

# OPTIMIZING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: THE INTERPLAY OF LEADERSHIP, MOTIVATION, AND WORK DISCIPLINE

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**Abstract:** This study examines the relationship between early childhood English language acquisition and Islamic education, emphasizing the benefits and difficulties present in this dynamic learning environment. The need for English language proficiency among young students in Islamic educational settings has significantly expanded as a result of growing globalization. According to this study, cultural views, disparities in teacher ability, and a lack of resources are some of the main obstacles that can prevent effective English language instruction. However, it also draws attention to significant chances to incorporate Islamic principles into English language instruction strategies in order to improve students' involvement and contextual awareness. This study intends to provide information on efficient teaching techniques that are in line with both Islamic teachings and contemporary language learning techniques by using qualitative approaches such as interviews and classroom observations. The findings of the study indicate that early childhood students enrolled in Islamic education can greatly increase their English proficiency with a well-rounded approach that honors cultural context while implementing cutting-edge teaching techniques. This study offers useful suggestions for educators and legislators who want to establish more inclusive and productive learning settings, as well as contributing to the current conversation on multilingual education.

**Key Word:** Leadership, Motivation, Work discipline, Employee performance.

## Introduction

Employee performance plays a crucial role in achieving an institution's mission and vision, and educational institutions are no exception. Educational institutions, such as Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB) in Medan, rely heavily on the optimal performance of their entire staff to deliver quality educational programs. Established in 2005, MAUB has been actively offering various Islamic Studies and Arabic language programs. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence employee performance, particularly within Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah, is crucial for the institution's sustainability and quality improvement.

Employee performance in educational institutions may differ from that in companies. In educational institutions, factors such as competence, work motivation, and organizational culture play a significant role in determining employee performance (Sitopu et al., 2021). Furthermore, religiosity and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) also influence the performance of government employees in educational institutions (Istyarini, 2019; Muis et al., 2018). This contrasts with companies, which often focus on motivation, work discipline, and compensation (Maulana et al., 2020), as well as leadership and work discipline (Machmud, 2020; Sriekaningsih et al., 2018). Therefore, this study will evaluate and identify elements that have the potential to directly impact employee performance at MAUB, focusing on

aspects of leadership, motivation, and work discipline, which are expected to contribute positively to improving employee performance.

Based on these problems, this study aims to analyze the extent to which the role of leadership, motivation, and work discipline affects employee performance at Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah Medan. The main research question is: "How and to what extent do the roles of leadership, motivation, and work discipline affect employee performance at Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah Medan?" This study will use a survey method with a quantitative approach, and OLS regression analysis will be applied to measure the influence of these variables. The hypothesis to be tested is "Leadership, motivation, and work discipline have a positive and significant influence on employee performance at the Arabic Language and Islamic Studies educational institution in Medan." The collected data will be analyzed statistically to test this hypothesis, with the hope of providing a better understanding of performance optimization at MAUB.

This study is expected to make significant contributions in two main areas. First, it will expand the body of knowledge by investigating the impact of leadership, motivation, and work discipline on employee performance in the context of the education sector, complementing previous studies conducted in the business environment. Second, it offers a new perspective by focusing on Islamic institutions, an area that has received limited attention in previous scholarly investigations. The results are expected to provide practical recommendations for MAUB to strengthen leadership, enhance motivation, and enforce work discipline to optimize employee performance.

## Method

This study employed a quantitative approach to measure the influence of leadership, motivation, and work discipline on employee performance in Arabic and Islamic Studies educational institutions in Medan City. The quantitative approach was chosen as it allows for the collection of numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to produce valid and reliable results (Rack & Grech, 2018). This method provides an objective measurement of how independent variables influence the dependent variable. The subjects of this study were employees of Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB), totaling 47 respondents. The inclusion criteria required participants to have worked at the institution for at least one year.

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire designed to measure employees' perceptions of leadership, motivation, work discipline, and performance. A pilot test was conducted beforehand to reduce item ambiguity and ensure clarity of the questionnaire. To address the issue of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012; Tirtayasa et al., 2021), proximal separation was implemented by separating the sections related to independent variables (leadership, motivation, and work discipline) from those measuring the dependent variable (employee performance).

The research procedure began with distributing the questionnaires to respondents, followed by data analysis using SPSS version 26. Quantitative analysis included validity and reliability testing to confirm the quality of the research instrument (N. Hopfenbeck, 2019), as well as classical assumption tests such as multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, normality, and linearity to ensure the data met statistical prerequisites. Once these assumptions were satisfied, further analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression, F-test, t-test, and  $R^2$  test to assess the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Additionally, inter-dimensional correlation analysis was optionally employed to explore the relationships among the independent variables (Ermawati et al., 2019; Moral de la Rubia, 2019; Tate & Perdices, 2018).

## Result and Discussion

### A. Instrument Validity

Validity checks are applied to measure the validity of survey instruments. This test is run by utilizing the Pearson correlation, which calculates the relationship between the values obtained from each question. A model can be valid if the r-count value is greater than the r-table value and the r-value is positive. In this study, the correlation coefficient was calculated with the help of SPSS software version 26. Based on the results of the analysis, all questions or statements for independent and dependent variables are considered valid because they have an r-count value (Corrected Item Total Correlation) that is greater than the r-table value (0.2816) using the value of df N-2 and the specified level of significance. Therefore, the indicators in this study deserve to be considered valid and can be used as measurement variables.

### B. Instrument Reliability

The technique used to measure reliability is to look at the Cronbach Alpha, which compares the alpha value to a limit value of 0.60. Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis is commonly used to assess the internal consistency of scales or questionnaires. It measures the degree to which items in the scale correlate with each other and provides an estimate of the reliability or consistency of the scale. A Cronbach Alpha value of 0.60 or higher is generally considered acceptable, indicating good internal consistency. The following is Cornbach's Alpha value for each variable that has been calculated and shows that all variables are reliable. (Aguirre et al., 2021; Ercan & Önal, 2021; Xie et al., 2021).

Tabel 1. Reliability Test Results

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Limit Value	Status
Leadership (X1)	0.945	0.60	Reliable
Motivation (X2)	0.906	0.60	Reliable
Work Discipline (X3)	0.945	0.60	Reliable
Performance (Y)	0.950	0.60	Reliable

### C. Multicollinearity Testing

Multicollinearity refers to a high degree of linear intercorrelation between explanatory variables in multiple regression models, which can lead to incorrect results in regression analysis. Diagnostic tools to detect multicollinearity include inflation factor variance (VIF), condition index and condition number, and proportion of variance decomposition (VDP(Kim, 2019) ). Multicollinearity in regression models can be assessed by looking at the variance inflation factor (VIF) value. The VIF should not exceed 10.0 or have a tolerance of less than 0.10.(Edith Uzoma, 2015; Kim, 2019). The three independent variables, namely Leadership (X1), Motivation (X2), and Work Discipline (X3), have a VIF value within the predetermined tolerance limit of 10.0 or tolerance not less than 0.10 so that it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity in the independent variable in this research.

### D. Normality Testing

Data normality testing is important in regression analysis to determine whether dependent and independent variables follow a normal distribution. If the data points are scattered around a diagonal line and follow its direction, the regression model satisfies the normality assumption (Budiman & Hairah, 2021). The picture below shows the results of the normality test performed.

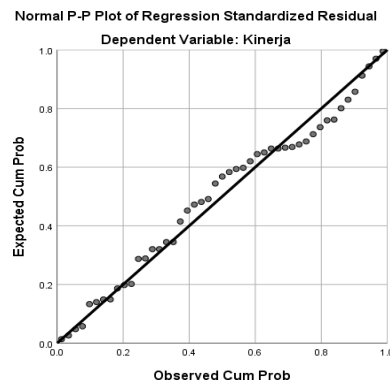


Figure 1. Normality Test Results

Based on Figure 1 above, it can be seen that the regression model meets the assumptions mentioned earlier, so it can be stated that the regression model in this study tends to be normal.

Table 2. Summary of Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients

Variable	Regression Coefficient	t count	Sig.
Constant	12.851		
Leadership (X <sub>1</sub> )	0.046	2.328	0.024
Motivation (X <sub>2</sub> )	0.076	5.389	0.000
Work Discipline (X <sub>3</sub> )	0.396	7.289	0.000
Performance (Y)			
F Count	17,416		0.000
R Square	0.549		

### E. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis is used to understand the influence between the independent and dependent variables. This allows the estimation and prediction of the dependent variable based on the known value of the independent variable. (Gupta, 2015; Jeelani et al., 2012; Tumin et al., 2020) The table below shows the results summary of multiple linear regression coefficients that have been performed:

### F. Test T

We use the following principle to test the effect between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y). Suppose the value of the t-count is greater than the t-table. In that case, Ho (null hypothesis) is rejected, which means that the independent variable partially influences the dependent variable. Conversely, if the value of the t-count is smaller than the t-table, Ho is accepted, which means the independent variable has no partial influence on the dependent variable

#### 1. The Influence of Leadership on Performance

Based on the results of calculations that have been done, it can be seen that the t-calculated value for the effect of the Leadership variable (X<sub>1</sub>) on Performance (Y) is 2.328, which is greater than the t-table value (df = 47 - 3 = 44) of 2.015 (with a significance of 0.024). The significance of t is less than alpha (α) = 0.05, which means Leadership (X<sub>1</sub>) partially has a positive and significant influence on Performance (Y). Thus, these results support the hypothesis in this study, with H<sub>0</sub> rejected, and H<sub>a</sub>

accepted. In another sense, leadership improvement among employees will positively impact their performance at Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB).

## 2. The Effect of Motivation on Performance

Based on the results of calculations that have been carried out, it can be seen that the t-calculated value for the effect of the Motivation variable (X2) on Performance (Y) is 5.389, which exceeds the value of the t-table ( $df = 47 - 3 = 44$ ) by 2.015 (with a significance of 0.000). This significance value t is lower than alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05. Therefore, this shows that Motivation (X2) partially positively and significantly influences Performance (Y). In other words, if motivation among employees continues to be improved, it will impact their performance at Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB). Based on these results, it can be said that the hypothesis in this study is accepted, in which H0 is rejected, and Ha is accepted.

## 3. The Effect of Work Discipline on Performance

Based on the results of calculations that have been carried out, it can be seen that the t-calculated value for the effect of the Work Discipline variable (X3) on Performance (Y) is 7.289, which is greater than the value of the t-table ( $df = 47 - 3 = 44$ ) 2.015 (with a significance of 0.000). This significance value t is lower than alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05. This means that Work Discipline (X3) has a significant and positive influence on Performance (Y) partially. In other words, improving Work Discipline will impact employee performance at Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB). Thus, based on these results, it can be concluded that the hypothesis in the study is accepted, in which H0 is rejected, and Ha is accepted

## G. Simultaneous Significant Test (F Test)

The simultaneous significant test (f test) shows whether all the independent variables included in this model influence the dependent variable; the proof is done by comparing the F value of the > table with the calculated F value. Based on the F value,  $17,416 > F_{table} 3.21$  is obtained from the formula  $df = n - k - 1$  with a sig of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , showing Ho rejected. Ha accepted means Leadership (X 1), Motivation (X 2), and work discipline (X3) have a positive and significant effect on performance (Y) at the level of 0.05. Thus, it can be interpreted that if leadership, motivation, and work discipline in employees continue to be improved, it will impact employee performance in Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB).

## H. Coefficient of Determination

By looking at the adjusted R-Square that has counted, it will be seen how the contribution value of the three independent variables to the dependent can be seen that leadership, motivation, and work discipline contribute to performance, and by looking at the Adjusted R-Square (D) =  $R^2 \times 100\%$  is 0.549, it is known that the contribution of leadership, motivation, and work discipline to performance is 54.9%. This means that leadership, motivation, and work discipline contribute to performance 54.9%. In comparison, the remaining 46.1% are contributed by other variables that are not studied, such as organizational culture, work supervision, organizational climate, etc

## Discussion

### A. The Influence of Leadership on Performance

Based on the results of the tests that have been carried out, important findings were achieved relating to the influence of the Leadership variable (X1) on performance (Y) with the number  $t 2.328 > t \text{ table } (df = 47 - 3 = 34) 2.015$  (sig 0.024), where significantly t is less than  $= 0.05$ . This implies that leadership (X1) positively and significantly influences performance (Y). Leadership's positive and significant effect in improving employee performance at Ma'had

Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB) is evident, indicating that if employee leadership is further improved, their performance will also improve.

This aligns with and supports previous research; Influential leadership plays an important role in educational organizations. For this reason, leaders need to have a clear vision and the ability to support the organization to create a dynamic and positive work environment. Transformational leadership, which focuses on employee empowerment and motivation, can promote organizational behavior and improve teacher performance. Trust in leadership is also important to the success of educational institutions. Leaders should strive to build and strengthen trust among themselves, employees, and the entire organization (Franco & Alvarado, 2020; Tamam et al., 2020; Wangari Njuguna et al., 2021) Leadership in Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB) is generally good, this can be seen from the leadership communicating kindly and courteously to subordinates and always being clearly understood and accepted, Leaders also show high dedication and commitment to improving organizational performance, leaders also have awareness in correcting mistakes, leaders provide feedback regularly, and employees always get motivation from their superiors to work better.

However, according to the responses given by the respondents, the capacity of leaders to understand the changes within the organization could be improved. In addition, it is known that leaders tend to be less responsive in imposing strict sanctions on violations of work rules committed by employees who neglect existing rules.

#### B. The Effect of Motivation on Performance

Based on the results of previous tests, significant results were obtained t the effect of the Motivation variable (X2) on performance (Y) of t count  $5.110 > t$  table (df = 47 - 3 = 44) 2.015 (sig 0.000), where significant t is smaller than = 0.05. This means that Motivation (X2) partially positively and significantly influences performance (Y). Motivation has a positive and significant effect on improving employee performance at □Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB), meaning that if motivation continues to be improved, employee performance will also increase.

This is in line with the results of previous studies where the activation has a positive effect on employee performance in several studies, including the research of Handayani et al. found that providing training and motivation has a positive and significant influence on employee performance at PT. Distribution of Sentra Jaya Tangerang. Purnomo et al. also concluded that motivation positively affects employee performance at PT—Dharma Guna Citra (Cheerful). Paais and Pattiruhu's study shows that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at Wahana Resources Ltd. Overall, these studies provide evidence for the positive effects of motivation on employee performance.(Handayani, 2020; PAAIS & PATTIRUHU, 2020; Purnomo et al., 2020)The motivation of Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB) employees is generally good; this can be seen when employees get an environment of friendship, which supports each other, and input for work results, awards given by leaders and support from Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah leaders for innovations that employees want to do.

#### C. The Effect of Motivation on Performance

Based on the results of previous tests, significant results were obtained t the effect of the Work Discipline variable (X3) on performance (Y) of t count  $4.079 > t$  table (df = 47 - 3 = 44) 2.015 (sig 0.000), where significant t is smaller than = 0.05. This means that work discipline (X3) partially has a positive and significant influence on performance (Y). so it can be concluded that work discipline has a positive and significant effect on improving

employee performance at Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB), meaning that if the discipline that has been applied is further improved, employee performance will also increase.

This aligns with several previous research results, such as research conducted by Maduningtias et al. at PT. Transkom Indonesia in Tangerang found that work discipline positively and significantly influences employee performance by 35.0%. Similarly, Syatoto found that work discipline positively and significantly influenced employee work performance by 49.7%. Sipahelut et al. also found that work discipline significantly positively affects employee work performance. (Maduningtias, 2020; Sipahelut et al., 2021; Syatoto, 2019) These findings suggest that work discipline improves employee performance. Similarly to research in the context of Sultan Agung Private High School, work discipline has been found to affect teacher performance positively. Furthermore, a study conducted at Gorontalo State University also found a significant influence of work discipline on employee performance. These findings suggest that maintaining high levels of labor discipline among teachers and employees can lead to improved performance in educational institutions. (Abdul Muis et al., 2021; Sudirman et al., 2020) In improving employee discipline, it is better to use three kinds of discipline traits: preventive, corrective, and progressive. Employee discipline is expected to apply these three kinds of traits.

It is worth using three types of disciplinary traits to improve employee discipline: preventive, corrective, and progressive. These three types of discipline work together to ensure that employees comply with rules and regulations, maintain high-performance levels, and contribute to a positive work environment. Preventive discipline focuses on setting clear expectations and providing guidance to employees to prevent disciplinary issues from arising. Corrective discipline involves addressing disciplinary issues as they occur and taking appropriate action to correct behavior. A progressive discipline is a step-by-step approach that starts with mild consequences and gradually increases in severity if the behavior continues. By implementing these three types of discipline, organizations can effectively manage discipline issues, maintain employee discipline, and promote workplace harmony. (Moses Et Al., 2021b)(Leonard, 2020)(Soares Et Al., 2020)(Candra Et Al., 2020)

The work discipline of Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB) employees is generally good; this can be seen where leaders can be role models in showing work discipline, besides that employees also tend to be active and take the initiative in working to achieve organizational goals. However, it needs to be a concern to provide sanctions that are more fair and consistent with violations of work discipline committed by employees. In addition, organizations need to pay attention to the salaries given to employees to be more in line with the duties and responsibilities given.

#### D. The Influence of Leadership, Motivation, and Work Discipline on Performance

Based on the results of the F test obtained, the F value in the table above is  $17.416 > F_{table 3.21}$  obtained from the formula  $df = n - k - 1$  with a sig of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , showing  $H_0$  rejected.  $H_a$  accepted, which means Leadership (X 1), Motivation (X 2), and work discipline (X3) have a positive and significant effect on performance (Y) at the level of 0.05. So it can be concluded that if employees' leadership, motivation, and work discipline are always improved, it will impact the performance of Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB) employees.

This is also by research in the last five years related to leadership, motivation, and work discipline found to significantly impact employee performance in various studies. Research shows that workplace motivation, leadership, and discipline greatly affect employee performance. Similarly, it found that work discipline, leadership, and motivation significantly affected staff performance. It also concluded that leadership, motivation, and work discipline

significantly influence employee performance. It also found that motivation, work discipline, and leadership style positively and significantly affected employee performance. Soares Et Al., 2020 Moon Et Al., 2020 Alhakim, 2020 Abdul Muis Et Al., 2021

The performance of employees at Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB) has been quite good, as evidenced by respondents' answers, with the majority agreeing on various aspects such as adherence to established standards, ease of performance, expected quality of performance, and active participation in assigned tasks.

However, certain employees need more leadership support, motivation, and work discipline, resulting in decreased motivation and low-performance standards. This is because these employees show low commitment to achieving optimal performance; some employees cannot complete their work within the stipulated time frame, while others are inactive in fulfilling assigned tasks. Leaders must improve employee performance by implementing the necessary measures.

### **Conclusion**

This study analyzes the influence of leadership, motivation, and work discipline on employee performance at Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB) in Medan City. Through quantitative research methods and statistical analysis using SPSS Version 26, this study has successfully shown that these three independent variables significantly influence employee performance.

Leadership in this institution affects employee performance, which shows the importance of effective and inspiring leadership in creating a conducive work environment for employees. This aligns with previous literature that emphasizes the importance of leadership in achieving organizational goals. Motivation also significantly influences employee performance, supporting motivation theory which asserts that motivation can encourage individuals to work harder and achieve their goals. In the context of this institution, institutions need to create effective motivation strategies to encourage employees to work harder and more efficiently.

Work discipline also affects employee performance, affirming the importance of discipline in ensuring work efficiency and effectiveness. In this context, institutions should strive to enforce employee work discipline to ensure optimal performance. Based on the results of this study, Ma'had Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (MAUB) should consider strategies to strengthen leadership, increase motivation, and enforce work discipline to optimize employee performance. In addition, these findings can also be a reference for similar institutions in understanding and optimizing the performance of their employees.

For future research, it is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse sample of different educational institutions of Arabic Language and Islamic Studies in different cities. In addition, future research can also explore other factors that may affect employee performance, such as organizational commitment, organizational culture, and work environment.

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