



Impact of Islamic leadership, motivation, and work-life balance on performance: A gender analysis

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to analyze the effect of Islamic leadership on employee performance by integrating Islamic work motivation, work environment, and work-life balance (WLB) as mediating and contextual factors, while also examining gender differences through Multi-Group Analysis (MGA).

Methodology – This study employs a quantitative approach with survey data collected from 80 employees working in Islamic banking and financial institutions and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Findings – The findings indicate that Islamic work motivation significantly enhances employee performance, both directly and indirectly, through WLB. In contrast, Islamic leadership and the work environment do not have a direct significant effect on employee performance, highlighting the need for more consistent application of Islamic leadership values. The MGA results reveal no significant gender difference in the influence of Islamic leadership on employee performance but show that women face greater challenges in achieving WLB, reflecting their dual roles in professional and personal spheres.

Implications – The findings imply that organizations should strengthen the implementation of Islamic leadership values consistently, promote Islamic work motivation, and design inclusive policies that address gender-specific challenges in achieving work-life balance.

Originality – This study offers originality by explicitly integrating gender dynamics into an Islamic leadership framework. Unlike previous studies that focus mainly on the general aspects of Islamic leadership, this research highlights how gender differences, particularly women's dual roles, shape the relationship between Islamic leadership, work-life balance, and employee performance.

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Introduction

Islamic leadership has many values that parallel or exceed modern leadership approaches, such as servant, ethical, and spiritual leadership. Islamic leadership has a unique value system that covers all aspects of human life (Zaim et al., 2021). In the research of Kessi et al. (2022) found that Islamic

leadership has a significant and positive effect on employee performance. This means that Muslim leaders can lead with integrity, justice, and deep concern for the welfare of those leaders. Islamic leadership emphasizes the importance of creating an ethical organizational culture that ensures fair treatment for all employees, regardless of their background (Hussin & Abd Mutalib, 2021).

Islam strongly upholds the principle of gender equality. In Islam, women have equal rights to men in various aspects of their lives, including leadership (Koburtay et al., 2023; Koburtay & Abuhussein, 2021). This is proven through the examples of many influential female figures in Islamic history, such as Khadijah bint Khuwailid, Aisyah bint Abu Bakar, and Fatimah bint Muhammad. However, some views still prevent women from taking on leadership roles, with reasons stemming from religious interpretations that limit women's roles in leadership. In fact, Islam recognizes equal positions between men and women, as affirmed by the QS. Al-Hujurat: Thirteen "Men and women are equal. They are the best of Allah's creations." In addition, it is found in the Qur'an Surah An-Nisa : 34 which "Men (husbands) are the leaders of women, because Allah has preferred some of them (men) over others (women), and because they (men) have spent some of their wealth."

Figure 1 shows that men have advantages in terms of physical strength and livelihood, so they lead the family and society. However, this does not mean that women cannot lead. Women have the same potential as men as good leaders.

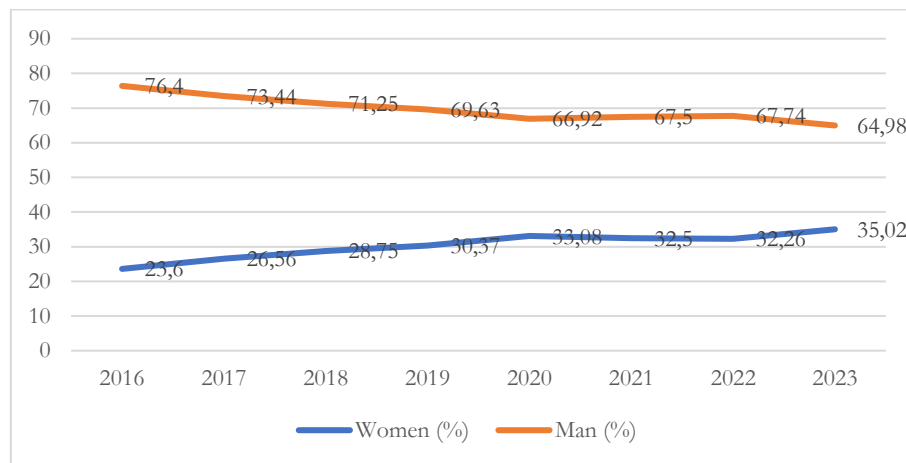


Figure 1. Manager position based on gender

Source: Badan Pusat Statistik (2024)

Aside from the explanation of the Quranic verse above, data from the BPS show that although men still dominate managerial positions, the percentage of men in these positions has decreased from 76.4% in 2016 to 64.98% in 2023. In contrast, the percentage of women in managerial positions has significantly increased from 23.6% in 2016 to 35.02% in 2023 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024). These data indicate a shift in leadership dynamics, where women are increasingly playing a role in managerial positions, although men still dominate. This shift is in line with the principle of gender equality in Islam, which provides space for women to assume leadership roles. Even so, there are still major challenges to achieving gender parity in leadership, especially in a social and cultural context that still views men as primary leaders.

One of the important responsibilities of leaders is to ensure the balance between work and personal life of employees, known as work-life balance. Work-life balance is an important issue in the modern workplace, where the increasing demands of work can have an impact on employees' personal lives. As stated in Hernández Martínez (2023), happiness at work is strongly related to employee productivity. Thus, the role of leaders becomes very important in creating a work environment that supports this balance. Panda and Sahoo (2021) emphasized the importance of work-life balance, which has a significant impact on employee performance. Furthermore, research has Fauziah (2020) found that good work-life balance can significantly improve employee performance, especially in the context of job satisfaction and productivity.

Other considerations in employee performance are work motivation and work environment. Islamic work motivation plays an important role in improving employees' performance. This motivation is deeply rooted in Islamic work ethics, which emphasizes principles such as honesty, diligence, and responsibility sourced from the teachings of the Quran and the life of the Prophet Muhammad (Sulastrı, 2020) by the intention to fulfill one's duties in accordance with Islamic values, which can lead to job satisfaction and higher performance (Aflah et al., 2021; Basir et al., 2023). In addition, the work environment significantly influences employee performance by affecting well-being, satisfaction, and productivity. A conducive work environment includes factors such as physical condition, organizational culture, and interpersonal relationships (Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017; Faez et al., 2023; Isa & Atim, 2019). Islamic-based leadership emphasizes moral values, justice, and responsibility, which encourages work motivation with integrity and high dedication. A work environment aligned with Islamic principles creates an atmosphere conducive to employee well-being. Work-life balance acts as a mediating variable that bridges leadership and employee performance, where performance reflects the effectiveness of all these variables.

Although the literature on Islamic leadership has grown significantly, several research gaps remain. First, most studies still focus on the general aspects of Islamic leadership (Abdelwahed et al., 2024; Astuti et al., 2020; Warsidi et al., 2019) without specifically highlighting the role of gender in such leadership. The increasing participation of women in the workforce provides a new perspective on how gender affects leadership effectiveness based on Islamic values. Second, the concept of work-life balance is often only seen as a practical issue without considering how Islamic values can provide a framework for creating such a balance. In Islam, balance is a basic principle that covers all aspects of life (Zolkefley et al., 2023). Therefore, this study aims to integrate the concept of work-life balance with Islamic leadership as a more comprehensive analytical framework.

In the modern world of work, organizations are required to not only focus on profitability but also on the well-being of their employees. This study is relevant because it integrates Islamic values with contemporary organizational issues, such as leadership, motivation, work environment, and work-life balance. The novelty of this study lies in its explicit incorporation of gender dynamics into the Islamic leadership framework, which has rarely been addressed in previous studies. By combining Islamic leadership with Islamic work motivation, work environment, and work-life balance within a single structural model, this study provides a more holistic understanding of the mechanisms through which Islamic leadership influences employee performance.

Furthermore, by employing Multi-Group Analysis (MGA), this research offers original empirical evidence on how gender differences shape the effectiveness of Islamic leadership and the attainment of work-life balance, enabling organizations to formulate more inclusive and gender-responsive policies. The purpose of this study is to identify the effect of Islamic leadership on employee performance, analyze the role of Islamic work motivation and work environment in enhancing the effectiveness of Islamic leadership, and examine work-life balance as a mediating variable in the relationship between Islamic leadership and employee performance. In addition, this study assessed gender differences using the MGA approach to provide a deeper understanding of how Islamic leadership operates across male and female employees.

The results of this study are expected to make a theoretical contribution by expanding the Islamic leadership literature through the introduction of gender-based comparative analysis and the integration of work-life balance as a mediating mechanism, which has not been jointly explored in prior research. Practically, these findings can guide organizations in designing leadership and employee management strategies that are more effective, inclusive, and grounded in Islamic values.

Literature review

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory (SET), introduced Homans (1958) and developed by Blau (1986), focuses on principles of social exchange, such as norms of reciprocity and balance of interaction, including

the distribution of power in organizational relationships. This theory emphasizes reciprocity, perceived fairness, and balance in relationships, where the benefits provided by organizations generate a sense of obligation among employees to return the favor in the form of loyalty and improved performance (Afrin et al., 2023; Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2011). SET has been widely applied to employer–employee dynamics, showing that supportive leadership and a conducive work environment serve as socioemotional resources that stimulate positive reciprocal actions (Aryee et al., 2012; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Emerson, 1976).

In the context of this study, SET underpins how Islamic leadership influences organizational outcomes. When leaders demonstrate Islamic values, such as fairness, compassion, and responsibility, employees perceive this as a form of support that strengthens their motivation and willingness to reciprocate through higher performance (Beekun & Badawi, 1999). A positive work environment also signals organizational support that encourages constructive reciprocal behavior (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). In addition, organizational sensitivity to employees' personal and family needs, reflected through work-life balance practices, is interpreted as a supportive treatment that enhances employee engagement and performance (Wayne et al., 2017).

Hypotheses development

Islamic leadership and employee performance

Islamic leadership is defined as the ability to influence employees to achieve goals based on the values of the Qur'an and Hadith, by emulating the behavior of the Prophet Muhammad (Sodiq et al., 2024). This concept integrates rationality as the khalifah of Allah with emotional and spiritual balance as his servant (Husti & Mahyarni, 2019). Islamic leadership emphasizes high ethical standards, justice, and responsibility, creating a productive and harmonious organizational culture (Saeed et al., 2014). This form of leadership emphasizes ethical standards and spiritual values in managerial activities, thereby supporting holistic organizational development (Ahmed et al., 2021; Gazi, 2020). Leadership establishes leaders with integrity and positively influences followers through increased motivation, morale, satisfaction, and loyalty to the organization (Daud et al., 2014; Iqbal et al., 2020).

The study by Zaim et al. (2024) and Jumaing et al. (2017) showed a positive relationship between Islamic leadership and employee performance, with morale and motivation as the main factors. Spiritual culture, which is a part of Islamic leadership, also supports performance through increased public service motivation (Hassan et al., 2022). However, Islamic leadership requires the support of other factors, such as the work environment or work-life balance to achieve optimal influence on performance (Sodiq et al., 2024). Based on this theoretical foundation, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{1a}: Islamic leadership has a positive effect on employee performance.

Islamic work motivation and employee performance

Islamic work motivation is rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and the Hadith, which emphasize values such as faith, integrity, sincerity, and responsibility. These values encourage employees to work with honest intentions and view their tasks as a form of worship for Allah, rather than solely pursuing material outcomes (Basir et al., 2023; Sulastri, 2020). Such spiritual motivation creates a balance between worldly and ukhrawi goals, strengthening employees' sense of purpose and enhancing both productivity and personal character (Cader, 2016). Employees who believe that work is an act of devotion tend to demonstrate higher levels of self-regulation, ethical behavior, and resilience, which are essential for achieving strong performance outcomes (Basir et al., 2023; Faliza et al., 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, this relationship can be explained through the lens of intrinsic motivation theory, in which internalized values generate sustainable motivation that leads to consistent effort, persistence, and task focus. Islamic work motivation also aligns with Social Exchange Theory, in which employees who perceive meaningful spiritual fulfillment from work feel a greater obligation to reciprocate through high commitment and improved performance. Empirical evidence supports this causal link, showing that employees with strong Islamic

motivations exhibit greater dedication, productivity, and performance effectiveness (Faliza et al., 2024; Rahmawan et al., 2022). Based on this theoretical and empirical foundation, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₂: Islamic work motivation has a positive effect on employee performance.

Work environment and employee performance

A conducive work environment includes physical conditions, organizational culture, and interpersonal relationships that collectively support employee performance, well-being, and job satisfaction (Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017; Kusuma, 2021). Components such as adequate work facilities, proper compensation, and harmonious work atmosphere contribute to employees' sense of comfort and stability. Physical elements, including noise levels, lighting, temperature, and workplace cleanliness also influence employees' ability to focus, manage stress, and maintain productivity (Mulyanto, 2015; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015). When these environmental factors are optimal, employees experience fewer distractions, reduced fatigue, and greater psychological readiness to perform their tasks.

From a theoretical standpoint, the relationship between the work environment and performance can be explained through job demands–resources theory, which suggests that supportive workplace conditions act as essential resources that improve employees' energy, motivation, and resilience. A positive environment also enhances social support from colleagues and supervisors, strengthens employee morale, and promotes collaborative behavior. Empirical studies have confirmed that supportive work environments increase job satisfaction and effectiveness by fostering emotional stability and reducing workplace stress (Barry & Heizer, 2001; Pawirosumarto et al., 2017; Nabawi, 2019; Handoko et al., 2021). These conditions ultimately lead to improved task completion, higher engagement, and better overall performance. Based on this theoretical and empirical foundation, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₃: Work environment has a positive effect on employee performance.

Work-life balance mediates and employee performance

Work-life balance (WLB) refers to an individual's ability to manage work responsibilities and personal life demands, including health, family relationships, and leisure (Lester, 2024). A high level of WLB enhances employee well-being, reduces psychological strain, and strengthens job satisfaction and productivity (Chowhan & Pike, 2022; Kecklund et al., 2017). Organizations that support employees' WLB benefit from higher retention, greater commitment, and improved performance (Pamungkas et al., 2024). When employees experience a healthy balance, their stress levels decrease, mental clarity increases, and they can focus more effectively on completing their tasks (Abdulaziz et al., 2022).

The mediating role of WLB can be explained through several theoretical mechanisms. Based on the conservation of resources theory, individuals who successfully balance work and personal life can preserve emotional and cognitive resources, which allows them to allocate greater energy and effort toward performance (Chowhan & Pike, 2022). WLB also reduces role conflict and emotional exhaustion, leading to higher task engagement and improved work quality (Pamungkas et al., 2024). In addition, when leaders apply Islamic principles, such as justice, compassion, and wisdom, employees perceive stronger support in managing their dual roles at work and at home. This support enhances WLB and eventually contributes to better performance. Previous empirical studies have confirmed that WLB serves as a mediator linking Islamic leadership to improved employee performance (Saefudin et al., 2024). Based on this theory and empirical evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₄: Work-life balance mediates the effect of Islamic leadership on employee performance.

Work-life balance mediates and employee performance

Work-life balance also plays a significant role in strengthening the effect of Islamic work motivation on employee performance. Employees with strong Islamic work motivation view their tasks as a

form of worship and moral responsibility, which naturally encourages sincerity, discipline, and perseverance (Basir et al., 2023). However, this intrinsic spiritual motivation can only translate into optimal performance when employees experience a balance between work and personal life. When WLB is achieved, employees have greater emotional stability, clearer focus, and sustained energy, which enables their intrinsic motivation to manifest productive behavior and high performance outcomes (Al Fidhdho & Larassaty, 2024; Safitri et al., 2022).

This mediating mechanism can be explained from several theoretical perspectives. According to the conservation of resources theory, individuals who maintain a balance between work and non-work roles are able to preserve psychological and emotional resources that are essential for converting motivation into effective performance (Panda & Sahoo, 2021). In addition, the role balance theory suggests that employees who experience harmony between their job demands and personal responsibilities experience less role conflict, which reduces stress and strengthens their ability to act consistently with their internal values (Kecklund et al., 2017). This alignment allows Islamic work motivation to be expressed through higher task engagement, better decision making, and greater perseverance in completing responsibilities. Therefore, WLB is a crucial condition that enables spiritual motivation to translate into tangible work outcomes. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

H₅: Work-life balance mediates the effect of Islamic work motivation on employee performance.

Work-life balance mediates and employee performance

A positive work environment contributes significantly to employees' ability to achieve work-life balance. A work environment that provides adequate physical facilities, supportive supervision, and healthy interpersonal relationships helps employees manage work demands more effectively while maintaining their personal responsibilities (Isa & Atim, 2019). Such an environment reduces stressors that typically lead to work-family conflict and instead creates conditions that allow employees to distribute their time, energy, and attention more efficiently across life domains (Faez et al., 2023). Employees are better able to maintain their well-being and avoid burnout when job demands are manageable and organizational support is present, which ultimately strengthens their capacity to perform at a higher level.

The mediating mechanism can be understood through the job demands resources theory, which states that a supportive work environment functions as a resource that protects employees from strain and enables them to replenish emotional and cognitive energy. These resources help employees maintain a balance between their work and non-work roles, thereby reducing role overload and psychological fatigue. Environmental psychology perspectives also explain that comfortable and structured work settings promote stability and positive emotional states, which enhances employees' ability to regulate their time and manage competing responsibilities (Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017). When work-life balance is achieved, employees experience lower stress levels, higher engagement, and improved concentration, all of which contribute directly to enhanced performance. Empirical studies support this pathway by showing that WLB mediates the effect of work environment on employee performance (Mujahidin et al., 2023; Sari et al., 2022). Based on this theory, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₆: Work-life balance mediates the effect of the work environment on employee performance.

Previous research shows that Islamic leadership is not influenced by gender but rather by the application of Islamic values (Udin et al., 2019; Wikaningrum & Yuniawan, 2018). However, gender differences may affect work-life balance as women often face the dual challenges of family and professional responsibilities (Bahadur, 2015; Drew & Murtagh, 2005). Based on this foundation, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{1b}: The magnitude of the relationship between Islamic leadership and employee performance differs between men and women.

H_{1c}: The magnitude of the relationship between Islamic leadership and work-life balance differs between men and women.

Figure 2 presents the study's conceptual framework, illustrating the direct and indirect relationships among Islamic leadership, Islamic work motivation, work environment, work-life balance, and employee performance, including the moderating role of gender. Hypotheses H1a, H2, and H3 examined the direct effects of Islamic leadership, Islamic work motivation, and work environment on employee performance. Hypotheses H1b and H1c capture gender-based multi-group analysis of the relationships involving Islamic leadership. Furthermore, hypotheses H4, H5, and H6 specify the mediating role of work-life balance in the relationships between Islamic leadership, Islamic work motivation, work environment, and employee performance. All hypothesis labels were positioned directly on their respective structural paths to clearly indicate the relationships being tested..

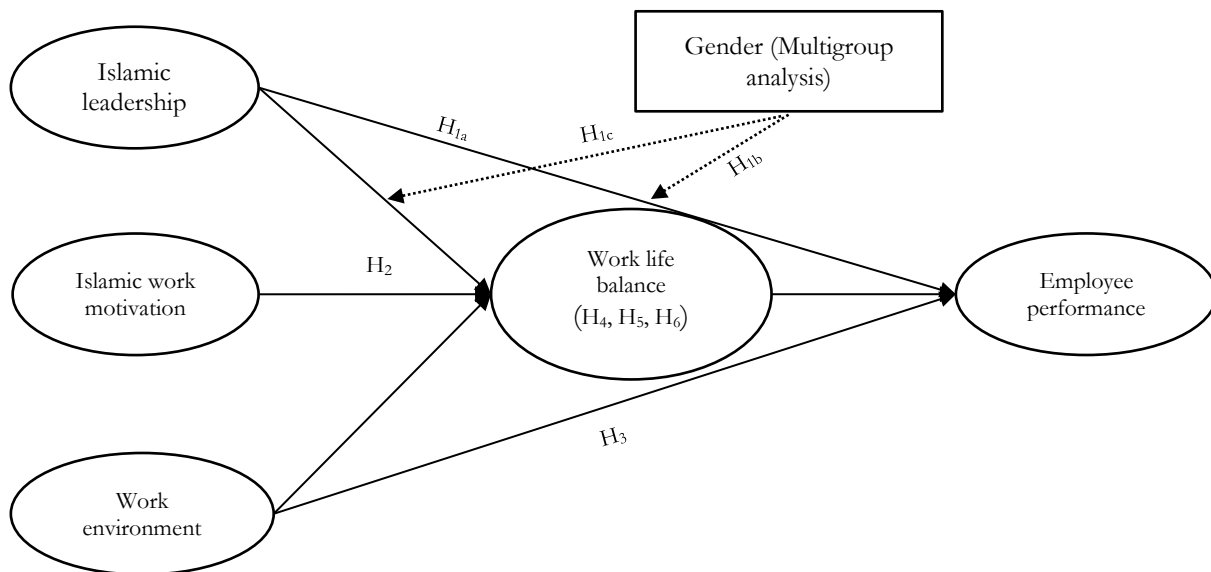


Figure 2. Conceptual framework
Source: Author's Own, 2024

Research methods

This research was conducted among employees working in companies and institutions with an Islamic organizational culture, such as Islamic banking and financial institutions. Purposive sampling was used, with the criteria of employees who had worked for at least one year to ensure sufficient understanding of organizational philosophy, were Muslim as the focus of the study, and worked under Muslim leaders.

To obtain the respondents, the researchers distributed the questionnaire through a combination of direct institutional contact and online survey dissemination. Permission was requested from the human resource departments and team leaders to share the survey link with eligible employees. The respondents were informed of the research purpose and voluntarily completed the questionnaire after confirming that they met the predetermined criteria. This procedure ensured that only the participants who fulfilled the purposive sampling requirements were included in the final dataset. Based on Wibisono (2000), the minimum sample size for multivariate analysis was five to ten times the number of variables. Considering the variables in this study, a minimum of 50 respondents was required, and the final number of participants exceeded this threshold.

This study uses five variables, as listed in Table 1, namely Islamic leadership, Islamic work motivation, and work environment as exogenous variables, Work-life balance as a mediating variable, and employee performance as an endogenous variable. Gender was used as a moderator variable. Islamic leadership was measured using five items from Ratnasari (2020) indicators of religiosity, wisdom, trust, justice, and kindness. Islamic work motivation uses three items (Hakim, 2012): happiness, efficiency, and devotion. The work environment adopted three items from Pawirosumarto et al. (2017), including the work atmosphere, work relationships, and supporting

facilities. Work-life balance uses five items from [Aziz-Ur-Rehman and Siddiqui \(2019\)](#), reflecting the balance between personal and work life. Employee performance is measured using three items from [Sodiq et al. \(2024\)](#), which assesses work quality, initiative, and self-development efforts. All variables are measured on a Likert scale of 1-5, where higher scores indicate a greater degree of agreement with the item being measured.

This research approach is quantitative in nature, with a focus on hypothesis testing through measurement and statistical analysis to address the research problems. Data analysis uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS), which is suitable for measuring the relationships between latent constructs and detecting errors directly ([Hair et al., 2014](#)). The PLS-Multi-Group Analysis (PLS-MGA) method was applied to analyze non-parametric differences between groups using a bootstrapping process in PLS path models ([Yang et al., 2019](#)). This technique allows for a more comprehensive testing of between-group differences based on variables such as gender, education level, or generation, thereby providing deeper insights into the context of this study.

Table 1. Research variables

Variables	Question items	Reference
Islamic leadership (X_1)	1. My leader uses religious values as a guide in every decision. 2. My leader is wise in solving problems at work. 3. My leader is consistent and trustworthy in carrying out his responsibilities. 4. My leader always acts fairly to all employees without discrimination. 5. My leader always shows kindness and empathy to employees.	(Ratnasari, 2020)
Islamic work motivation (X_2)	1. I feel happy at work because my work is in line with Islamic values. 2. I always try to complete work efficiently to fulfill my responsibilities. 3. I consider work as part of worship to Allah SWT.	(Hakim, 2012)
Work environment (X_3)	1. The working atmosphere at my place supports productivity and comfort. 2. I have a good working relationship with my colleagues. 3. The work facilities available are adequate to support my work.	(Pawirosumarto et al., 2017)
Work life balance (Z)	1. My job gives me energy to carry out personal activities. 2. I am in a good mood at work because of my personal life. 3. My personal life gives additional energy to my work. 4. I am satisfied with the amount of time I have for activities outside of work. 5. I feel my mood is better because of my work.	(Aziz-Ur-Rehman & Siddiqui, 2019)
Employee performance (Y)	1. I always try to provide the best quality of work. 2. I often take the initiative to complete tasks without waiting for directions. 3. I actively seek to improve my personal skills to support my work.	(Sodiq et al., 2024)

Source: Data processed by the author (2024)

Results and discussion

Respondent characteristics

This study included 80 respondents with demographic characteristics based on gender, age, length of work, work sector, and leader gender. In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were female, totaling 46 (58%), while male respondents numbered 34 (42%), as shown in [Table 2](#). This

pattern reflects the workforce composition of many Islamic banking and financial institutions, where women commonly occupy administrative and service-oriented positions.

Viewed by age, the largest group consisted of respondents aged 25–30 years, with 36 individuals (45%). This was followed by those aged 20 to 25 years, comprising 28 respondents (34%), respondents aged 30 to 35 years with 11 individuals (14%), those over 35 years with as many as four respondents (5%), and only one respondent (2%) under the age of 20. The predominance of respondents under 35 aligns with the demographic profile of Islamic banking and related institutions, which typically employ younger professionals who are more adaptive to digital systems and more responsive to issues related to work–life balance and leadership practices.

Based on the length of work, 28 respondents (34%) had one year of tenure, while respondents with three or more years of experience totaled 21 individuals (27%). Meanwhile, 10 respondents (13%) had worked for two years. This distribution indicates that many participants were early career employees whose perceptions of leadership, motivation, and work-life balance are still actively forming within the organizational environment.

When assessed from the work sector, 40 respondents (50%) were employed in Islamic banking, 13 respondents (16%) in Islamic financial institutions, and 28 respondents (34%) in other agencies. This distribution is consistent with the context of this study, as Islamic banking is one of the main settings in which Islamic leadership and Islamic work motivation are widely implemented.

Considering the gender of the organizational leaders, 42 respondents (53%) reported working under male leaders, while 38 respondents (48%) worked under female leaders. This balanced representation provides a more comprehensive view of how leadership dynamics from both genders may relate to work-life balance and employee performance.

Table 2. Respondent characteristics

Category	Respondent profile	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	34	42%
	Female	46	58%
	Total	80	100%
Age	< 20	1	2%
	20 - 25	28	34%
	25 - 30	36	45%
	30 - 35	11	14%
	> 35	4	5%
	Total	80	100%
Length of work	1	28	34%
	2	10	13%
	3	21	27%
	> 4	21	27%
	Total	80	100%
Employment sector	Islamic financial institution	53	66%
	Other agencies	28	34%
	Total	80	100%
Leader gender	Male	42	53%
	Female	38	48%
	Total	80	100%

Source: Author's processing (2024)

This study used external model evaluation: loading factor, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and cross-loading. The loading factor value was accepted if > 0.5 , Composite reliability (CR) was used to measure internal consistency, the value was accepted if > 0.6 , and the AVE value was accepted if > 0.5 (Haryono, 2017). The Cronbach's alpha value was accepted if the value was > 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3 shows that this study has a loading factor value > 0.5 , so that the data in this study can be retained to follow further tests or can be said to be valid. Measurement of construct reliability is done with CR and Cronbach's alpha values. Based on Table 3, the CR value is > 0.6 ,

and the Cronbach alpha value is > 0.7 for all variables, which means that the variable constructs pass the reliability test. This study has an AVE value > 0.5 , which indicates that it has good validity adequacy for latent variables.

Table 4 shows that the indicators used have higher cross-loading for each latent variable being measured and compared to indicators for other latent variables. Thus, it means that all constructs have good discriminant validity.

Table 3. Construct reliability and validity

Variables	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Islamic leadership	IL1	0.668	0.79	0.857	0.548
	IL2	0.615			
	IL3	0.857			
	IL4	0.731			
	IL5	0.803			
Islamic work motivation	IWM 1	0.754	0.714	0.635	0.635
	IWM 2	0.852			
	IWM 3	0.781			
Work environment	WE 1	0.863	0.799	0.881	0.711
	WE 2	0.837			
	WE 3	0.829			
Work-life balance	WLB 1	0.752	0.886	0.917	0.69
	WLB 2	0.866			
	WLB 3	0.842			
	WLB 4	0.772			
	WLB 5	0.91			
Employee performance	EP 1	0.761	0.709	0.837	0.631
	EP 2	0.81			
	EP 3	0.811			

Source: Author's processing (2024)

Table 4. Cross loading

	Employee performance	Islamic leadership	Islamic work motivation	Work environment	Work-life balance
EP 1	0.761	0.523	0.682	0.537	0.441
EP 2	0.81	0.383	0.534	0.381	0.502
EP 3	0.811	0.407	0.519	0.375	0.563
IL1	0.443	0.668	0.531	0.254	0.585
IL2	0.357	0.615	0.349	0.392	0.298
IL3	0.454	0.857	0.515	0.496	0.418
IL4	0.344	0.731	0.296	0.272	0.4
IL5	0.438	0.803	0.474	0.546	0.486
IWM 1	0.544	0.52	0.754	0.288	0.517
IWM 2	0.715	0.455	0.852	0.501	0.525
IWM 3	0.465	0.475	0.781	0.588	0.391
WE 1	0.472	0.496	0.58	0.863	0.678
WE 2	0.51	0.428	0.462	0.837	0.394
WE 3	0.414	0.406	0.364	0.829	0.485
WLB 1	0.499	0.46	0.462	0.522	0.752
WLB 2	0.464	0.519	0.438	0.389	0.866
WLB 3	0.53	0.463	0.448	0.492	0.842
WLB 4	0.417	0.517	0.563	0.633	0.772
WLB 5	0.67	0.569	0.59	0.564	0.91

Source: Author's processing (2024)

This study used a model measurement using probability and t-statistics. Hypothesis testing was performed using the P value with 5% alpha (< 0.05) and t-statistic with 5% alpha (> 1.96).

Table 5 shows that some hypotheses are accepted and some hypotheses are not accepted at the significance level <0.05 . In the first hypothesis, Islamic leadership has a negative and insignificant relationship with employee performance by looking at the t statistic $0.078 < 1.96$ and the original sample value (β) of -0.008 , thus H1a is rejected. In the second hypothesis, Islamic work motivation has a positive and significant influence on employee performance by looking at the t-statistic value of $3.017 > 1.96$ and the original sample (β) of 0.388 which means H2 is accepted. In the third hypothesis, Work environment has a negative and insignificant relationship with employee performance by looking at the t-statistic $0.39 < 1.96$ and the original sample value (β) of -0.045 , thus H3 is rejected.

Table 5. Hypothesis test: Direct and indirect effect

Hypothesis	Variables	β	T Statistics	P Values	Description
Direct effect					
H1a	IL $\rightarrow$ EP	-0.008	0.078	0.938	Not significant
H2	IWM $\rightarrow$ EP	0.388	3.017	0.003	Significant
H3	WE $\rightarrow$ EP	-0.045	0.39	0.696	Not significant
Indirect effect					
H4	IL $\rightarrow$ WLB $\rightarrow$ EP	0.065	1.539	0.124	Not significant
H5	IWM $\rightarrow$ WLB $\rightarrow$ EP	0.125	2.063	0.039	significant
H6	WE $\rightarrow$ WLB $\rightarrow$ EP	0.146	2.498	0.013	significant

Source: Author's processing (2024)

Testing the indirect effect shows that work-life balance does not have a mediating effect on the effect of Islamic leadership on employee performance by looking at P-values $0.124 > 0.05$ and the original sample (β) of 0.065 ; thus, H4 is rejected. In the fifth hypothesis, work-life balance has a mediating effect on the effect of Islamic work motivation on employee performance by looking at P values of $0.039 < 0.05$, and the original sample (β) of 0.125 ; thus, H5 is accepted. Furthermore, there is a mediating effect of work-life balance on the effect of work environment on employee performance by looking at P-values $0.013 < 0.05$, and the original sample (β) of 0.146 ; thus, H6 is accepted.

Multi Group Analysis (MGA)

This study conducted PLS-MGA testing to determine whether there were differences in the effect of Islamic leadership on employee performance among male and female leaders. Before conducting a multi-group analysis to determine the difference between male and female leadership, a three-step MICOM procedure was performed (Zhu et al., 2023). As the first step of the MICOM procedure, configural invariance was checked to ensure that the same underlying factor structure existed in both groups. Since the same indicators, treatments, and algorithms were used in both leader groups throughout the study period, configural invariance can be said to be satisfied.

In the second step, compositional invariance was checked for both groups. For both leadership genders, the original correlation was greater than or equal to the 5% quantile (0.005); therefore, compositional invariance was achieved (see Table 6)(Henseler et al., 2016).

Table 6. 2nd Step MICOM: Compositional invariance

	Original correlation	Correlation permutation mean	5.00 %	Permutation p-values
Employee performance	0.997	0.997	0.991	0.332
Islamic leadership	0.990	0.992	0.980	0.246
Islamic work motivation	0.999	0.995	0.984	0.84
Work environment	0.999	0.996	0.988	0.741
Work life balance	0.998	0.998	0.996	0.317

Source: Author's Processing (2024)

Finally, [Table 7](#) shows that the third step of the MICOM procedure was performed on the Islamic leadership gender group to check whether full measurement invariance was met, based on equal mean and variance.

Table 7. 3rd Step MICOM: Equal mean and equal variance

Step 3: Part 1: Equal Mean Assesment					Step 3: Part 2: Equal Variance Assessment			
	Mean - Original Difference	2.5%	97.5%	Permutation p-Values	Variance - Original Difference	2.5%	97.5%	Permutation p-Values
EP	0.345	-0.437	0.434	0.116	-0.186	-0.446	0.435	0.423
IL	0.497	-0.465	0.426	0.064	-0.579	-0.625	0.589	0.056
IWM	0.546	-0.428	0.426	0.071	-0.567	-0.652	0.617	0.088
WE	-0.142	-0.426	0.438	0.549	0.280	-0.526	0.542	0.283
WLB	0.043	-0.451	0.451	0.872	0.269	-0.618	0.583	0.377

Source: Author's Processing (2024)

The original mean and variance differences were within the limits of 2.5% and 97.5%, respectively, with permutation values > 5% (0.05) ([Henseler et al., 2016](#)). Therefore, full measurement invariance was met for the gender groups. Finally, the results of the three-step MICOM procedure indicated that the researcher could conduct a multigroup analysis on both groups.

Table 8. MGA Test

Hipotesis	Variabel	Path Coefficient (Perempuan)	Path Coefficient (Laki-Laki)	Path Coefficients- diff (P & L)	Pvalues	Significant difference?
H1b	IL → EP	-0.078	0.240	-0.318	0.176	Not Significant
H1c	IL → WLB	-0.088	0.428	-0.516	0.016	Significant

Source: Author's Processing (2024)

[Table 8](#) shows the results of the MGA for both groups. In this analysis, P values less than 0.05 (5% significance level) for permutation tests indicate significant differences among groups for a particular path model ([Henseler et al., 2016](#)). The results of the multigroup analysis for the female and male leader groups show that there is no significant difference in Islamic leadership on employee performance, which is evident from the p-values showing numbers greater than 0.05, so H1b is rejected. Meanwhile, the effect of Islamic leadership on work-life balance is different between male and female Islamic leadership, where Islamic leadership has a higher impact than female leadership.

Discussion

This study shows that Islamic work motivation has a significant influence on employee performance, both directly and indirectly, through the mediation of Work-life balance (WLB). This finding supports the research results of [Rahmawan et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Abdelwahed et al. \(2024\)](#) on direct and [Al Fidhdho & Larassaty \(2024\)](#) indirect effects. These effects are due to spiritual values in Islamic work motivation, such as sincerity, the intention to seek the pleasure of Allah SWT, and the realization that work is worship ([Al-Douri et al., 2020](#); [Cader, 2016](#)). These values improve employee discipline, responsibility, and integrity, which boost productivity and work quality ([Basir et al., 2023](#)). In addition, the concept of WLB in Islam is reflected in QS. Al-Qashash 77 teaches a balance between work, worship, family, and personal time. Employees with good WLB tend to be physically and mentally healthier, reduce stress, and work purposefully ([Peter et al., 2019](#)).

The findings show that work environment does not have a significant direct effect on employee performance. A supportive environment may increase comfort, yet it does not automatically enhance performance when employees still face personal pressures, role conflicts, or

limited psychological resources. Prior studies also note that physical comfort and good interpersonal relationships do not necessarily translate into higher productivity if employees experience stress or competing demands outside their work roles (Andy & Alejo, 2024; Sofyan, 2013). This suggests that the work environment alone is insufficient to produce measurable performance improvement.

The significant indirect effect through work-life balance (WLB) indicates that WLB functions as a key mechanism that enables environmental support to influence performance. When employees can balance work and personal responsibilities, they are better able to benefit from workplace comfort, supervisor support, and flexibility, which strengthens their focus and reduces fatigue (Premalatha, 2018). Thus, H3 is rejected, while H6 is accepted, consistent with Sari et al. (2022) and Mujahidin et al. (2023), confirming that the work environment affects employee performance primarily through its contribution to employees' work-life balance.

The results indicate that Islamic leadership does not have a significant direct effect on employee performance. One possible explanation is that the application of Islamic leadership values such as justice, integrity, and trustworthiness is not always consistent in daily managerial practices. When leadership values are not uniformly implemented, employees may not perceive sufficient behavioral cues from leaders that can directly enhance their performance (Sodiq et al., 2024; Virk et al., 2022). Previous studies also note that leadership based on spiritual and ethical values tends to influence performance only when employees clearly experience these values in concrete managerial actions, such as fair workload distribution, supportive communication, and transparent decision-making. This insignificant effect may also be influenced by Islamic banking and the external work context. Employees in this sector operate under intense competitive pressure because Islamic financial institutions hold a relatively small market share compared with conventional banking. According to Otoritas Jasa Keuangan (2024), Islamic banking controls only 7.72 percent of the market, creating a demanding work environment that prioritizes performance targets, speed, and operational efficiency. Under such conditions, leadership behavior rooted in Islamic ethics may not be sufficient to directly elevate employee performance, as the dominant drivers become competition, workload, and institutional pressures. This interpretation aligns with the findings of Sodiq et al. (2024), who also reported that Islamic leadership does not significantly influence employee performance when contextual pressures are high.

Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) results show that Islamic leadership does not differentiate its influence on employee performance based on gender. This supports the research of Wikaningrum and Yuniawan (2018) and Udin et al. (2019), which shows that Islam provides equal rights to men and women in leadership (Koburtay et al., 2023). However, Islamic leadership has different gender-based effects on WLB. Women face greater challenges in achieving work-life balance due to dominant household responsibilities, whereas men are more focused on time to refresh themselves (Bahadur, 2015; Drew & Murtagh, 2005). Masculine organizational culture also influences women's leadership style, which prioritizes collaboration and empathy, providing a unique approach to WLB (De la Rey, 2005) and suggesting the importance of considering structural, cultural, and social factors in understanding gender differences in Islamic leadership and WLB.

Conclusion

This study found that Islamic work motivation has a significant influence on employee performance, both directly and through work-life balance (WLB). This suggests that spiritual values in Islamic work motivation help employees manage their work more effectively and purposefully. In contrast, Islamic leadership and the work environment did not show a significant direct influence on employee performance, indicating the need for a more consistent implementation of Islamic leadership values to improve productivity. Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) showed that there was no significant difference in the effect of Islamic leadership on employee performance between men and women. However, there is a significant difference in the effect of Islamic leadership on WLB between genders, as women tend to face greater challenges in achieving work-life balance, which could be due to their dual roles.

This study had several limitations. The relatively small sample size and limitations to the Islamic banking sector and Islamic financial institutions affect the generalizability of the research results. In addition, the data used were cross-sectional, making it impossible to measure the dynamic changes in the relationships between variables. Future research should expand the sample size to include other industry sectors to obtain more representative results. Longitudinal research is also needed to understand the dynamics of the relationships between variables over a longer period of time. In addition, the exploration of additional mediating or moderating variables, such as job satisfaction or organizational culture, may enrich the understanding of the influence of Islamic leadership. Qualitative studies can also be conducted to dig deeper into employees' perceptions of the implementation of Islamic leadership values in the workplace.

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