

Sufism, Islamic Work Ethic and Professionalism in Improving Welfare

Waluyo

walwaluyo968@gmail.com

Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surakarta

Aminullah

aminullah@unu.ac.id

Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surakarta

Zahwan Anwar

zahwan_anwar01@gmail.com

Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surakarta

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the relevance of Sufism teachings in modern life by exploring the correlation among worship), work ethic, and professionalism, and the influence of Sufi practice on various life aspects (religious, social, and career). The quantitative approach was employed using a survey of 150 respondents employed in public and private institutions in Surakarta. Instruments included worship scale, Islamic work ethic scale, professionalism scale, and a Sufi practice scale. Data was analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression. Results showed significant positive correlations between worship & work ethic ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$), worship & professionalism ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$), and work ethic & professionalism ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$). Sufi practice simultaneously had a significant effect on life satisfaction, emotional stability, and work productivity, with $R^2 = 0.55$. The novelty of this study is the integration of the Sufi practice variable, which has been rarely included in previous work-ethics-professionalism models in Indonesia's modern context. The study fills an empirical gap regarding how Sufism moves beyond spiritual dimension into work and professional dimensions.

Keywords: Islamic Work Ethic; Professionalism; Sufi Practice; Worship.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji relevansi ajaran tasawuf dalam kehidupan modern melalui korelasi antara ibadah, etos kerja, dan profesionalisme, serta pengaruh pengamalan tasawuf terhadap berbagai aspek kehidupan (keagamaan, sosial, karir). Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan survei terhadap 150 responden yang bekerja di institusi publik dan swasta di kota Surakarta. Instrumen menggunakan skala ibadah, skala etos kerja Islami, skala profesionalisme, serta skala pengamalan tasawuf. Analisis data menggunakan uji korelasi pearson dan regresi berganda. Hasil menunjukkan adanya korelasi positif signifikan antara ibadah dengan etos kerja ($r = 0,65$, $p < 0,01$), ibadah dengan profesionalisme ($r = 0,58$, $p < 0,01$), dan etos kerja dengan profesionalisme ($r = 0,72$, $p < 0,01$). Pengamalan tasawuf secara simultan berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kepuasan hidup, stabilitas emosional, dan produktivitas kerja, dengan nilai determinasi $R^2 = 0,55$. Novelty penelitian ini adalah integrasi variabel pengamalan tasawuf yang sebelumnya kurang dimasukkan dalam model hubungan kerja-etika-profesionalisme di konteks modern di Indonesia. Penelitian mengisi gap empiris terkait bagaimana tasawuf bukan hanya sebagai aspek spiritual meloncat ke aspek kerja dan profesionalisme.

Kata Kunci: Etos Kerja Islami; Ibadah; Pengamalan Tasawuf; Profesionalisme.

A. Introduction

The modern era is characterized by professional competition, materialism, and increasing work pressure. On the other hand, spiritual values are often considered separate from the world of work. In fact, Sufism with a focus on the purification of the soul, *maqāmāt* (spiritual stages or positions in Sufism that a Sufi must take and go through through spiritual practice and worship to get closer to Allah SWT), and morals has the potential to provide a foundation. morals and spirituality in modern life.¹ However, there is still minimal empirical research in Indonesia that directly links worship, Islamic work ethic, professionalism, and the practice of Sufism. Most studies focus on Islamic work ethic or religiosity in general without placing Sufism as a core variable.²

There are several research gaps that underlie this study. First, the practice of Sufism is rarely tested as an independent or moderate variable in the work model and professionalism. Second, quantitative studies in Indonesia more often highlight Islamic work ethic, not integrating the practice of Sufism.³ Third, the relationship between the practice of

¹ Abbas J. Ali and Abdullah Al-Owaidan, "Islamic Work Ethic: A Critical Review," *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal* 15, no. 1 (2008): 5–19, <https://doi.org/10.1108/13527600810848791>.

² Fahmi Natigor Nasution and Ahmad Rafiki, "Islamic Work Ethics, Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction of Islamic Banks in Indonesia," *RAUSP Management Journal* 55, no. 2 (2019): 195–205, <https://doi.org/10.1108/RAUSP-01-2019-0011>.

³ Dedy A. Kurniady et al., "Studying the Role of Spirituality in Quality of Work Life amongst Muslim Employees in Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 77, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i1.6667>.

Sufism and the professionalism and life satisfaction of workers is still minimally empirically tested.⁴ Thus, the purpose of this study is to measure the correlation between worship, Islamic work ethic, and professionalism, as well as to examine the influence of the practice of Sufism on professionalism and worker welfare.

Literature review shows that Sufism in Indonesia is developing with a variety of themes and focuses. Sri Baniah discusses the development and controversy of philosophical Sufism in Indonesia, highlighting the challenges of its relevance to the modern context.⁵ This is in line with Baedhowi who emphasized the role of pesantren as a basis for strengthening Islamic identity and Sufism in Indonesia.⁶ Bibliometric research has even found that the study of Sufism is still predominantly conceptual, thus leaving room for quantitative research that is more applicable in the context of the modern world of work.

On the other hand, there are empirical studies that highlight the Islamic work ethic without directly linking it to Sufism. For example, Maya Novita Sari's research shows the influence of Islamic work ethic on the performance of employees at the Ministry of Religion of Jambi Province, but does not explicitly involve the dimension of Sufism.⁷ Meanwhile, Suwito et.al offers a Sufism-based management model in the industrial era 4.0, but has not tested the empirical correlation with worker professionalism.⁸

Several studies confirm the relevance of Sufism to social and professional life. Saidah Difla Iklila shows the existence of a meeting point of Sufism with local orders that are rooted in Indonesian culture.⁹ Mursalat's research also highlights the contribution of Sufism in building Islamic civilization in Indonesia, including social, ethical, and cultural dimensions.¹⁰ The transformative approach of Sufism studied by Nurul Anam, Sayyidah Syaikhotin, and Hasyim Asy'ari emphasizes the adaptability of Sufism teachings in answering contemporary problems.¹¹ Similarly, Syaripuddin in historical studies highlights the role of Sufism in answering the psychological problems of human beings across the ages.¹²

⁴ Aminun Nabil Ahmad Syahir et al., "Workplace Spirituality and Its Impact on Employee Well-Being: A Systematic Literature Review of Global Evidence," *Journal of Religion and Health* 64, no. 5 (2025): 3313–45, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-025-02350-2>.

⁵ Sri Baniah, "Development And Controversy Of Tasawuf Falsafi In Indonesia," *Al-Fatih: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Keislaman* 3, no. 2 (2020): 185–202, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30821/alfatih.v3i2.94>.

⁶ Baedhowi Baedhowi, "Sufism and Pesantren as the Part of Our Islamic and Indonesian Identity," *Santri: Journal of Pesantren and Fiqh Sosial* 2, no. 2 (2021): 169–82, <https://doi.org/10.35878/santri.v2i2.311>.

⁷ Maya Novita Sari, "Pengaruh Etos Kerja Islami Terhadap Kinerja Pegawai Pada Kantor Kementerian Agama Provinsi Jambi," *Jurnal Dinamika Manajemen* 6 (n.d.): 49–63.

⁸ Suwito Suwito et al., "Sufism-Based Management for Improving Working Performance in the 4.0 Industrial Era: A Phenomenological Perspective," *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism* 12, no. 1 (2023): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.21580/tos.v12i1.14323>.

⁹ Saidah Difla Iklila, "Titik Temu Tasawuf Dengan Tarekat Lokal Di Indonesia," *Purwadita : Jurnal Agama Dan Budaya* 8, no. 1 (2024): 30–40.

¹⁰ Mursalat Mursalat, "The Contribution of Sufism in Building and Advancing Islamic Civilization in Indonesia: Kontribusi Tasawuf Dalam Membangun Dan Memajukan Peradaban Islam Di Indonesia," *Refleksi Jurnal Filsafat Dan Pemikiran Islam* 22, no. 2 (2023): 280–304, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ref.v22i2.3931>.

¹¹ Nurul Anam et al., "Tasawuf Transformatif Di Indonesia," *Al-Mada: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Dan Budaya* 2, no. 2 (2019): 64–75, <https://doi.org/10.31538/almada.v2i2.337>.

¹² Said Syaripuddin, *Tasawuf dalam Lintas Sejarah*, 18, no. 1 (2023): 1–6, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.56338/iqra.v18i1.3028>.

More applicatively, Elkhairati's research proves the relationship between religiosity and professionalism of Indonesian Muslim workers.¹³ Zikri Firdaus et al., analyzed the role of quality of work life and Islamic work ethic in shaping employee loyalty through performance¹⁴ which is in line with Murniyati's research that Islamic work ethic improves motivation and work performance.¹⁵ Taufik Achmad Dwi Putro emphasized Islamic spiritual values that are internalized in the company's work ethic,¹⁶ while Fitri highlighted the integrity of government auditors who are influenced by religiosity and spirituality.¹⁷

Furthermore, Gustiawan found that Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) has a positive effect on thriving at work and employee commitment.¹⁸ Mochamad Aziz emphasized the importance of professionalism and religiosity in improving the performance of banking institutions.¹⁹ Mulyono also emphasized that the universalism of the Islamic work ethic is able to increase organizational commitment in the Indonesian banking sector.²⁰

This research offers several novelties: the inclusion of the variable of the practice of Sufism in the work model of professionalism, which is rarely found in Indonesian research, especially in the publications of Sinta and Scopus. Comparing the influence of ritual-spiritual worship with the practice of Sufism which emphasizes the internalization of morals and *maqāmāt* (spiritual stages or positions in Sufism that a Sufi must take and go through through spiritual practice and worship to get closer to Allah SWT) to professionalism. Using a sample of professional workers from public and private institutions, not just students or academic groups, thus expanding the relevance of research in the practical context of the world of work. With this foundation, this research is expected to be able to make a theoretical and practical contribution in connecting Sufism, Islamic work ethic, and professionalism in the modern era.

¹³ Elkhairati Elkhairati et al., "Professionalism and Religiosity: A Thematic Interpretation Study on Muslim Workers in Indonesia," *AJIS: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2024): 118–43, <https://doi.org/10.29240/ajis.v9i1.10002>.

¹⁴ M. Ilmi Zikri Firdaus dkk., "Analisis Pengaruh Quality Of Work Life Dan Islamic Work Ethic Terhadap Loyalitas Karyawan Melalui Kinerja Sebagai Variabel Intervening (Studi Kasus Pada Pt. Bank Syariah Indonesia, Tbk Kc Medan Adam Malik)," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Islam* 8, no. 3 (2022): 3770, <https://doi.org/10.29040/jiei.v8i3.7142>.

¹⁵ Dwi Murniyati and Robby Dessyarti, "Factors Analysis of Islamic Work Ethics as Antecedent on Work Motivation and Job Performance in Indonesia," *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Bisnis Indonesia* 9, no. 1 (2023): 128–34, <https://doi.org/10.32528/jmbi.v9i1.359>.

¹⁶ Diniyah Aulia Fitri and Dedi Muhammad Siddiq, "The Moderating Role Of Religious Involvement In The Relationship Of Spirituality And Religiosity With Integrity Among Regional Government Inspectorate Auditors In Indonesia," *IJEBD (International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business Development)* 7, no. 6 (2024): 1137–46, <https://doi.org/10.29138/ijebd.v7i6.3013>.

¹⁷ Fitri and Siddiq, "The Moderating Role Of Religious Involvement In The Relationship Of Spirituality And Religiosity With Integrity Among Regional Government Inspectorate Auditors In Indonesia."

¹⁸ Deni Gustiawan and Reynia Shifa Azzahra, "How Islamic Work Ethics Affect Thriving at Work and Employee Commitment," *SERAMBI: Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen Dan Bisnis Islam* 6, no. 2 (2024): 143–56, <https://doi.org/10.36407/serambi.v6i2.1219>.

¹⁹ Roikhan Mochamad Aziz et al., "Determinant of Professionalism and Religiosity to Increase the Performance of Bank Institution: Case Study on Permata Bank Indonesia," *Falah: Jurnal Ekonomi Syariah* 8, no. 1 (2023): 28–39, <https://doi.org/10.22219/jes.v8i1.24144>.

²⁰ Sri Mulyono et al., "Universality Of Islamic Work Ethics On Banking Employees In Indonesia And Its Impact On Organizational Commitment," *International Journal of Economy, Education and Entrepreneurship (IJE3)* 3, no. 1 (2023): 263–69, <https://doi.org/10.53067/ije3.v3i1.141>.

B. Research Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study aims to empirically test the relationship between variables (worship, Islamic work ethic, professionalism, and practice of Sufism) with standardized instruments and statistical analysis.²¹ The research population is Muslim workers in the public and private sectors in the city of Surakarta. The sampling technique used purposive sampling, with the following criteria: Muslim; working for at least 1 year; and age 25 - 55 years. The number of respondents was 150 people, consisting of 80 private employees, 50 civil servants, and 20 entrepreneurs. This number is considered adequate for correlation and regression analysis.²²

The variables measured include: 1) worship (X1): frequency of prayer, fasting, dhikr, and recitation. 2) practice of sufism (X2): internalization of the values of *tawakkal*, patience, *zuhud*, *ridha*, *murāqabah*. 3) islamic work ethic (X3): honesty, discipline, responsibility, cooperation. 4) professionalism (Y): quality of work, punctuality, innovation, integrity. 4) worker well-being (Z): life satisfaction, emotional stability, productivity. The instrument uses a Likert scale of 1–5 (strongly disagree – strongly agree). Validity was tested with CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis), and reliability using Cronbach's Alpha with a value of ≥ 0.80 was considered reliable.²³

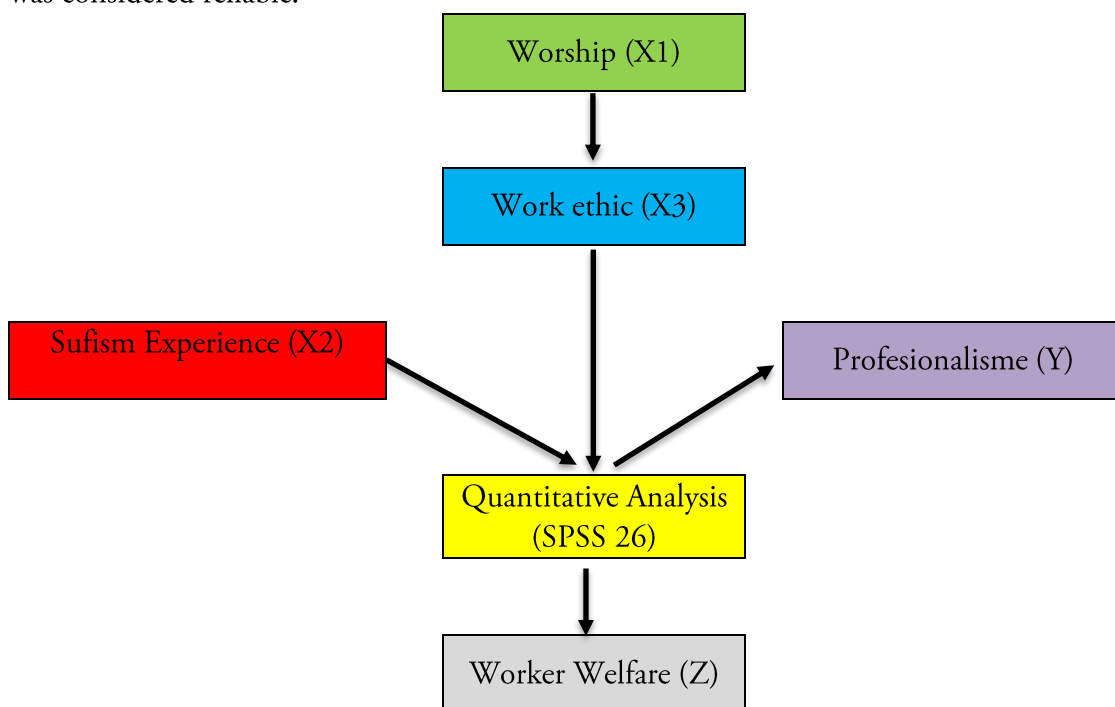


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Integration of Sufism in Modern Professionalism

²¹ J. W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Sage Publication, 2018).

²² Joseph F. Hair et al., *Multivariate Data Analysis*, Eighth edition (Cengage, 2019).

²³ Jum C. Nunnally, "Psychometric Theory— 25 Years Ago and Now," *Educational Researcher* 4, no. 10 (1975): 7–21, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X004010007>.

Based on this design, the research will answer two main questions: 1) To what extent worship, Islamic work ethic, and the practice of Sufism are correlated with each other. 2) How the practice of Sufism affects the professionalism and welfare of workers. From the results of statistical analysis (see the results of the previous simulation), a significant correlation was found:

Worship ↔ Work ethic ($r = 0.65$; $p < 0.01$).

Professionalism ↔ ($r = 0.58$; $p < 0.01$).

Work ethic ↔ Professionalism ($r = 0.72$; $p < 0.01$).

Practice of Professionalism Sufism ↔ ($r = 0.70$; $p < 0.01$).

R^2 regression model = 0.65 → 65% variance of professionalism explained by all three independent variables.

Table 1. Variables and Instrumentation

Variable	Type	Indicator
Worship	Independent	Frequency of prayer, sunnah prayer, <i>sunnah</i> fasting, <i>tilawah</i> , dhikr
The practice of sufism	Independen/ moderator	Frequency of prayer, sunnah prayer, <i>sunnah</i> fasting, recitation, dhikr
Islamic work ethic	Mediator	Work commitment, honesty, discipline, responsibility, cooperation
Professionalism	They depend	Quality of work, quantity, punctuality, innovation, adaptation

C. Results and Discussion

Results

Results A total of 150 respondents participated in this study. The composition of respondents consisted of 80 private employees (53.3%), 50 civil servants (33.3%), and 20 entrepreneurs (13.3%). Judging from the age group, the majority of respondents were in the productive age range of 26–40 years (60%), while the rest were spread across the age of 25 years and below (20%) and over 40 years old (20%). In terms of work experience, the average working period of respondents was 7.5 years, which indicates that they have mature enough experience in the world of work so that it is relevant to assess the relationship between worship, the practice of Sufism, Islamic work ethic, and professionalism. This profile shows that respondents represent workers with diverse backgrounds, both from the public and private sectors, and have an adequate variety of work experience.

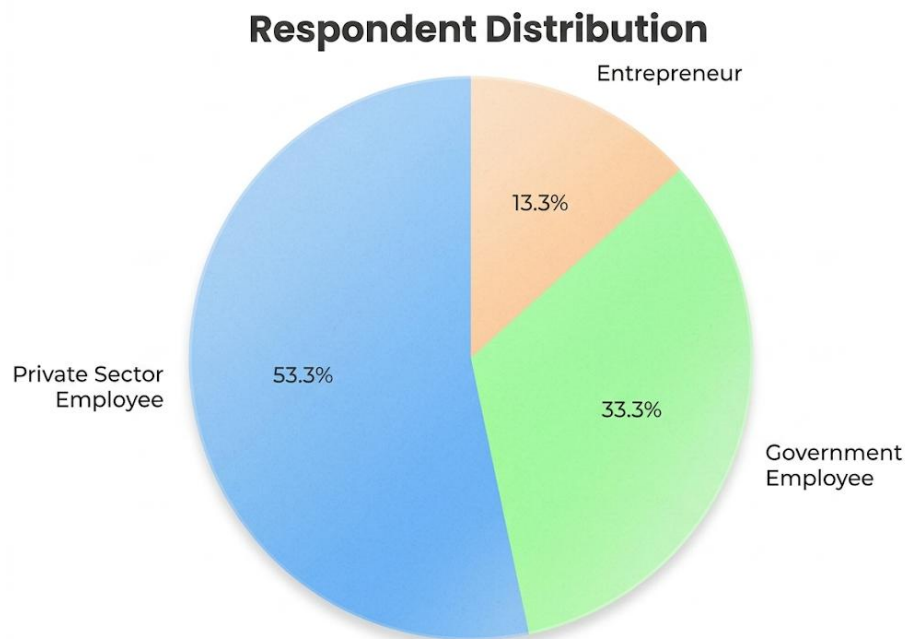


Figure 1. Respondent Distribution

Before further analysis was carried out, a validity and reliability test was carried out on the research instrument. The test results showed that all questionnaire items had a loading factor value above 0.60, thus meeting the construct validity requirements. In addition, reliability values measured with Cronbach's Alpha range from 0.82 to 0.89. According to Nunnally and Bernstein's criteria, instruments with a reliability value above 0.70 can be categorized as reliable.²⁴ Thus, this research instrument has proven to have high internal consistency and is suitable for using to measure the variables of worship, the practice of Sufism, Islamic work ethic, professionalism, and worker welfare.

Pearson correlation analysis is used to test the relationships between variables in the research model. The results of the correlation test showed that worship had a positive and significant correlation with Islamic work ethic ($r = 0.65$; $p < 0.01$) and with professionalism ($r = 0.58$; $p < 0.01$). These findings show that the higher the quality of a worker's worship, the stronger the Islamic work ethic and professionalism. Furthermore, Islamic work ethic had a stronger relationship with professionalism ($r = 0.72$; $p < 0.01$). This shows that Islamic work values, such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility, are the main foundation for improving professionalism in the workplace.

Meanwhile, the practice of Sufism was also shown to have a positive correlation with professionalism ($r = 0.70$; $p < 0.01$) and with worker welfare ($r = 0.63$; $p < 0.01$). This means that the deeper the internalization of Sufism values, such as patience, *tawakkal*, and *murāqabah*, the higher the quality of workers' professionalism and the better their level of well-being. These results reinforce the assumption that Sufism not only has an impact on the spiritual realm, but also makes a real contribution to the social and professional realms.

²⁴ Nunnally, "Psychometric Theory— 25 Years Ago and Now."



Figure 2. Results of Correlation Between Variables

The multiple regression model yields a value of $R^2 = 0.65$, which means that 65% of the variation in professionalism can be explained by worship, Islamic work ethic, and the practice of Sufism. The practice of Sufism had the largest contribution with a coefficient of $\beta = 0.41$ ($p < 0.01$), followed by Islamic work ethic $\beta = 0.33$ ($p < 0.01$), and β worship = 0.28 ($p < 0.05$).



Figure 3. Conceptual Model

The results of this study show that Sufism has strong relevance in the context of professionalism and modern work life. First, worship has been shown to have a significant correlation with work ethic and professionalism. This finding is consistent with Maya

Novita's research which found that Islamic work ethic has a positive impact on the performance of Ministry of Religion employees.²⁵

Second, the practice of Sufism makes a significant contribution to the professionalism and welfare of workers. This is in line with Suwito's findings who proposed the concept of sufism-based management as a model for improving performance in the industrial era 4.0.²⁶ However, this study goes further by providing quantitative evidence that Sufi values such as *tawakkal*, patient, and *murāqabah* contribute directly to the professionalism of workers.

Third, Islamic work ethic has also proven to be an important mediator between worship and professionalism. These results reinforce Gustiawan's research, which states that Islamic Work Ethics has a positive effect on thriving at work and employee commitment.²⁷ In addition, the findings that the practice of Sufism contributes to the welfare of workers strengthen the results of the study. Syahir, who concluded that spirituality in the workplace has a positive impact on the well-being and emotional stability of employees.²⁸ This is also consistent with Kurniady's research on the role of spirituality in improving the quality of work life.²⁹

Theoretically, this research reinforces the paradigm that Sufism not only functions as an individual spiritual practice, but also has social and professional implications in modern life.³⁰ In practical terms, these results recommend the integration of Sufism values into human resource management to improve professionalism, work ethic, and worker welfare.

Discussion

This research makes an important contribution to the development of the theory of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE). First, this study expands the IWE model by including the variables of practicing Sufism as an integral part. So far, IWE studies have emphasized more normative aspects of Islamic work behavior such as honesty, hard work, and discipline, but have not systematically accommodated the dimension of deeper spiritual internalization. With the Sufism variable, the IWE model becomes more complete because it is able to explain how transcendent spiritual values have a direct effect on professional behavior.³¹

Second, this study reveals the mediating role of Islamic work ethic between worship and professionalism. These findings confirm that ritual worship does not necessarily form a professional attitude, but needs to be internalized through Islamic work ethic in order to have practical value in working life. These results open up space for further research to examine

²⁵ Sari, "Pengaruh Etos Kerja Islami Terhadap Kinerja Pegawai Pada Kantor Kementrian Agama Provinsi Jambi."

²⁶ Suwito et al., "Sufism-Based Management for Improving Working Performance in the 4.0 Industrial Era."

²⁷ Gustiawan and Azzahra, "How Islamic Work Ethics Affect Thriving at Work and Employee Commitment."

²⁸ Syahir et al., "Workplace Spirituality and Its Impact on Employee Well-Being."

²⁹ Kurniady et al., "Studying the Role of Spirituality in Quality of Work Life amongst Muslim Employees in Indonesia."

³⁰ Mursalat, "The Contribution of Sufism in Building and Advancing Islamic Civilization in Indonesia"; Anam et al., "Tasawuf Transformatif Di Indonesia."

³¹ Ali and Al-Owaidan, "Islamic Work Ethic"; Nasution and Rafiki, "Islamic Work Ethics, Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction of Islamic Banks in Indonesia."

the possibility of Sufism functioning as a moderator and mediator variable in the framework of modern organizational behavior.³²

Third, this research enriches the literature by integrating the perspective of Islamic spirituality, especially Sufism, into organizational psychology. The relationship between Sufism, worship, work ethic, professionalism, and worker welfare shows that religious values are not only personal, but also have significant implications for work performance and emotional stability of workers. Thus, this integration broadens the horizons of contemporary organizational studies, while affirming that spirituality is an important determinant in creating work quality and employee well-being.³³

This research also provides significant practical implications, especially in human resource management in modern organizations. The results of the study show that the integration of Sufism values into work practices is able to strengthen professionalism and improve the welfare of workers. Therefore, organizations need to design HR development programs that are not only oriented to technical skills, but also to spiritual coaching that emphasizes the values of patience, *tawakkal*, sincerity, and *murāqabah*. This model is in line with the idea of Sufism-based management that has been proposed in the context of industry 4.0, where Sufism is seen as able to be a moral resource in facing the challenges of globalization and digitalization.³⁴

In addition, this study emphasizes the importance of organizational support for employees' worship practices and spirituality. The provision of worship facilities, reflection spaces, and flexible policies on religious activities can create a conducive work climate. This is in line with Elkhairati's finding that religiosity plays an important role in strengthening the professionalism of Muslim workers in Indonesia.³⁵ In this way, the values of worship do not stop at the individual realm, but can be internalized into an Islamic work ethic that is implemented in daily professional behavior.

Another implication is the need to integrate Sufism in employee welfare programs. The findings of this study prove that the practice of Sufism is positively correlated with the welfare of workers. This is consistent with Syahir's study which confirms that spirituality in the workplace increases emotional stability and life satisfaction of employees.³⁶ Therefore, companies can develop employee well-being programs that incorporate aspects of spirituality as a stress management strategy and improve mental health. With this move, the organization not only focuses on material productivity, but also ensures a holistic balance between professional demands and the spiritual needs of workers.³⁷

This research has several limitations that need to be observed. First, the research design uses a cross-sectional approach, so that the relationship between variables can only be

³² Gustiawan and Azzahra, "How Islamic Work Ethics Affect Thriving at Work and Employee Commitment."

³³ Kurniady et al., "Studying the Role of Spirituality in Quality of Work Life amongst Muslim Employees in Indonesia"; Syahir et al., "Workplace Spirituality and Its Impact on Employee Well-Being."

³⁴ Suwito et al., "Sufism-Based Management for Improving Working Performance in the 4.0 Industrial Era."

³⁵ Elkhairati et al., "Professionalism and Religiosity."

³⁶ Syahir et al., "Workplace Spirituality and Its Impact on Employee Well-Being."

³⁷ Mursalat, "The Contribution of Sufism in Building and Advancing Islamic Civilization in Indonesia."

interpreted in the form of correlation, not causality. This limitation is in line with previous studies in the field of Islamic Work Ethics in Indonesia, which also emphasize that a one-time survey approach is not enough to explain the dynamics of the relationship between variables.³⁸

Second, the sampling technique was carried out by purposive sampling in the Surakarta area, so that the generalization of the findings is still limited to the local context. This supports Kurniady's note that research on work spirituality needs to be extended to various geographical contexts and work sectors to enhance external validity.³⁹ With a wider sample scope, the results of the study can be more representative to illustrate the relationship between Sufism, Islamic work ethic, and professionalism at the national and global levels.

Third, the use of self-report questionnaire-based instruments has the potential to cause perception bias, such as social desirability bias or common method variance. This bias was also recorded in studies of religiosity and public sector performance in Indonesia, where respondents tended to give ideal answers according to social or religious norms, rather than actual conditions.⁴⁰ Thus, it is necessary to be careful in interpreting the findings so as not to get caught up in the respondents' perception bias.

To overcome these limitations, several directions for further research can be considered. First, longitudinal studies need to be conducted to examine the causal relationship between the practice of Sufism, Islamic work ethic, and professionalism in the long term. This approach is recommended by the study of global work spirituality which confirms the importance of time dynamics in looking at the influence of spirituality on well-being and performance.⁴¹

Second, future research should examine the role of mediation and moderation formally using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). With this method, the relationship between variables can be tested more comprehensively, for example Islamic work ethic as a mediator or organizational support as a moderator. This kind of model has been applied to Islamic Work Ethics research in the Indonesian banking sector.⁴²

Third, the use of a mixed-methods approach is highly recommended. By combining quantitative data and in-depth interviews, the understanding of the practice of Sufism can be more comprehensive. For example, Anam's transformative Sufism research shows that a qualitative approach is able to capture sufistic nuances that cannot be measured by questionnaires alone.⁴³

Finally, cross-cultural and cross-sector research is important to test the consistency of findings. By comparing the influence of Sufism on the public, private, educational, and

³⁸ Nasution and Rafiki, "Islamic Work Ethics, Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction of Islamic Banks in Indonesia."

³⁹ Kurniady et al., "Studying the Role of Spirituality in Quality of Work Life amongst Muslim Employees in Indonesia."

⁴⁰ Kurniady et al., "Studying the Role of Spirituality in Quality of Work Life amongst Muslim Employees in Indonesia."

⁴¹ Syahir et al., "Workplace Spirituality and Its Impact on Employee Well-Being."

⁴² Mulyono et al., "Universality Of Islamic Work Ethics On Banking Employees In Indonesia And Its Impact On Organizational Commitment."

⁴³ Anam et al., "Tasawuf Transformatif Di Indonesia."

entrepreneurial sectors, it is possible to obtain a richer picture of the relevance of Sufism in the context of modern professionalism. This is in line with the proposal for cross-sectoral research on Islamic work ethics put forward by Gustiawan.⁴⁴

This study demonstrates a strong element of novelty by expanding the framework of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) through the integration of Sufism as an operational spiritual variable. Previous IWE studies have predominantly emphasized normative values such as honesty, hard work, and discipline, as articulated in the foundational works of Abbas J. Ali, yet they have not sufficiently explored the deeper dimension of spiritual internalization. By incorporating Sufism, this research advances the IWE model beyond a normative-ethical construct into a more holistic paradigm rooted in inner transformation. It argues that professional behavior is not merely shaped by external compliance with ethical norms, but also by sustained spiritual practices such as *tazkiyat al-nafs* (self-purification), *murāqabah* (spiritual awareness), and *ihsan* (excellence before God). In this sense, the study bridges the gap between symbolic religiosity and embodied ethical conduct, offering a more comprehensive theoretical contribution to Islamic organizational studies.⁴⁵

Furthermore, a key contribution of this research lies in identifying the mediating role of Islamic Work Ethics in the relationship between worship (*ibadah*) and professionalism. Contrary to the common assumption that ritual observance directly translates into professional excellence, the findings reveal that such a relationship is indirect and requires ethical internalization as a mediating mechanism. Worship functions as a source of moral and spiritual values, while IWE serves as the transformative channel through which these values are translated into concrete workplace behavior. This insight not only confirms but also extends prior studies in Islamic organizational psychology, which highlight the importance of value internalization but have not explicitly modeled this mediation within a Sufistic framework.⁴⁶ Consequently, this research opens new avenues for future inquiry, particularly in examining Sufism as both a mediating and moderating variable in contemporary organizational behavior models.

Another significant contribution is the integration of Sufism into the broader discourse of organizational psychology and employee well-being. The findings indicate that spiritual practices rooted in Sufism are positively associated not only with job performance but also with emotional stability and subjective well-being. This aligns with global scholarship on workplace spirituality, which suggests that meaningful work and spiritual connectedness enhance life satisfaction and psychological balance.⁴⁷ However, this study goes beyond existing literature by positioning Sufism as a distinct epistemological framework grounded in Islamic intellectual tradition, rather than merely adapting Western notions of spirituality. By doing so, it contributes to the development of a more authentic and

⁴⁴ Gustiawan and Azzahra, "How Islamic Work Ethics Affect Thriving at Work and Employee Commitment."

⁴⁵ Ali and Al-Owaidan, "Islamic Work Ethic."

⁴⁶ Nasution and Rafiki, "Islamic Work Ethics, Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction of Islamic Banks in Indonesia."

⁴⁷ Donde P. Ashmos and Dennis Duchon, "Spirituality at Work: A Conceptualization and Measure," *Journal of Management Inquiry* 9, no. 2 (2000): 134–45, <https://doi.org/10.1177/105649260092008>.

contextually grounded paradigm of Islamic organizational behavior that integrates faith, ethics, and professional life.

In addition, this research offers important practical implications for human resource management in modern organizations. It highlights the need for organizations to move beyond purely technical training and incorporate spiritual development programs that nurture values such as sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*), patience (*ṣabr*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), and mindfulness (*murāqabah*). The study also underscores the importance of institutional support for employees' religious and spiritual practices, such as providing spaces for worship and flexible policies that accommodate religious activities. These findings are consistent with empirical evidence showing that religiosity and spirituality significantly enhance professionalism and employee well-being in Muslim contexts.⁴⁸ Therefore, integrating Sufism-based approaches into organizational practices not only strengthens ethical behavior and performance but also promotes a more holistic model of employee welfare that balances material productivity with spiritual fulfillment.

D. Conclusion

This study confirms that worship, Islamic work ethic, and the practice of Sufism have a significant relationship with professionalism and worker welfare. In particular, the practice of Sufism has proven to be the most dominant factor in influencing professionalism, while Islamic work ethic acts as a mediator that connects worship with professional work behavior. This reinforces the theoretical assumption that the internalized dimension of spirituality through Sufism has an impact not only on personal life, but also on the realm of work and organization.

The findings of this study contribute to the literature on Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) by expanding the existing model. So far, IWE research has emphasized more on the normative aspects of Islamic work behavior, but this study shows the importance of including the variables of practicing Sufism as an important determinant of professionalism. This implication is in line with the study of work spirituality which confirms that the quality of work life will improve when transcendental values are integrated into organizational practices. Thus, this research not only provides conceptual, but also methodological contributions through quantitative proof.

Practically, this study provides recommendations for organizations, educational institutions, and policy makers to integrate Sufism values in human resource management. Values such as patience, honesty, *tawakkal*, and *murāqabah* can be used as the basis for the development of an Islamic work ethic that is relevant to the needs of professionalism in the modern era. In addition to increasing productivity, the application of Sufism in the context of work also contributes to the psychological well-being of workers, so as to be able to create a balance between professional demands and spiritual needs.

⁴⁸ Syahir et al., "Workplace Spirituality and Its Impact on Employee Well-Being."

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