Model of Khaadimul Integrity Leadership in Improving Organizational Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the mediating role of Khaadimul Integrity Leadership in the relationship between management competence and organizational performance in Private Universities under LLDIKTI Region VI, Central Java, Indonesia. While transformational, authentic, and spiritual leadership have been extensively studied, there is a need to contextualize leadership models based on Islamic values that emphasize service and integrity. The Khaadimul Integrity Leadership model, grounded in the concept of servant leadership in Islam, is proposed as a unique construct to address this theoretical and contextual gap. A quantitative approach utilizing SEM-PLS was employed with 273 respondents. The results indicate that management competence significantly impacts organizational performance, and Khaadimul Integrity Leadership partially mediates this relationship. This model contributes to enhancing the leadership literature, particularly in higher education governance with a focus on spiritual-ethical integration.

Keywords: Khaadimul, Integrity, Leadership, Organizational, Performance

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a crucial element in organizational management, and various theories have been developed to explain the characteristics and influence of leadership styles on organizational performance, including Transformational Leadership (Bass, 1987), Authentic Leadership (Avolio, 2004), Leader-Member Exchange (Ilies et al., 2007), and Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 1998). Among these theories, Spiritual Leadership introduced by Fry (2003) emerges as a holistic approach that integrates the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of human beings in leadership. The main dimensions of spiritual leadership are vision, faith/hope, and altruistic love, emphasizing intrinsic motivation and creating meaning in work.

However, the application of spiritual leadership still has limitations, especially in the aspect of transcendental values connected to God. Therefore, a more rooted approach in Islamic values is needed. One relevant Islamic leadership concept is Khaadimul Ummah—leader as a servant of the people—derived from the Qur'an, hadiths, and the practices of the caliphs. This concept emphasizes values of integrity, justice, responsibility, and public service, believed to complement the weaknesses of modern spiritual leadership that are still general and lack accommodation of hereafter values.

In addition to leadership, managerial competence is also an important factor in driving organizational performance. Some studies have shown a positive relationship between management competence and organizational performance (Liang et al., 2013; Saito, 2008), but there are also inconsistent results (Arasanmi &

Krishna, 2019). This indicates a research gap that needs to be further explored, especially through the integration of Islamic spiritual leadership values such as khaadimul integrity leadership.

This study aims to address this challenge by proposing an integrative model that combines management competency with the values of khaadimul integrity leadership in the context of improving the performance of study programs at private universities (PTS). This context is significant considering the low accreditation achievements of institutions and study programs in the LLDIKTI Region VI Central Java. Therefore, this model is expected to be an innovative solution in driving the performance of higher education organizations based on spiritual and professional values.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Khaadimul Integrity Leadership

Islam emphasizes the importance of leadership in a strategic position, as a leader will determine the success in family life, organizations, and leadership in a broader context. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who was sent by Allah, had the duty to serve his community in all aspects of life, including ethics, worship, and transactions, which is commonly known as the concept of servant leadership (Khaadimul Ummah).

According to Al-Buraey (1985), Islam is a perfect religion that regulates all aspects of life, both in transactions and worship. Allah sent Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a role model for the entire community. The Prophet showed how to manage the community and set a practical example for his followers. Allah's words in Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 21:

"Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much."

The leadership of Khaadimul Ummah is a model of leadership from the Prophet Muhammad to bring people closer to their Lord, ensuring well-being in this world and the hereafter characterized by serving, facilitating without causing hardship, assisting, comforting, alleviating the difficulties of the community, and guiding the community towards divine values.

Leadership in the Islamic perspective has several definitions. According to Mutalib et al. (2017), leadership is defined as a trust. This represents the psychological contract between the leader and the followers that the leader will strive to guide them, protect them, and treat them fairly. According to Supriyanto, A. S., Ekowati (2020), leadership in Islam is a process of inspiring and nurturing voluntary followers in an effort to fulfill a clear vision and sharing and total surrender to Allah. Islam integrates social, economic, legal, cultural, and all aspects of human life, exploring how Islam influences the daily leadership practices of its followers. The focus of leadership in Islam is to do good for the sake of Allah, the Muslim community, and humanity (Sari et al., 2021). The Islamic leadership approach is human-oriented rather than production-oriented (Supriyadi et al., 2020).

A leader in Islam must possess the qualities of Khaadimul Ummah because Khaadimul Ummah is a religious value that underpins a leader in carrying out their duties to serve, create justice for both personal and employee interests, fulfill their leadership duties based on trust, and strive to enhance balanced well-being in this world and the hereafter for employees. They should always pay attention to and respect their subordinates, make decisions by setting a good example, uphold ethical and moral norms.

Good leadership will have an impact on the success of an organization, leadership based on religious values (religiosity). Research on religiosity values is very interesting because it is related to leadership that plays a strategic role in an organization. A study by Ahmed et al. (2019) on religiosity and leadership shows that the capacity and religiosity values of a leader can guide the organizational leadership process towards better and healthier potential. Studies on spirituality or the application of religious values in work or organizational activities will increase employee goals to a higher level (Markow & Klenke, 2005), and religious values will encourage ethical behavior underlying decision-making processes (Vasconcelos, 2009), which will also have a significant impact on overall organizational effectiveness (Chen et al., 2012).

Similarly, the leadership patter n in private universities, especially in study programs, is always required to achieve effectiveness in organizational management and good organizational performance, with specific standards set by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, to fulfill these obligations, the Khadimul Integrity Leadership approach can be implemented to influence better and sustainable organizational performance.

The Influence of Knowledge on Khaadimul Integrity Leadership

Knowledge is one of the key factors that support the effectiveness of leadership, especially in the context of Khaadimul Integrity Leadership. According to Mahdi & Nassar (2021), knowledge is an important aspect in transformational leadership that involves high integrity and ethics. Meanwhile, Nonaka & Lewin (1994) emphasize that leaders with extensive knowledge can create value for the organization, including in the dimension of integrity

leadership. These findings support that the higher the level of knowledge a leader possesses, the greater the impact in strengthening Khaadimul Integrity Leadership, leading to the achievement of good organizational performance. Therefore, the hypothesis in this study is: Higher knowledge will enhance the implementation of Khaadimul Integrity Leadership (H1).

The Influence of Skills on Khadimul Integrity Leadership

Integrity Leadership is a leadership style that emphasizes integrity, ethics, and service to others. Several studies have shown a positive influence of skills on integrity leadership (Issa & Hall, 2024). According to Nallaya et al. (2024), having skills can reduce academic integrity violations depending on whether the assessment has been well designed, organized, and implemented. This study found that the technical skills of leaders do not always directly correlate with integrity in leadership. Leaders with high skills are able to maintain and strengthen integrity in leadership. They are more effective in communicating vision, providing guidance, and setting an example of integrity within the organization. These results support the view that the higher the skills of a leader, the greater their impact in strengthening Khadimul Integrity Leadership. Therefore, the hypothesis in this study is: The higher the skills, the better the implementation of Khadimul Integrity Leadership (H2).

The Influence of Ability on Khadimul Integrity Leadership

Khadimul Integrity Leadership emphasizes the importance of integrity, ethics, and strong service in leadership. Ability in the context of leadership includes various skills needed to effectively manage an organization, including intellectual, emotional, and managerial skills. Previous research has shown a positive influence between Ability and Khadimul Integrity Leadership, according to Zhou (2022). It states that leader's skills and abilities, including analytical and interpersonal skills, significantly contribute to the effectiveness of integrity-based leadership. Abdulai et al. (2025) state that the ability to solve complex problems is closely related to ethical leadership behavior and integrity. Leaders with high ability are more likely to adhere to ethical standards and act with integrity because they can understand the complexity of situations that require an ethical approach. Therefore, a leader's ability supports the creation of Khadimul Integrity Leadership. Thus, the higher a leader's ability, the stronger their potential to strengthen the implementation of Khadimul Integrity Leadership by maintaining high ethical standards and providing trustworthy leadership examples. Therefore, the hypothesis in this study is: The higher the ability, the greater the implementation of Khadimul Integrity Leadership (H3).

The Influence of Khaadimul Integrity Leadership on Creativity

Creativity in the workplace encompasses the dimensions of ideation, execution, and evaluation of outcomes, which contribute to the development of new products or processes that support competitive advantage (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). Leaders with high integrity tend to facilitate freedom of expression, enabling employees to feel more confident in presenting new ideas (Liu et al., 2021). Employees led by individuals with Khaadimul Integrity Leadership feel more inspired and motivated to innovate, generating new ideas beneficial to the organization. The work environment created by Khaadimul Integrity Leadership (KIL) leaders fosters a sense of safety and collaboration, enhancing employees' ability to think creatively. Empirical studies have explored the relationship between KIL and creativity, as well as other factors that may influence this relationship. Servant leadership with high integrity can influence the leader's creativity in carrying out activities and achieving good organizational performance. Therefore, the hypothesis in this study is: The higher the Khaadimul Integrity Leadership, the higher the creativity (H4).

The Influence of Creativity on Organizational Performance

Creativity is the ability to generate new ideas, innovative solutions, and unique ways to solve problems. Organizations with a culture that supports creativity tend to achieve better performance, according to Amabile, T. M. (1996). Research shows that an environment that supports creativity, including giving employees' freedom, can enhance innovation and, in turn, organizational performance. According to Hirst, G., van Knippenberg, D., & Zhou, J. (2009), Caniëls, M. C. J., & Veldhoven, M. J. P. M. (2016) provide evidence of a significant relationship between a leader's creativity in allowing employees the freedom to innovate and productivity. Empirical studies on a leader's creativity have a positive impact on organizational performance. With the creativity possessed by a leader, there will be many ideas or concepts for activities to solve the problems faced in the organization. Based on these studies, it can be concluded that a leader's creativity can enhance organizational performance. Therefore, the hypothesis in this research is: The Higher the Creativity, the Higher the Organizational Performance (H5).

The Influence of Khadimul Integrity Leadership on Organizational Performance

Khadimul ummah is a leadership approach that emphasizes values of integrity, ethics, and service to others. Leaders with integrity leadership focus on the importance of making ethical and responsible decisions. Good decisions aligned with organizational values can have a positive impact on the reputation and overall performance

of the organization. Research indicates a positive relationship between Integrity Leadership and organizational performance. According to Shahin, A., & Zairi, M. (2011), leaders with integrity can drive innovation and enhance organizational performance by creating a culture that supports creativity. Research by García-Morales, V. J., Llorens-Montes, F. J., & Verdú-Jover, A. J. (2008) shows a significant relationship between integrity-oriented leadership and organizational performance, emphasizing employee commitment and collaboration. Based on these studies, it can be concluded that high and consistent implementation of Khadimul Integrity Leadership can improve organizational performance. Therefore, the hypothesis in this study is: High implementation of Khadimul Integrity Leadership will lead to higher Organizational Performance (H6).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative approach with data analysis conducted using the SMART-PLS software. Testing techniques included discriminant validity, reliability, and hypothesis testing. The research population consisted of leaders of private universities in Central Java. Samples were selected using purposive sampling based on specific criteria such as Deans, Directors, or Chairpersons. A total of 273 respondents were involved in the study. Data collection was done through closed and open-ended questions using a Google Form-based questionnaire with a rating scale of 1-10.

The indicator variable "Knowledge" includes organizational knowledge, strategic knowledge, knowledge of leadership, knowledge of ethics and social responsibility, and knowledge of innovation and technology. The indicator variable "Skill" includes communication skills, decision-making skills, team motivation skills, change leadership skills, and relationship-building skills. The indicator variable "Ability" includes team leadership skills, problem-solving skills, environmental adaptation skills, and innovation skills. Khaadimul Integrity Leadership includes Fairness, Trustworthiness, Balance, and Morality. The indicator variable "Creativity" includes generating new ideas, flexibility in decision-making, utilizing modern technology, and fostering creativity. The indicator variable "Organizational Performance" includes faculty performance, regional and international cooperation, teaching quality, and scholarly publications.
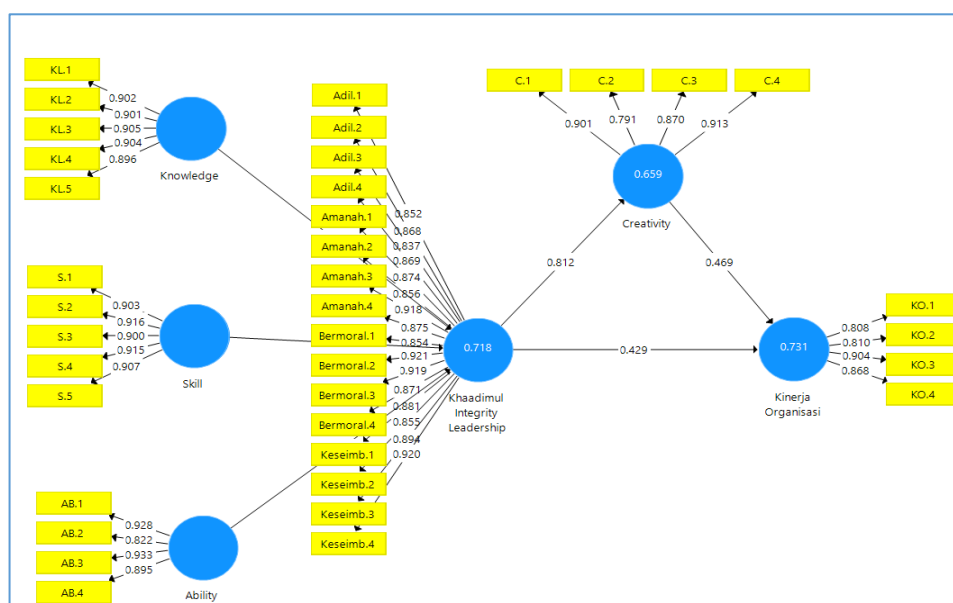
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Convergent Validity

Figure 1. Test of Validity

The analysis results show that all indicators have a correlation with the latent variable above 0.70, indicating that each indicator can adequately represent the latent variable construct.

Reliability Test

The reliability test was conducted using the PLS algorithm technique by looking at the value of Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha value is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Result
Ability	0,917	Reliable
Creativity	0,892	Reliable
Khaadimul Integrity Leadership	0,980	Reliable
Kinerja Organisasi	0,869	Reliable
Knowledge	0,943	Reliable
Skill	0,947	Reliable

The research results show that the scores of all variables are above 0.80, meaning that all variables have good reliability (David Garson, 2016). Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables are reliable and can be used in the next testing.

Model Fit

Model fit test was conducted using the PLS algorithm technique by looking at the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) in the Model Fit. The SRMR value is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model	Result
SRMR	0.050	0.064	Good fit

The research results show that the SRMR score is 0.050 or less than 0.08, meaning that the model fit in this study is met. Therefore, the model in this study is a good fit and can be used for further testing.

Structural Path Coefficients

Test of *Structural Path Coefficient* was done by PLS *Bootstrapping,* consirdering *path coefficient. Path coefficient* was displayed in Tabel 3.

Table 2. Structural Path Coefficient

	Hipothysis	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics ($|O/STDEV|$)	P Values	result
H1	Knowledge -> Khaadimul Integrity Leadership	0,367	6,125	0,000	Significant
H2	Skill -> Khaadimul Integrity Leadership	0,363	4,687	0,000	Significant
H3	Ability -> Khaadimul Integrity Leadership	0,263	3,454	0,001	Significant
H4	Khaadimul Integrity Leadership -> Creativity	0,812	31,593	0,000	Significant
H5	Creativity -> Organisasion Performance	0,469	7,892	0,000	Significant
H6	Khaadimul Integrity Leadership -> Organisasion Performance	0,430	7,040	0,000	Significant

The research results indicate that all hypotheses were accepted, as evidenced by all T Statistics values of 7.040 > 1.96 and P Value of 0.000 < 0.05. Hypothesis 1 states that as knowledge increases, the level of integrity leadership will also increase, in line with previous research (Nonaka & Lewin, 1994). Hypothesis 2 suggests that as skills increase, the level of integrity leadership will also increase, consistent with research findings (Issa & Hall, 2024). Hypothesis 3 indicates that as ability increases, the level of integrity leadership will also increase, in line with findings from Zhou (2022). Hypothesis 4 states that higher levels of integrity leadership lead to increased creativity, consistent with research by Liu et al. (2021). Hypothesis 5 suggests that higher creativity leads to higher organizational performance, in line with research by Hirst, G., van Knippenberg, D., & Zhou, J. (2009). Hypothesis 6 states that higher levels of integrity leadership lead to higher organizational performance, consistent with the study by Shahin, A., & Zairi, M. (2011).

R-Square

R-Square Test has been done by PLS *Algorithm*. R-Square value was displayed in Table 4.

Table 3. R-Square

Variabel	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Result
Creativity	0,659	0,658	High
Khaadimul Integrity Leadership	0,718	0,715	High
Organizational performance	0,731	0,729	High

The research results show that creativity has a significant and simultaneous influence. This means that the variable of khaadimul integrity leadership collectively influences creativity by 66%. The combined and simultaneous effect of khaadimul integrity leadership on management competence is 0.718, which is 71.8%. The combined and simultaneous effect of organizational performance on management competence, khaadimul integrity leadership, and creativity is 0.731, which is 73.1%.

CONCLUSION

The research findings confirm that knowledge, skills, and abilities play a significant role in strengthening Khaadimul Integrity Leadership (KIL), which in turn has a positive impact on creativity and organizational performance. These findings support the theory of Islamic spiritual-based leadership, which emphasizes integrity, service, and moral accountability in leadership practices. KIL has been shown to not only enhance trust and collaboration among organizational members but also to promote an innovative culture that contributes to the improvement of performance in private higher education institutions in Central Java. Therefore, the KIL model can be positioned as a conceptual alternative that enriches modern leadership literature while also responding to the contextual needs of Islamic values-based higher education organizations.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Firstly, university leaders need to internalize the values of KIL (fair, trustworthy, moral, and service-oriented) in making strategic decisions. Secondly, investments in training and developing managerial competencies (knowledge, skill, ability) should be directed not only towards technical aspects but also towards strengthening integrity and ethical leadership. Thirdly, higher education organizations are advised to build a performance assessment system that emphasizes creativity, innovation, and moral contribution, so that faculty performance, teaching quality, and international collaboration can improve continuously. Fourthly, the KIL model can be used as a reference in formulating leadership policies in the education sector, especially to enhance institutional competitiveness and accreditation.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations. First, the data were collected only from private university leaders in Central Java, so generalization to other contexts (such as the public sector or non-education industries) is still limited. Second, the use of a cross-sectional design may not capture the dynamics of leadership behavior changes in the long term. Third, perception-based questionnaire instruments may introduce subjective bias from respondents. Future research is recommended to test the KIL model in other organizational sectors, such as state-owned enterprises, government agencies, or non-profit organizations. Future research could also use a longitudinal approach to assess the long-term impact of KIL on organizational performance. Additionally, integrating qualitative methods to enrich understanding of KIL practices in the field. Developing a comparative model between KIL and other leadership models (transformational, authentic, or ethical) to assess their relative effectiveness in different contexts.

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