combine pedagogical excellence with spiritual integrity can be instrumental in achieving institutional goals.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that academic culture and transformational leadership significantly influence Lecturer Performance both directly and indirectly through Islamic work motivation, confirming the mediating role of motivation grounded in Islamic values. A conducive academic environment and leadership that inspires, guides, and upholds moral values can foster intrinsic motivation, leading to improved Lecturer Performance in Islamic higher education institutions. Therefore, it is recommended that universities strengthen academic culture, promote transformational leadership practices, and integrate Islamic values into institutional strategies such as training, mentoring, and Performance evaluation to optimize both motivation and academic outcomes.

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