

THE TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY TRAINING ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE IN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of workplace spirituality training in improving teacher performance at SMP IMIM Putra YASDIC IMIM. Educational digitalization through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) was found to trigger administrative burdens and work-related stress, which have an effect on the decline in teacher performance. Using a quasi-experimental design (pretest posttest control group design), the study involved 15 teachers who were divided into experimental and control groups. Performance was measured through the results of academic supervision focusing on instructional planning and learning process aspects. Data analysis employed Independent and Paired Sample t-Tests. The results showed a very significant improvement in performance in the experimental group by 96.8% (scores increased from 56.13 to 110.50) with a very large effect size (Cohen's $d = -3.847$), while the control group tended to remain stagnant. It is concluded that strengthening the dimensions of work meaning, sense of togetherness, and alignment with Islamic values is effective in transforming teachers' intrinsic motivation and mental resilience, which directly has an effect on the improvement of instructional quality in the classroom.

Keywords: *Spiritual Training, Workplace Spirituality, Teacher Performance, Academic Supervision, Islamic Education.*

INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of education fundamentally requires teachers to adapt not only pedagogically but also psychologically. However, numerous studies indicate that excessive administrative demands significantly contribute to the decline of teachers' occupational well-being and instructional quality. Teacher burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, loss of work meaning, and reduced professional engagement in teaching practices (Maslach et al., 2001; Friedman, 2000). In the long term, this condition affects not only teachers as individuals but also leads to a deterioration in instructional quality and student learning outcomes (Hakanen et al., 2006; Klusmann et al., 2008). Therefore, interventions that focus on teachers' inner well-being and psychological resilience have become an urgent necessity within the context of modern educational systems.

Recent studies further emphasize that purely technocratic approaches such as curriculum training or instructional technology development are insufficient to address the crisis of teacher motivation and professional identity. Karakas (2010) and Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) argue that workplace spirituality plays a crucial role in enhancing meaningful work, organizational commitment, and sustainable individual performance. Spirituality provides an internal framework through which individuals perceive their work as part of a broader life purpose rather than merely as the fulfillment of formal targets. In the educational context, this dimension is particularly relevant, as the teaching profession is inherently connected to values, morality, and a sense of calling (Palmer, 1998; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). From the perspective of Islamic education, work is not viewed solely as an economic activity but as a form of *amanah* (trust) and worship. The concept of *ihsan* performing work with excellence based on the awareness of Allah's constant supervision serves as the foundation of Muslim teachers' work ethics (Al-Ghazali, 2005; Al-Attas, 1980). When this spiritual dimension is internalized, teachers tend to demonstrate stronger mental resilience in coping with external pressures, including the demands of educational digitalization. Connor and Davidson (2003) highlight that individuals who possess strong spiritual resources and a clear sense of life meaning

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are generally more adaptive and less susceptible to psychological exhaustion. Despite the growing body of literature on workplace spirituality in organizational and business settings, experimental research examining its direct impact on teacher performance—particularly within Islamic educational institutions remains limited. Most existing studies employ correlational designs and have yet to empirically test the effectiveness of structured spiritual training interventions (Milliman et al., 2003; Duchon & Plowman, 2005). Moreover, Islamic schools possess distinctive cultural and value-based characteristics that cannot be fully generalized from studies conducted in non-educational contexts. Therefore, this study addresses an important research gap by experimentally investigating how workplace spirituality training can transform teachers' intrinsic motivation and performance within the context of Islamic education in the digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher Performance Construct

Teacher performance refers to the qualitative and quantitative outcomes achieved by teachers in executing instructional responsibilities and educational duties. Bernardin and Russell (1993) conceptualize performance through six key criteria: quality, quantity, timeliness, cost efficiency, independence (need for supervision), and interpersonal impact. In the educational context, these dimensions translate into teachers' ability to design effective lesson plans, deliver meaningful learning experiences, manage classroom dynamics, and interact constructively with students and colleagues. High teacher performance has consistently been linked to improved instructional quality and student learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009; Klusmann et al., 2008). Beyond technical competence, teacher performance is strongly influenced by psychological and motivational factors. Day and Gu (2010) argue that sustainable teacher performance depends not only on professional skills but also on emotional engagement, resilience, and a strong sense of professional identity. Teachers who experience high work engagement tend to demonstrate greater instructional creativity, persistence in facing challenges, and commitment to student development (Hakanen et al., 2006). Conversely, excessive workload and administrative pressure often reduce performance by diminishing teachers' intrinsic motivation and sense of meaning (Maslach et al., 2001). From an Islamic perspective, teacher performance is not merely evaluated by observable outputs but is deeply rooted in spiritual consciousness. Performance is viewed as the manifestation of *amanah* (trust) and *ihsan* (excellence), where work is performed with sincerity and accountability before Allah (Al-Ghazali, 2005; Al-Attas, 1980). Teachers who internalize this spiritual awareness tend to demonstrate higher dedication, self-regulation, and moral responsibility, as their motivation transcends external rewards or administrative compliance. This spiritual orientation strengthens internal control and encourages consistency in delivering high-quality instruction even under challenging conditions (Nasr, 1987; Tafzir, 2010).

Workplace Spirituality (WSP)

Workplace spirituality is defined as a framework through which individuals seek meaning, purpose, and connectedness in their work environment. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) describe workplace spirituality as the recognition that employees have an inner life that is nourished by meaningful work performed within a supportive community. In educational organizations, workplace spirituality plays a crucial role in sustaining teachers' motivation, ethical commitment, and emotional well-being (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Karakas, 2010). Milliman et al. (2003) identify three core dimensions of workplace spirituality. The first is meaningful work, which refers to the perception that daily tasks are intrinsically valuable and connected to a higher purpose. When teachers perceive teaching as a calling rather than a routine obligation, they are more likely to experience intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and persistence in overcoming instructional challenges (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997; Palmer, 1998). Meaningful work has been empirically shown to enhance work engagement and performance across various organizational settings (Duchon & Plowman, 2005).

The second dimension is sense of community, which reflects feelings of belonging, mutual care, and trust among colleagues. In school settings, strong collegial relationships foster collaboration, reduce professional isolation, and enhance collective efficacy (Hargreaves, 2003). From an Islamic standpoint, this dimension aligns with the concept of *ukhuwah*, which emphasizes solidarity, compassion, and shared responsibility among members of the educational community (Mujib & Mudzakkir, 2006). A strong sense of community has been associated with lower burnout levels and higher organizational commitment among teachers (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The third dimension is alignment with organizational values, referring to the congruence between individual values and institutional goals. When teachers perceive alignment between their personal beliefs and the school's vision particularly values rooted in *iman*, *taqwa*, and professionalism they experience greater authenticity and moral coherence at work (Milliman et al., 2003; Kolodinsky et al., 2008). Such alignment strengthens commitment and encourages teachers to internalize institutional goals as part of their personal mission, thereby enhancing performance and ethical conduct. In Islamic

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educational institutions, value alignment reinforces the perception of teaching as both a professional duty and a spiritual responsibility.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental method with a pretest–posttest control group design. This design was selected to examine the causal effect of workplace spirituality training on teacher performance by comparing outcome differences between an experimental group and a control group that did not receive any intervention. The research subjects consisted of 15 teachers at SMP IMIM Putra who met the criteria of low performance, classified under Categories B and C based on academic supervision results. The participants were divided into two groups: eight teachers were assigned to the experimental group, while seven teachers were assigned to the control group. The experimental group participated in a workplace spirituality training program lasting 4.5 hours, whereas the control group continued their routine teaching activities without any additional treatment. Teacher performance was measured using academic supervision assessments that covered instructional planning and classroom learning processes. In addition, workplace spirituality was assessed using a standardized Workplace Spirituality Scale consisting of 21 items, which demonstrated good internal consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.887. Data analysis was conducted using both the Independent Sample t-Test and the Paired Sample t-Test. The Independent Sample t-Test was employed to examine differences in performance outcomes between the experimental and control groups, while the Paired Sample t-Test was used to evaluate changes in performance scores within each group before and after the intervention. These statistical procedures allowed for a robust assessment of the effectiveness of the workplace spirituality training.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Data Analysis

The descriptive analysis indicates that prior to the intervention, both the experimental and control groups were at a relatively equivalent level of performance, with mean pre-test scores of 56 for the experimental group and 59 for the control group. This similarity suggests that both groups began the study under comparable conditions, thereby strengthening the internal validity of the quasi-experimental design. However, a markedly different pattern emerged following the intervention. As presented in Table below, the experimental group experienced a substantial increase in performance, with the mean score rising from 56.13 to 110.50, resulting in a gain score of 54.37 or an improvement of 96.8%. In contrast, the control group showed a slight decline in performance, with a decrease of 1.9%, indicating stagnation in the absence of any structured intervention. This sharp divergence highlights that improvements in teacher performance did not occur naturally over time but were strongly associated with the workplace spirituality training. The stagnation observed in the control group further suggests that routine activities alone were insufficient to address existing performance challenges, particularly those arising from administrative pressures and psychological strain in the digital education environment.

Group	Pre-test (Mean)	Post-test (Mean)	Gain Score	Improvement (%)
Experiment	56.13	110.50	+54.37	96.8%
Control	59.43	58.43	-1.00	-1.9%

Hypothesis Testing

The results of the Independent Sample t-Test revealed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups, with a t-value of -8.426 and a significance level of $p = 0.000$. This finding confirms that teachers who participated in the workplace spirituality training demonstrated significantly higher performance compared to those who did not receive the intervention. The magnitude of this difference indicates that the observed improvement cannot be attributed to random variation, but rather to the structured spiritual intervention implemented in the experimental group. Furthermore, the Paired Sample t-Test conducted within the experimental group showed a significance value of $p = 0.000$, accompanied by an effect size (Cohen's d) of -3.847 . According to conventional benchmarks, this represents a very large effect size, indicating a transformative impact of the intervention on teacher performance. Such a strong effect underscores that the training did not merely produce incremental improvements, but fundamentally altered teachers' motivation, engagement, and instructional practices.

Discussion: Why Does Workplace Spirituality Work?

The effectiveness of workplace spirituality training can be explained primarily through the enhancement of intrinsic motivation. When teachers rediscover a sense of meaningful work, their daily instructional tasks such as lesson planning, assessment, and classroom management—are no longer perceived as administrative burdens, but as purposeful activities connected to a higher calling (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997; Palmer, 1998). This shift in perception transforms work from an externally imposed obligation into an internally valued mission, which has been shown to strengthen persistence, engagement, and performance (Karakas, 2010). From an Islamic perspective, the internalization of *ihsan* performing work with excellence as an act of worship serves as a powerful psychological buffer against digital and administrative stress. Teachers who view their professional responsibilities as a form of accountability before Allah tend to exhibit greater emotional regulation and resilience when facing pressures related to platforms such as the Merdeka Teaching Platform (PMM). Rather than focusing on compliance with application-based indicators, their attention shifts toward fulfilling moral and educational responsibilities toward students, thereby reducing anxiety and emotional exhaustion (Al-Ghazali, 2005; Maslach et al., 2001).

In addition, the *ukhuwah* (sense of togetherness) fostered during the training played a critical role in reducing professional isolation among teachers. Strong collegial relationships promote emotional support, trust, and collaboration, which are essential for sustaining performance in demanding educational contexts (Hargreaves, 2003; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The development of a supportive spiritual community enabled teachers to share challenges, reflect collectively, and collaborate more effectively, ultimately contributing to improved instructional quality. These findings align with previous studies indicating that workplace spirituality enhances not only individual performance but also collective organizational functioning (Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Milliman et al., 2003). Overall, the results demonstrate that workplace spirituality operates as a transformative mechanism by simultaneously strengthening meaning, resilience, and social connectedness. In the context of Islamic education, this integration of spiritual values with professional practice provides a robust foundation for sustaining teacher performance amid the complexities of digital-era schooling.

CONCLUSION

Workplace spirituality training has been empirically proven to be very significant in improving teacher performance. The 96.8% improvement in the experimental group confirms that inner aspects are the primary drivers of outward aspects, namely instructional performance.

Practical and Policy Implications

1. For Schools: Teacher development should not be solely technical in nature (IT or curriculum training). Schools should regularly implement workplace spirituality strengthening to preserve the “soul” of the teaching profession.
2. For PolicyMakers: Educational digitalization must be accompanied by attention to teachers’ psycho-spiritual well-being to prevent a future crisis of teacher identity.

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