

Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation Towards Human Resources Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze in depth the contribution of organizational culture, especially the dimensions of collectivism and low power distance, to improving human resource performance. The primary focus of this study is not only on the direct relationship between variables but also on the dual mediation mechanism involving career development and Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation (MAM), a central component of the proposed conceptual model. Using an explanatory design research empirically tested the causality relationship between variables through structural model testing. The sample was 250 respondents who worked in Islamic educational institutions in the Central Java region, Indonesia. Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling. The study found that an organizational culture characterized by collectivism and low power distance significantly increased the intensity of Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation in the work environment. Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation has proven to be an effective mediating factor in bridging the influence of organizational culture on career development and human resource performance. This confirms that spiritually based value motivation can be an internal force that drives individuals to achieve sustainably.

Keywords: Collectivism, Power Distance Low, Achievement Motivation, Career Development, Human Resource Performance, Mardhatillah

INTRODUCTION

Human resource performance is a key pillar of organizational success, including in higher education institutions. In higher education, lecturers' motivation to excel, develop their careers, and improve the quality of research is a vital indicator of institutional sustainability. However, the reality is that many lecturers still hold low-level positions and publish few scientific papers. Based on data from (Hajjali et al., 2022), of the 14,973 lecturers in Central Java, Indonesia, only 183 hold the position of Professor, 1,082 are Head Lecturers, while 4,188 lecturers do not have functional positions. This phenomenon shows that the performance of lecturers, the main component of human resources, remains suboptimal.

In modern management theory, motivation to perform is the primary driver of performance improvement. However, conventional theories, such as those put forward by Maslow (1943) and McClelland (1958), emphasize material aspects and individual satisfaction. As a result, achievement orientation often focuses only on external rewards, social status, or financial compensation. These limitations create a need for a more comprehensive motivation model, one that not only drives work behavior but also fosters the spiritual value and deep meaning of work. In this context, this study proposes the concept of Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation (MAM), a synthesis of classical achievement motivation theory and Islamic spiritual values. MAM views the motivation to excel as an intrinsic motivation to achieve the pleasure of Allah SWT (Mardhatillah). This orientation encourages individuals to work with sincerity, truth (*syawah*), quality (*itqan*), and social usefulness (*ihsan*). Thus, MAM balances worldly and ukhrawi orientations and serves as a response to the limitations of secular motivational theories, which tend to be hedonistic.

Empirical studies show inconsistencies in the relationship between organizational culture and human resource performance. Several studies have found a positive relationship between the two (Shahzad et al., 2017; Yu & Wang, 2018), while others (Abdullah, 2019; Xanthopoulou et al., 2022) found no significant effect. This inconsistency reveals a research gap that demands a new approach that considers the context of values and spirituality. In addition, cultural dimensions such as power distance and collectivism have not been fully explored in the context of higher education institutions in Indonesia, especially in Islamic Higher Education. Previous research has looked more at structural or administrative factors, while religious and spiritual values have not been integrated as determinants of motivation and performance. Therefore, this study offers a conceptual model linking organizational culture to Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation, which serves as a mediator of career development and human resource performance.

The low motivation and performance of lecturers are also strategic problems for the competitiveness of private universities in Central Java. Based on SINTA 2023 data, Indonesian lecturers publish an average of 0.6 articles per year, well below the ideal standard of 1 article per lecturer. This condition indicates a gap between academic potential and realized performance. This imbalance is not only due to limited facilities, but also a weak reward system, a collectivist work culture, and spiritual values in encouraging sustainable performance. This phenomenon underscores the urgency for educational institutions to build an egalitarian, religious organizational culture. Islamic universities should be an example of combining professionalism with divine values, so that the performance of lecturers is measured not only on quantitative grounds but also in the spiritual, dedication, and social usefulness dimensions (Sudarti et al., 2021). This research has a high theoretical and practical urgency. Theoretically, this study expands the theory of achievement motivation by adding a religiously measurable dimension that can be empirically measured. The value of Mardhatillah is no longer understood merely as a moral principle but as a psychological construct that can be operationalized to measure motivation for spiritual work. This approach challenges the classical materialist paradigm and opens the door to integrating organizational psychology with Islamic values.

The results of this study guide university leaders in creating a collaborative, fair, and spirituality-based work culture. By integrating the values of collectivism, low power distance, and Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation, organizations can foster the performance of lecturers who are not only professionally competent but also spiritually integrated. The novelty of this research lies in the development of the "Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation Framework" model, which is an integrative model that places spiritual motivation as a link between organizational culture, career development, and human resource performance. This approach has not been widely studied in the modern management literature. It is expected to become an alternative conceptual model for building sustainable human performance in the era of disruption.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation

Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation (MAM) is a concept of achievement motivation based on Islamic spiritual values, where a person's primary motivation to work and achieve is no longer oriented to mere worldly achievements such as awards, social status, or material gains, but is entirely directed to obtain the pleasure of Allah SWT (mardhatillah). In this framework, a person's success is measured not only by the visible results of their work, but also by sincere intentions, the proper process, and the resulting benefits to fellow humans and their environment (Huang et al., 2022).

The concept of MAM was developed as a form of refinement of the classical theory of achievement motivation put forward by Brunstein & Heckhausen (2018), which emphasizes the need for achievement. Suppose in the Western view, the motivation to excel comes from personal ambition and the desire to excel in competition. In that case, MAM changes this orientation into a form of spiritual motivation, namely the spirit of achievement born from sincerity (ikhlas), earnestness in work (itqan), moral responsibility (amanah), and commitment to do good (ihsan). Thus, every work activity is not only seen as an effort to achieve organizational targets, but also as a form of worship with a ukhrawi dimension (Lusianti et al., 2024).

Individuals who have Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation will work with the awareness that their achievements and productivity are part of their responsibility to God and society. It strives to achieve the highest standards of performance without losing its human values and moral integrity. MAM also fosters a balance between worldly and hereafter orientations, where professional success is seen as a means to obtain the blessings of life and divine pleasure. Psychologically, MAM fosters inner peace because the work drive comes from a holy intention and does not depend on human judgment. This makes motivation more consistent, stable, and sustainable. In an organizational context, MAM has implications for improving work ethic, loyalty, and productivity, as individuals work not just to meet the demands of the position but also to fulfill spiritual responsibilities. Thus, Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation can be defined as a person's intrinsic and spiritual motivation to achieve maximum by

prioritizing sincerity, quality, and usefulness of work to obtain the pleasure of Allah SWT. This concept serves as an essential foundation for the development of Islamic management theory, positioning spirituality as the core driver of human resource performance while bridging the gap between secular motivation and religious moral values.

The Influence of Organizational Culture on Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation

Organizational culture is the foundation of the behavior and motivation of the organization's members. The values of collectivism and low power distance form an interaction pattern that encourages emotional, spiritual, and moral involvement at work (Benson et al., 2020; Zulaikha et al., 2021). The results show that an egalitarian work culture with low power hierarchy creates an open environment, enhances two-way communication, and strengthens a sense of spiritual responsibility towards work. Thus, the stronger the culture of collectivism and the lower the power distance, the higher the Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation that grows in the work environment. This is because these cultural values are in line with the principles of sincerity, responsibility (*amanah*), and the intention to work to obtain the pleasure of Allah SWT.

The Influence of Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation on Career Development

Mardhatillah's value-based achievement motivation encourages individuals to continue to develop their competencies and capabilities. Highly spiritually motivated individuals are not only oriented to external rewards, but to the perfection of charity and social usefulness. Empirical studies Legiman & Widayati (2024) and Sutoni et al. (2025) show that achievement motivation encourages innovative and proactive behavior, strengthening dedication to developing academic and professional careers. In this context, MAM functions as an internal driver for lecturers to improve functional positions, produce publications, and add skills that support career advancement

The Influence of Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation on Human Resources Performance

The approach to workplace spirituality explains that internalized spiritual values increase loyalty, work engagement, and job meaning. Individuals who work with the intention of mardhatillah are more consistent, productive, and have high intrinsic job satisfaction. Empirically, MAM has been shown to have a dominant influence on Human Resource Performance (HRP), accounting for 88.3% of the total influence (Alzaydi et al., 2022; Gameda & Lee, 2020). This influence extends beyond other variables, such as organizational culture and career development, demonstrating that work spirituality is a key factor in sustainably improving employee performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative, explanatory research design to examine the causal relationships among variables in the conceptual model of the Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation Framework. This approach was chosen because it can empirically describe the influence of organizational culture, spirituality-based achievement motivation, career development, and human resource performance in Islamic universities in the LLDIKTI VI area of Central Java.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale that measured respondents' perceptions of the indicators for each variable. The questionnaire was developed based on McClelland's motivation theory, Hofstede's organizational culture theory, and the researcher's Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation construct. The research population comprises all lecturers at private Islamic universities in the LLDIKTI VI, Central Java, Indonesia. In contrast, the research sample of 250 respondents was selected using purposive sampling, with the criterion of having at least 3 years of work experience and an academic functional position of at least an Expert Assistant. Supporting data was also obtained from official documents of LLDIKTI, internal university reports, and related scientific publications.

To ensure the research instrument is valid and reliable, a construct validity test and a Cronbach's Alpha reliability test are conducted, and all indicators exceed the recommended minimum. Once the data is collected, the analysis is performed in two stages. First, descriptive analysis is used to describe the respondent profile and the distribution of each variable's values. Second, an inferential analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS software version 25.

The model was tested using Goodness-of-Fit criteria, including $\text{Chi-Square/df} \leq 2$, $\text{RMSEA} \leq 0.08$, $\text{GFI} \geq 0.90$, $\text{TLI} \geq 0.95$, and $\text{CFI} \geq 0.94$, according to Ghazali (2016). If the initial model does not meet these criteria, model modifications are made according to the guidelines of Hair (2019), considering residual covariances that are statistically significant ($\geq \pm 2.58$). This stage ensures the final model has a good structural fit with the empirical data. The final results of the analysis were used to interpret the direct and indirect relationships among variables, as well as to examine the role of Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation and career development as mediators in

the relationship between organizational culture and human resource performance. Through this approach, the research succeeded in developing a comprehensive empirical model that can be used to strengthen the theory of achievement motivation grounded in Islamic spiritual values in higher education settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research instruments are tested to ensure that each indicator used actually measures the construct in question and has a high internal consistency. This test is carried out through two main stages: construct validity (Confirmatory Factor Analysis / CFA) and construct reliability (Composite Reliability and Variance Extracted). The results of the construct validity test showed that all indicators for exogenous and endogenous variables had loadings above 0.75, indicating that all questionnaire items were valid. The indicators in the variables Power Distance Low, Collectivism, Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation (MAM), Career Development, and Human Resource Performance (HRP) all met these criteria. This shows that each indicator explains the latent variables it represents well and significantly ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, a construct reliability test was conducted to assess the internal consistency of indicators within each variable. The results showed that all variables had Composite Reliability (CR) values > 0.70 and Variance Extracted (VE) values > 0.50 , as per the criteria of Ghozali (2017). This means that more than 50% of the indicator's variance is explained by the latent construct it measures, and that the instrument is reliable overall.

The measurement model's Goodness-of-Fit test also showed that the model met the eligibility criteria, with an RMSEA ≤ 0.08 , CFI ≥ 0.94 , TLI ≥ 0.95 , and Chi-Square/df ≤ 2 . These results confirm that the measurement model is feasible and that the entire construct is unidimensional, in line with the guidelines of Hair et al. (2019). Thus, it can be concluded that the research instrument is declared valid and reliable, and can be used for hypothesis testing in structural models.

Table 1. Instrument Test

| Variable | Loading Factor (Range) | Composite Reliability (CR) | Variance Extracted (VE) | Remarks |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Power Distance Low | 0.837 – 0.868 | 0.91 | 0.72 | Valid and reliable |
| Collectivism | 0.805 – 0.872 | 0.91 | 0.72 | Valid and reliable |
| Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation | 0.785 – 0.886 | 0.92 | 0.70 | Valid and reliable |
| Career Development | 0.754 – 0.873 | 0.89 | 0.65 | Valid and reliable |
| Human Resource Performance | 0.807 – 0.884 | 0.90 | 0.67 | Valid and reliable |

Hypothesis testing in this study examined the causal relationships among organizational culture (low power distance and collectivism), Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation (MAM), career development, and human resource performance (HRP). The test was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS software version 25, and significance was determined using Critical Ratio (CR) values and a p-value of 5% ($p < 0.05$). The results of the first hypothesis test (H1) showed that the Power Distance Low variable had a positive and significant effect on Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation, with a path coefficient of 0.327, a CR value of 6.284, and a p-value of 0.000. This means that the lower the power gap in an organization reflecting an egalitarian, open leadership structure, the higher the individual's spiritual motivation for work. A non-hierarchical work environment provides space for lecturers to contribute sincerely and is aligned with Mardhatillah's values. Thus, the first hypothesis is accepted.

The second hypothesis (H2) tests the influence of Collectivism on Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation. The analysis showed an influence coefficient of 0.290, a CR value of 5.639, and a p-value of 0.000. These results confirm that an organizational culture that upholds values of togetherness, collaboration, and solidarity can strengthen spiritual motivation at work. Individuals who work in a supportive environment will find it easier to cultivate a spirit of achievement oriented towards blessings rather than mere personal achievement. Therefore, the second hypothesis is accepted.

The test results for the third hypothesis (H3) showed that Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation had a positive and significant effect on Career Development, with a coefficient of 0.611, a CR of 6.455, and a p-value of 0.000. This means that the higher a person's spiritual motivation to achieve, the greater his or her motivation to develop a career sustainably. Lecturers with a work orientation will seek to improve their academic competence, publish

scientific papers, and develop themselves to achieve higher functional positions. Thus, the third hypothesis is accepted.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) indicates that Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation has the most substantial direct influence on Human Resource Performance, with a coefficient of 0.848, a CR of 6.638, and a p-value of 0.000. This means that motivation for achievement grounded in values of sincerity, moral responsibility, and spiritual orientation has proven to be the main factor in improving lecturer performance. Individuals who work with the intention of mardhatillah will show high dedication, discipline, and continuous productivity. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is accepted and becomes the main finding of this study.

The results of the fifth hypothesis test (H5) showed that Career Development had a positive and significant effect on Human Resource Performance, with a coefficient of 0.382, a CR of 6.632, and a p-value of 0.000. This means that career development through training, promotions, and opportunities for competency development plays an essential role in improving human resource performance in Islamic universities. The better the career development system implemented, the higher the performance of lecturers in carrying out the tridharma of higher education. Thus, the fifth hypothesis is accepted.

Overall, as shown in Table 2, all hypotheses (H1–H5) are accepted, indicating that all relationships in this research model are statistically significant. These findings show that an egalitarian and collective organizational culture not only has a direct impact on the formation of Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation but also indirectly improves career development and human resource performance. Thus, it can be concluded that Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation is a key variable (core mediator) in this model. Spiritual values such as sincerity, responsibility, and orientation toward the pleasure of Allah SWT have proven to be the main drivers of improving human resource performance, beyond structural and administrative factors within the organization.

Table 2 Hypothesis Test

| Hypothesis | Path Relationship | Estimate (β) | CR | p-value | Results |
|------------|---|----------------------|-------|---------|----------|
| H1 | Power Distance Low \rightarrow MAM | 0.327 | 6.284 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H2 | Collectivism \rightarrow MAM | 0.290 | 5.639 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H3 | MAM \rightarrow Career Development | 0.611 | 6.455 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H4 | MAM \rightarrow Human Resource Performance | 0.848 | 6.638 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H5 | Career Development \rightarrow Human Resource Performance | 0.382 | 6.632 | 0.000 | Accepted |

Figure 1 explains that an egalitarian and collective organizational culture serves as the basis for the formation of spiritual achievement motivation (Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation), which, in turn, improves career development and human resource performance (HRP) in Islamic universities. The Low Power Distance value (0.382) indicates that the lower the power distance in the organization, the stronger the individual's spiritual drive to work sincerely and responsibly. Meanwhile, Collectivism (0.335) emphasizes that togetherness and solidarity strengthen the spirit of achievement in pursuit of the pleasure of Allah SWT. Mardhatillah's motivation then had a direct impact on Career Development (0.449) and was the dominant factor in increasing Human Resource Performance (0.692). In addition, Career Development (0.425) also plays a role in strengthening performance through increasing competence and professionalism. Overall, this model shows that Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation acts as a key mediator between organizational culture and performance. This means that the improvement in lecturers' performance is not determined solely by the managerial system and structure, but also by the power of spiritual motivation that encourages them to work with the intention of seeking the pleasure of Allah SWT.

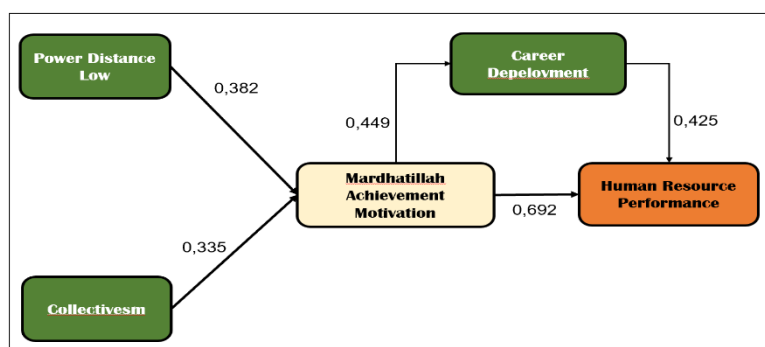


Figure 1. Direct Influence of the Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation Model

The results showed that Low Power Distance had a significant positive effect on Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation. These findings indicate that the lower the power gap in the organization (an egalitarian leader-

subordinate relationship), the higher the individual's spiritual motivation to achieve. An open and participatory culture makes members feel valued, gives them autonomy, and encourages them to work with the intention of mardhatillah. Theoretically, this is in line with the concept of Hofstede (2011) and research by Wang & Fränti (2022), which states that low power distance increases trust, participation, and intrinsic motivation in organizations.

An organizational culture characterized by low power distance creates an egalitarian, open, and participatory work environment. In this context, lecturers and employees feel that they have the space to express their opinions, be treated equally, and be involved in decision-making. This condition fosters a sense of belonging to the institution and increases intrinsic motivation that is oriented towards spiritual values. When power hierarchies are not rigid, the relationships between individuals become more human and meaningful. Lecturers do not work out of structural pressure, but out of moral and spiritual awareness to contribute to the common good. Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation thrives in this climate because sincerity and responsibility can be expressed naturally. Theoretically, an equal environment encourages the transformation of motivation from mere obedience to devotion, which is worth worship before Allah SWT.

The Collectivism variable has a positive and significant effect on Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation. A work culture that emphasizes togetherness, solidarity, and social responsibility has been proven to strengthen the spirit of achievement based on spiritual values. In Islam, collectivism not only encourages social harmony but also internalizes the values of worship and collective contribution to society. These findings are consistent with the research of Guterman et al. (2024) and Teh (2025), who stated that collectivism strengthens motivation to achieve and commitment to common goals. The culture of collectivism emphasizes the values of togetherness, solidarity, and strong social concern. In an academic environment, a collective spirit fosters mutual support, where individual success is seen as a shared success. This kind of value orientation strengthens Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation, because every achievement is seen not only as a personal achievement, but also as a contribution to society and worship of God.

The analysis shows that Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation has a significant positive effect on Career Development. This means that the higher a person's spiritual motivation, the greater the desire and effort to improve their academic career through training, publications, and promotion to functional positions. Mardhatillah's motivation becomes a moral and psychological energy that encourages individuals to develop professionally. This is in line with McClelland (1958) theory, which explains that individuals with a high need for achievement will strive to achieve the best standards and recognition through hard work and dedication.

A lecturer who is oriented towards togetherness finds it easier to find spiritual meaning in his work, because he works to benefit many parties. Values such as ukhuwah, cooperation, and social responsibility are the catalyst for the growth of sincere motivation for achievement. Thus, collectivist culture not only strengthens social relationships but also affirms that working for others is part of spiritual devotion. Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation is an internal force that encourages individuals to continue growing and developing their careers. Lecturers with a work orientation will strive to improve their quality as part of their moral and worship responsibilities. Lecturers focus not only on promotion but also on increasing academic capacity, publishing scientific work, and making a real contribution to the development of science and society.

The results of the study confirm that Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation has the most dominant influence on Human Resource Performance. These findings show that spiritual motivation is the core of strength in improving lecturers' performance, both in the aspects of tridharma, discipline, and dedication to the institution. Individuals who work with the intention of mardhatillah tend to be more consistent, responsible, and productive because their orientation is not on material rewards, but on the blessings of work. Empirically, these results reinforce the role of Islamic values as a source of a superior work ethic in higher education.

Spiritual motivation has changed the way we look at careers: not just a tool for prestige, but a platform for wider benefit. Thus, a career is not seen as a competition but as a mandate to be carried out professionally and dedicatedly. The higher a person's spiritual motivation, the more consistent he will be in pursuing a career with a quality- and blessing-oriented orientation. Mardhatillah's motivation has proven to be the most dominant factor in improving human resource performance. Individuals who work with the intention of worship tend to have high discipline, consistency, and responsibility. He works not because of supervision or reward, but because of the spiritual awareness that every task is a form of devotion to Allah SWT. In Islamic universities, spiritual motivation serves as the moral foundation that sustains academic integrity. Mardhatillah-oriented lecturers will maintain the quality of teaching, research, and service wholeheartedly. Performance born of spiritual motivation is sustainable because it is driven by stable inner values rather than temporary external factors. Thus, MAM not only increases productivity but also creates spiritual accountability in the academic work system.

Career Development has a significant positive effect on Human Resource Performance. This means that career development opportunities, through training, promotion, or competency development, can improve lecturer performance. Organizational support for lecturers' careers strengthens their sense of belonging, increases professional commitment, and expands their contribution to the tridharma of higher education. These results align

with the research of Napitupulu et al. (2017) and Meitisari et al. (2018), which affirm that effective career management can improve individual and organizational performance. Career development plays a vital role in strengthening human resource performance. When institutions provide opportunities for competency development, position advancement, and professional training, lecturers feel valued and motivated to perform at their best. A fair and transparent career development process increases loyalty and commitment to the tridharma of higher education. However, the most effective career development is accompanied by a spiritual orientation. When the motivation to achieve is rooted in the intention of mardhatillah, career development is not only about individual progress but also about increasing self-worth as a form of devotion. The integration of career and spirituality creates a comprehensive HR management model in which professional competence goes hand in hand with moral and spiritual maturity.

The overall results of the discussion show that Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation is the driving core in the relationship between organizational culture, career development, and human resource performance. An equal and collective organizational culture fosters a spiritual climate that encourages individuals to work sincerely, develop professionally, and contribute optimally to the institution. Thus, superior performance in Islamic universities is not only built through the managerial system, but through the strengthening of spiritual values as the foundation of motivation for achievement.

Theoretically, this research extends the theory of achievement motivation by incorporating the spiritual dimension of Islam into its framework. The concept of Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation (MAM) emphasizes that work motivation is not driven solely by material goals and worldly rewards, but also by a moral and spiritual orientation toward achieving the pleasure of Allah SWT. These findings enrich Islamic motivational theory and work ethic by adding a motivational dimension that hard work and achievement are part of worship and moral responsibility. This model also encourages the development of a value-based performance theory that balances material efficiency with spiritual blessings and sincerity.

CONCLUSION

This research answers the central question of how organizational culture, especially the values of low power distance and collectivism, can affect the formation of Mardhatillah Achievement Motivation (MAM) and its impact on career development and human resource (HR) performance in Islamic universities in the LLDIKTI Region VI, Central Java. The results of the study show that an egalitarian and collective organizational culture can foster achievement motivation grounded in spiritual values (mardhatillah), thereby encouraging greater career development and lecturer performance. Thus, MAM is a key variable (core mediator) that bridges the influence of organizational culture on human resource performance. This research confirms that the success of Islamic universities is not only determined by career systems and technical competencies, but also by the strength of spiritual and moral values in the work culture.

Limitations of the study include the use of cross-sectional designs that describe relationships between variables at a single point in time, thereby failing to capture dynamic changes in motivation and performance. This study has limited geographic coverage to Islamic universities in Central Java, Indonesia, so the generalizability of the results is still limited to national contexts or non-religious institutions. The future research agenda is directed to expand the MAM model by adding mediation or moderator variables such as organizational commitment, work engagement, or transformational leadership; conduct cross-regional studies to compare cultural values and religiosity; and examine the integration between spirituality and digital transformation so that the value of mardhatillah remains the foundation of ethics in modern human resource management. Overall, this study confirms that Islamic spiritual values are not merely a complement to human resource management but a significant source of motivation and sustainable performance, making mardhatillah a new paradigm in human resource development in Islamic universities.

Managerial Implications

Managerially, this research provides direction for Islamic universities to build an egalitarian, collaborative, and spiritually oriented work culture. Leaders need to create an open, participatory, and supportive work environment for two-way communication to foster spiritual growth. The career system needs to be designed not only based on academic competence and achievement, but also on the integrity, sincerity, and moral contributions of lecturers. Thus, human resource management in Islamic universities can integrate academic professionalism with spiritual values, making mardhatillah the core of motivation and the guiding principle for sustainable performance development.

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