

THE INFLUENCE OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY ASPECTS ON EMPLOYEES' WORK MOTIVATION: A CASE STUDY AT MEDAN AREA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of workplace spirituality, consisting of dimensions of meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with organizational values, on employee work motivation. This study is motivated by the phenomenon of declining employee performance at Medan Area University in the 2016-2018 period, indicated by the results of internal audits, even though the institution has implemented quality management standards. This study uses a causal quantitative approach. The study population was all employees and permanent lecturers, with a sample of 220 respondents determined using purposive sampling techniques and the Slovin formula. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Multiple Linear Regression. The results show that the three dimensions of workplace spirituality have a positive and significant effect on work motivation, both partially and simultaneously. The dimension of "alignment with organizational values" was found to have the most dominant influence. The coefficient of determination (R²) value of 0.623 indicates that 62.3% of the variation in work motivation is influenced by workplace spirituality. The research implications suggest the need for a spiritual and religious values-based approach to enhance the meaning of work for employees.

Keywords: *Workplace Spirituality, Work Motivation, Meaningful Work, Community, Organizational Values.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In an era of global competition, human resources (HR) are an organization's most vital asset. Unlike technological or capital assets, humans possess complex feelings, thoughts, desires, and behaviors. The quality of HR is seen as key to economic growth, job creation, and innovation. However, data from the 2019 Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) shows that Indonesia's HR competitiveness remains sixth in ASEAN, behind Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines, and Thailand. This indicates the need for serious efforts to improve the capacity and motivation of HR in Indonesia. Work motivation is a crucial factor that drives individuals to work hard to achieve personal and organizational goals. However, in practice, employees often lose enthusiasm or appear "lazy," which is actually an indication of low motivation. Motivation stems not only from external factors (salary, incentives), but also from internal or intrinsic factors, including spirituality. Medan Area University (UMA) as one of the leading private educational institutions in North Sumatra has committed to good governance by meeting ISO 9001:2008 standards. However, based on the results of the foundation's internal audit, a phenomenon of decreasing average employee performance completion in 40 work units was found from 2016 to 2018⁷. Data on the assessment of performance support aspects shows a fluctuating and decreasing trend in the following aspects:

- Work coordination (down from 72% to 70%).
- Work initiative (down from 67% to 62%).
- Sense of caring (down from 71% to 65%).
- Morale (down from 73% to 71%).

This decline in coordination, caring, and work enthusiasm indicates a problem with "workplace spirituality" and "motivation." Workplace spirituality is not about formal religion, but rather about understanding oneself as a spiritual being who needs meaning in work and connection with others. This problem becomes paradoxical when employees feel

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their salaries are sufficient but their work enthusiasm is low, or conversely, employees demand increased incentives but the organization feels it is already providing the best. Therefore, this research is urgently needed to examine the influence of non-material aspects, namely spirituality, on work motivation.

1.2 Problem Formulation

Based on the phenomenon of declining performance and motivation indicators, the problem formulation in this study is:

1. How does *Meaningful Work* influence Employee Work Motivation at Medan Area University?
2. How does *Sense of Community* (Connected with the Community) influence Employee Work Motivation at Medan Area University?
3. How does *Alignment with Organizational Values* influence Employee Work Motivation at Medan Area University?

1.3 Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to determine and analyze the partial and simultaneous influence of aspects of workplace spirituality on the work motivation of employees and lecturers at Medan Area University.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Workplace Spirituality

Workplace spirituality is a framework of organizational values that facilitates employees' experiences of transcendence through the work process, facilitating a sense of connection with others to create feelings of integrity and joy. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) define it as an individual's self-understanding as a spiritual being whose soul needs nurturing at work, experiencing a sense of purpose in work, and feeling connected to the community. According to Milliman, Czaplewski, and Ferguson (2003), workplace spirituality consists of three main dimensions:

1. **Meaningful Work** : An individual-level dimension. This encompasses the fundamental aspect of how a person feels a deeper sense of meaning and purpose in their work. Work is not just about earning a living, but also about giving meaning to life.
2. **Sense of Community** : A group-level dimension. This refers to interactions between employees, as well as the mental, emotional, and spiritual connections within the team. The key is support, freedom of expression, and a sense of belonging among coworkers.
3. **Alignment with Organizational Values** : An organizational-level dimension. This reflects the alignment of employees' personal values with the organization's mission and goals. Individuals believe that the organization has a conscience and cares about the well-being of the community.

2.2 Work Motivation

Motivation comes from the word "movere," which means encouragement. Motivation is the driving force that causes someone to exert their abilities to achieve organizational goals. Robbins (2008) defines motivation as the willingness to make optimal efforts to achieve organizational goals, influenced by the effort's ability to satisfy individual needs.

In this study, motivation was measured using indicators developed by Ananda (2020) which simplified Maslow's theory into two main dimensions:

1. **Need for Appreciation**: Relates to satisfaction in carrying out work, achieving achievements, and independence.
2. **Social Needs**: Focus on pride in work, spirit of cooperation, and welfare guarantees (salary/incentives).

2.3 Framework of Thinking and Hypothesis

Previous research shows that workplace spirituality contributes significantly to intrinsic motivation and performance.

- *The Relationship between Meaningful Work and Motivation*: Research by Prakoso et al. (2018) and Mesakh et al. (2018) shows that when someone interprets their work as something noble, their work motivation will increase.
 - **H1**: Meaningful work has a positive and significant effect on employee work motivation.
- *The Relationship Between Sense of Community and Motivation*: A supportive and fraternal work environment will boost work enthusiasm. Fanggidae's (2018) research confirms this positive relationship.
 - **H2**: Connecting with the Community has a positive and significant effect on Employee Work Motivation.
- *Relationship between Alignment with Organizational Value and Motivation*: When employees feel that their personal values are aligned with the organization's values, their commitment and motivation will grow stronger.
 - **H3**: In line with Organizational Values, it has a positive and significant effect on Employee Work Motivation

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This research uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The research is causal-associative in nature to determine the influence between variables. The research was conducted across all work units at Medan Area University.

3.2 Population and Sample

The research population was all permanent employees and permanent lecturers at Medan Area University, totaling 450 people. The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling with purposive sampling. The sample inclusion criteria were: (1) Permanent employees/lecturers, and (2) Having worked for more than 2 years.

The sample size is calculated using the Slovin formula with an error rate (e) of 5%:

Therefore, the sample size was rounded to **220 respondents**.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

Primary data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire using a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Secondary data were obtained from Medan Area University's personnel documentation.

3.4 Validity and Reliability Test

Prior to further analysis, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability on respondents outside the sample.

- **Validity:** Using the *Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy* (KMO MSA). The test results show that the KMO value for all variables (X1, X2, X3, and Y) is > 0.50 , and the *Anti-image Correlation value* is > 0.50 , so that all statement items are declared valid.
- **Reliability:** Using *Cronbach Alpha*. The results show Alpha values for X1 (0.931), X2 (0.871), X3 (0.856), and Y (0.866). Since all values are > 0.60 , the instrument is declared reliable.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was performed using statistical software (SPSS). The analysis stages include:

1. **Descriptive Analysis:** Describes the characteristics of respondents and the distribution of answers.
2. **Classical Assumption Test:** Normality, Multicollinearity, and Heteroscedasticity Test.
3. **Multiple Linear Regression Analysis:** Equation $Y = \alpha + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + e$
4. **Hypothesis Test:** t-test (partial) and F-test (simultaneous) with a significance level of 5%.
5. **Coefficient of Determination (R^2):** Looks at the magnitude of the contribution of the independent variable.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

Based on demographic data, the respondent profile is dominated by:

- **Age:** The majority are aged 32-37 years (28.2%) and 26-31 years (26.4%), which is classified as productive age.
- **Education:** The majority have a Bachelor's/S1 degree (43.2%) and Academic (34.1%).
- **Length of Service:** The majority have worked for 8-10 years (45.5%) and 5-7 years (27.3%). This indicates a high level of loyalty.
- **Status:** 77.3% are employees and 22.7% are lecturers.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Based on the distribution of respondents' answers:

- **Meaningful Work (X1):** Included in the high category. The indicator "passion for work" has the highest mean (4.05), while the indicator "support for spiritual values" has the lowest mean (3.67).
- **Connected with the Community (X2):** This falls into the high category. The "opportunity to innovate" indicator has the highest mean (4.15), but the "confidence in coworkers' abilities" indicator is relatively lower (3.61).
- **Aligned with Organizational Values (X3):** Included in the high category. The indicator "optimism towards the organization" is very high (4.20), but the indicator "measurable strategic plan" is rated the lowest (3.62).
- **Work Motivation (Y):** Included in the high category. The highest indicator is "working effectively" (4.30), while "collective responsibility" is the lowest (3.64).

4.3 Results of the Classical Assumption Test

- **Normality:** Data are normally distributed (Kolmogorov-Smirnov Significance > 0.05).
- **Multicollinearity:** Tolerance value > 0.10 and VIF < 10 , indicating no multicollinearity between independent variables.

- **Heteroscedasticity:** The scatterplot spreads randomly above and below the number 0 on the Y-axis, indicating a homoscedasticity model.

4.4 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The results of the regression estimation are as follows:

$$Y = 10.876 + 0.332(X_1) + 0.286(X_2) + 0.481(X_3)$$

Interpretation:

- Constant (10.876): If there is no influence of spirituality, work motivation has a value of 10.876.
- Coefficient X1 (0.332): A 1 unit increase in work meaningfulness increases motivation by 0.332.
- X2 coefficient (0.286): A 1 unit increase in community relations increases motivation by 0.286.
- X3 Coefficient (0.481): A 1 unit increase in value alignment increases motivation by 0.481. This is the largest coefficient.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

1. Partial Test (t-Test):

- **H1 (X1 against Y):** $t_{count} = 7.542 > t_{table} = 1.65$ (Sig. 0.000). The hypothesis is accepted.
- **H2 (X2 against Y):** $t_{hitung} = 4.974 > t_{tabel} = 1.65$ (Sig. 0.001). Hypothesis is accepted.
- **H3 (X3 against Y):** $t_{hitung} = 8.314 > t_{tabel} = 1.65$ (Sig. 0.007). Hypothesis is accepted.

2. Simultaneous Test (F Test):

$F_{count} = 118.868 > F_{table} = 3.04$ (Sig. 0.000). This proves that together, the three aspects of spirituality have a significant influence on work motivation.

3. Coefficient of Determination (R^2):

The Adjusted R Square value is 0.623. This means that 62.3% of the variation in work motivation is explained by the workplace spirituality variable, while 37.7% is explained by other factors.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 The Effect of Meaningful Work on Work Motivation

The research results confirm that Medan Area University employees who are able to find meaning in their work have higher motivation. Meaningful work is a fundamental aspect where employees feel their work is important to their lives and others. This finding supports the theory of Milliman et al. (2003) that the deepest human motivation is the desire to carry out meaningful activities. However, descriptive analysis found that the indicator "having a purpose in work" still needs to be improved. Field observations showed that some employees still neglect or work mechanically without understanding the lofty purpose of their work, which results in operational errors. Efforts to improve the meaning of work are crucial to improve performance which declined in 2016-2018.

5.2 The Influence of Connecting with the Community on Work Motivation

This variable has been shown to have a positive and significant impact. Social interaction, coworker support, and a sense of community fuel employee motivation. This aligns with Maslow's theory of social needs and Fanggidae's (2018) research. However, the data shows that trust in coworkers remains a weak point. Some employees doubt their colleagues' competence, which hinders task delegation and coordination. The phenomenon of declining "work coordination" scores in the foundation's internal audit is confirmed by these findings. Therefore, building trust is key to increasing community motivation.

5.3 The Influence of Alignment with Organizational Values on Work Motivation

Statistical results show that this variable has the largest regression coefficient (0.481), making it the most dominant factor. This means that the greatest motivator for UMA employees is the alignment of their personal values with the university's vision and mission. Respondents expressed pride in being part of UMA and optimism about the organization's future. However, there are critical points regarding the "measurable strategic plan" aspect. Employees need clearer, more concrete direction from leadership so that the organization's noble values can be translated into realistic work targets.

5.4 Managerial Implications

This research validates criticisms of classical management approaches that focus solely on rationality and materialism. At UMA, a spiritual approach has proven effective. Employees who feel valued for their spirituality—not just religion,

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but also the meaning of life and community—are more productive at work. These findings suggest that UMA management should focus not only on financial incentives but also invest in a humanistic and meaningful organizational culture.

6. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

6.1 Conclusion

Based on data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that:

1. Meaningful Work has a positive and significant impact on employee work motivation. Employees who understand the meaning of their work tend to have strong internal motivation.
2. Connecting with the community has a positive and significant impact on work motivation. A supportive work climate boosts morale, although trust among colleagues needs improvement.
3. In line with organizational values, it has a positive and significant influence on work motivation and is the dominant variable. A shared vision between employees and the organization is the biggest motivator.
4. Simultaneously, the aspect of workplace spirituality contributes 62.3% to the formation of employee work motivation at Medan Area University.

6.2 Suggestions

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that the Medan Area University Foundation:

1. **Value-Based Approach:** Conducting intensive outreach and training using a religious/spiritual value approach to instill the understanding that work is worship and devotion, in order to address employees who do not yet understand the purpose of their work.
2. **Community Strengthening:** Organizing regular *gathering*, *outbound*, or *team training activities* to build trust and cooperation between employees that has been identified as starting to decline.
3. **Incentive Evaluation:** Reconsider the health and retirement insurance components, as data shows that there is still dissatisfaction with these aspects which can erode long-term motivation.
4. **Adoption of Work Culture:** Considering the adoption of global positive work culture values such as *Kaizen* (continuous improvement) that are aligned with UMA's local values to improve work efficiency and objectivity.

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