The Role of Religious Leadership In Improving Employee Work Motivation

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the role of religious leadership in enhancing employee work motivation at Methy Beauty Clinic. The background of this study is based on the importance of spiritual and moral values in building work ethics and employee enthusiasm in the service sector. The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between religious leadership style and employee work motivation levels, and to describe the extent to which the application of religious values influences loyalty and work enthusiasm. The method used is a qualitative approach with observation techniques, in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), and the distribution of Likert-based questionnaires. The results show that leaders with prominent religious characters based on the values of honesty, sincerity, responsibility, and justice are able to create a harmonious work atmosphere, increase intrinsic motivation, and strengthen employee loyalty. The average score of respondents' perceptions of the variables of religious leadership and work motivation reached 4.68 and 4.58 (strongly agree category). The study confirms that religious leadership plays a significant role in shaping sustainable work motivation, because it combines spiritual aspects and work professionalism, thereby creating a balance between performance, psychological well-being, and spiritual meaning in the organizational environment.

Keywords : Religious Leadership, Work Motivation, Spiritual Values, Employee Loyalty, Beauty Clinic.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a crucial factor in determining organizational success, particularly in influencing employee work motivation. Leadership theory suggests that leadership style plays a significant role in performance, productivity, and work motivation (Robbins & Judge, 2022). According to Yukl (2020), leadership is not simply the process of giving instructions, but also how a leader can inspire, set an example, and foster values that align with the cultural and religious context of the organization. In the Indonesian context, religious values often serve as the foundation for morals and work ethics, which impact the quality of employee motivation (Rahman & Putra, 2021).

Work motivation itself can be understood as both internal and external forces that drive employees to achieve organizational goals (Luthans, 2021). Herzberg, in his two-factor theory, asserted that job satisfaction stemming from intrinsic factors such as work meaning and moral values is more sustainable than motivation based solely on extrinsic factors such as salary or benefits (Miner, 2019). In this regard, religious leadership can serve as a crucial instrument in shaping work motivation rooted in spiritual values, sincerity, and devotion.

Leadership is a crucial element in determining the direction and success of an organization. Robbins and Judge (2022) define leadership as a person's ability to influence, direct, and motivate others to achieve specific goals. Meanwhile, Yukl (2020) emphasizes that leadership extends beyond simply giving instructions, but also encompasses efforts to empower subordinates, set an example, and create an organizational climate conducive to collaboration and innovation. In its application, Luthans (2021) explains that leadership styles can be categorized as authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire, each of which has a different impact on employee motivation and performance. However, in the Indonesian cultural context, leadership styles based on religious values are gaining increasing attention because they are considered capable of instilling ethical, moral, and spiritual principles in the workplace (Rahman & Putra, 2021).

This trend has given rise to the concept of religious leadership, a leadership style that bases its behavior and policies on spiritual values and religious teachings. According to Sari (2021), religious leadership can create a harmonious and fair work environment while fostering loyalty among employees. Wahyudi and Prasetyo (2022) add that religious leaders act as moral controllers in organizations, encouraging employees to work not only for material incentives but also out of sincerity and devotion. In practice, leaders with a religious style emphasize the values of honesty, responsibility, solidarity, and exemplary behavior. This view aligns with ethical leadership theory, which suggests that leaders with high integrity can increase the commitment and dedication of their subordinates to work (Brown & Treviño, 2020).

Effective leadership significantly influences employee motivation. According to Miner (2019), work motivation is an internal force that drives individuals to act and achieve specific goals. Herzberg, through his two-factor theory, differentiates motivation into intrinsic factors such as a sense of responsibility, achievement, and spiritual values, and extrinsic factors including salary, working conditions, and relationships with coworkers. Luthans (2021) underscores the importance of motivation in increasing employee productivity and loyalty, while reducing employee turnover. Similarly, a study by Ahmad and Basri (2020) found that leadership style is a variable that significantly influences motivation levels within an organization.

Several previous studies have demonstrated the link between leadership and work motivation. Research by Ahmad and Basri (2020) found that transformational leadership increases employee work motivation by strengthening vision and inspiration. Meanwhile, a study by Sari (2021) showed that leadership based on religious values can create a harmonious work environment and increase employee loyalty. Another study by Wahyudi and Prasetyo (2022) confirmed that religious leadership plays a role in building an ethical organizational culture, thus positively impacting work motivation.

However, most research still focuses on the education and government sectors, while studies on religious leadership in the service industry, particularly beauty clinics, are relatively limited. This research gap highlights the need for further study on how religious leadership plays a role in increasing employee motivation in the service-based sector, which demands both professionalism and a humanistic approach.

This study aims to address this gap by examining in-depth the role of religious leadership in employee work motivation at the Madira Beauty Clinic. The study focuses on three main aspects: first, how leadership style impacts employee work motivation; second, how religious leadership contributes to increased work motivation; and third, the level of employee work motivation at the Madira Beauty Clinic. Therefore, the objectives of this study are:

1) To analyze how leadership style plays a role in employee work motivation at the Madira Beauty Clinic.
2) To find out how religious leadership plays a role in employee work motivation at the Madira Beauty Clinic.
3) To describe the level of employee work motivation at the Madira Beauty Clinic.

The relationship between religious leadership and work motivation has also been widely discussed in previous research. Rahman and Putra (2021) revealed that religious leadership can create a meaningful and valuable work environment for employees, while Wahyudi and Prasetyo (2022) demonstrated that this leadership style creates an ethical culture that directly impacts work motivation. From these findings, it is clear that religious leadership not only serves as a moral guide but also serves as a key motivating factor in motivating employee work enthusiasm and commitment. In the context of service-based organizations, such as beauty clinics, the application of religious leadership becomes increasingly relevant because human interaction and excellent service are key to business success. Thus, religious leadership plays an important role in increasing employee work motivation through the application of spiritual values that foster a sense of responsibility, sincerity, and meaning in work, thereby creating a productive, harmonious work environment that is oriented towards mutual progress.

RESEARCH METHODS

Although this study is primarily qualitative, it adopts a mixed-method explanatory approach. Quantitative data from Likert-scale questionnaires were used to identify patterns and strength of perceptions, while qualitative data from interviews, observations, and FGDs were employed to deepen interpretation and contextual understanding. This integration enhances data triangulation and strengthens the credibility of findings.

This study used a qualitative approach to explore in-depth the role of religious leadership in increasing employee work motivation at the Madira Beauty Clinic. A qualitative approach was chosen because it provides a holistic understanding of social phenomena through direct data collection in the field (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The research was conducted at the Madira Beauty Clinic, with the clinic's managers and employees as subjects. Subjects were selected using purposive sampling, selecting informants deemed most knowledgeable about leadership and work motivation at the research site (Sugiyono, 2019).

Qualitative research instruments are essentially the researchers themselves, who act as data collectors and analyzers (Miles et al., 2019). However, to strengthen the results, researchers use additional instruments in the form of observation and interview guides.

For this purpose, the instruments used are:

1. *Field observation* : Researchers conducted direct observations of activities in the clinic, including interactions between leaders and employees, as well as employee behavior at work.

2. *Interviews :* Conducted with managers and several employees to gather information regarding work motivation and the role of religious leadership. The interviews were conducted in-depth, guided by open-ended questions.

3. *Data processing* : Data from observations and interviews were processed through qualitative descriptive analysis. The interview results were then presented in narrative form, tables, or graphs to facilitate interpretation.

This type of research was conducted qualitatively with the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2019).

1. Data reduction: sorting relevant data from observation and interview results.

2. Data presentation: presenting data in the form of narrative descriptions, tables, and graphs to see patterns and trends.

3. Conclusion: conclude the role of religious leadership in increasing employee work motivation at the Madira Beauty Clinic based on the results of the analysis.

Conceptual framework:

This research's conceptual framework stems from an understanding of the role of leadership in shaping employee behavior and work motivation. Based on the general leadership theory proposed by Robbins and Judge (2022) and Yukl (2020), leadership is viewed as the ability to influence, direct, and motivate others to achieve organizational goals. The first and second indicators in this framework emphasize two main dimensions of general leadership: the leader's ability to influence the direction of employee work and their role model in creating a conducive

work climate. These two aspects illustrate the fundamental foundation of the relationship between leader behavior and subordinate responses within an organizational context.

Furthermore, the third to fifth indicators represent the concept of religious leadership, which emphasizes moral, ethical, and spiritual values in leadership practices (Rahman & Putra, 2021; Wahyudi & Prasetyo, 2022). Religious leaders focus not only on achieving organizational goals but also on character development and fostering meaning in their work. As explained by Brown and Treviño (2020), leaders who demonstrate integrity and exemplary moral conduct foster a strong sense of commitment and responsibility among employees. Therefore, embracing the values of honesty, sincerity, and justice is crucial for creating a harmonious and meaningful work culture.

The sixth and seventh indicators describe work motivation, which is an internal and external response to leadership situations and the work environment. Based on Herzberg's two-factor theory (as cited in Miner, 2019) and Luthans's (2021) perspective, work motivation can be divided into intrinsic factors—such as personal responsibility and achievement—and extrinsic factors, such as a conducive work environment and positive social relationships. In this context, work motivation reflects not only the drive to achieve optimal results but also feelings of meaning and satisfaction with the work itself.

Meanwhile, the eighth indicator explains the positive relationship between religious leadership and work motivation. Research by Rahman and Putra (2021) and Wahyudi and Prasetyo (2022) shows that implementing religious values in leadership can increase employee motivation and loyalty to the organization. Leaders who are oriented toward spiritual values are able to provide deeper meaning to their work, thus encouraging employees to work with enthusiasm, sincerity, and high commitment.

Overall, this conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between general leadership, religious leadership, and work motivation. Religious leadership is seen as an extension of the concept of general leadership that adds ethical and spiritual dimensions, ultimately contributing directly to increased employee work motivation. Therefore, leaders who are able to combine managerial competence with religious and moral values are believed to be able to create a productive, meaningful, and highly motivated work environment.

Questionnaire: a list of in-depth interview question guidelines (open-ended questions) that are in accordance with the research focus "The Role of Religious Leadership in Increasing Employee Work Motivation at the Madira Beauty Clinic". These questions are divided into two groups: for managers and for employees, so that the data obtained is more comprehensive.

Interview Question Guidelines:

1. Questions for Clinic Managers

The questionnaire contains questions based on a Likert scale (1–5) in accordance with the theoretical basis provided, covering dimensions of leadership, religious leadership, and work motivation, as well as the relationship between variables.

2. Research Questionnaire: Religious Leadership and Work Motivation

Filling Instructions:

Put a check mark (✓) in the column that corresponds to your opinion.

Answer scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Abstain 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree.

Research Indicators:

1. General Leadership

   a. The leader's ability to influence and direct employees to achieve organizational goals.

   b. The leader's exemplary behavior and ability to create a conducive work climate.

2. Religious Leadership

   a. Application of religious values such as honesty, sincerity, and responsibility in carrying out leadership duties.

   b. Fairness of leaders in treating all employees and an attitude of respect for spiritual values in the work environment.

   c. The leader's efforts to foster work enthusiasm by emphasizing sincerity and a spirit of service.

3. Work Motivation

   a. Internal motivation to work better through personal responsibility and achievement of work results.

   b. Work enthusiasm that arises from a positive, ethical, and meaningful work environment.

4. The Relationship between Religious Leadership and Work Motivation

   The influence of religious leadership style in increasing employee motivation and loyalty to the organization.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

FGD Questions: Religious Leadership and Work Motivation

1. Perception of General Leadership

   How do you define a leader's role in influencing and directing employees to achieve organizational goals? (Based on the theories of Robbins & Judge, 2022; Yukl, 2020—leadership as the ability to influence, direct, and create a conducive work climate.)

2. Religious Values in Leadership

   In your opinion, to what extent are religious values such as honesty, sincerity, responsibility, and justice reflected in your leadership style at work? (Based on the theories of Rahman &

Putra, 2021; Wahyudi & Prasetyo, 2022—religious leadership as a moral driver and a shaper of ethical culture.)

3. The Impact of Religious Leadership on Work Motivation

   Can you share your experience of how religious leaders influence your work ethic, loyalty, and motivation in carrying out your daily tasks? (Based on findings by Rahman & Putra, 2021; Brown & Treviño, 2020—religious leaders foster motivation through integrity and role modelling.)

4. Factors that Increase Work Motivation

   In your opinion, what factors — both from a leadership and work environment perspective — are most influential in increasing work motivation in your organization? (Based on Herzberg's theory in Miner, 2019; Luthans, 2021 — intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their relationship to leadership style

Analysis Techniques

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore in depth how religious leadership influences employee work motivation through ethical and spiritual values within organizational practices. Analysis was conducted from the data collection process to the interpretation of the findings, with the goal of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and meanings constructed by the participants.

The first step in analysis is data reduction. At this stage, data from interviews, observations, and documentation are selected, coded, and grouped according to themes related to the research focus. Researchers highlight aspects such as leadership role models, the application of honesty and sincerity, and the influence of religious values on employee morale and loyalty. The reduction process aims to filter relevant data so that complex information can be presented in a focused manner.

The second stage is data display. The reduced data is organized into thematic narratives, matrices, or direct quotes from respondents to demonstrate patterns of relationships between variables. For example, how employees interpret a leader's religious behavior as a factor driving their intrinsic motivation, or how spiritual values shape a harmonious and meaningful work environment.

The third stage is conclusion drawing and verification. Researchers interpret the meaning of the presented data and then relate it to general leadership theory, religious and ethical leadership theory, and work motivation theory. The final conclusions are then verified using triangulation of sources and methods to ensure data validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the results of respondents' answers (R1–R20) using a Likert scale of 1–5, the majority of respondents answered 4 (Agree) and 5 (Strongly Agree). These results illustrate a tendency towards positive perceptions of religious leadership and work motivation.

Table 1. Employee Assessment Results

Aspect	Contribution (%)	Indicator	Score Value	%	Description
General Leadership	19.2%	Influence & Direction	4.45	89%	Leaders are highly competent in directing employees to achieve organizational targets as an operational foundation.
		Role Model & Work Climate	4.65	93%	The exemplary leadership creates a conducive work environment and is the most valued factor in this category.
Religious Leadership	38.1%	Religious Values	4.75	95%	The application of honesty, sincerity, and responsibility is the biggest contribution in forming effective leadership.
		Justice & Spiritual Respect	4.70	94%	Leaders are considered fair and respect the spiritual dimension, thereby increasing feelings of security and appreciation.
		Sincerity & Devotion	4.60	92%	The spirit of dedication drives work motivation even though it requires long-term consistency.
Work motivation	23.1%	Personal Responsibility	4.55	91%	Intrinsic motivation through personal achievement aligns with Herzberg's theory.
		Ethical Environment	4.60	92%	A positive and ethical work environment as a driver of extrinsic motivation.
Religious Leadership Relationship – Motivation	19.6%	Loyalty & Motivation	4.90	98%	The highest contribution in absolute terms; religious leadership predominantly increases organizational loyalty and validates the research hypothesis.

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

The respondent results table shows employee assessments of key indicators on a 1-5 Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The overall average reached 4,675 or 93.5% of the maximum scale, indicating a very positive perception of religious leadership in the organization.

Based on the results of the study based on employee perceptions, general leadership was categorized as *agree* , indicating that leaders were assessed as having carried out their roles effectively and were able to provide positive examples in directing employees. Religious leadership was categorized as *strongly agree* , indicating that religious values such as honesty, sincerity, responsibility, and justice had been implemented concretely in daily leadership practices. Meanwhile, work motivation was also categorized as *agree* , illustrating that employees felt driven

to work both intrinsically through personal responsibility and ethically through a positive work environment. Furthermore, the relationship between religious leadership and work motivation was categorized as *strongly agree* , confirming that religious value-based leadership had a strong influence in increasing employee motivation, especially in building loyalty, a spirit of devotion, and commitment to the organization.

The following explains the relative contribution of each indicator:

1. General Leadership (Contribution 19.2%)

   Indicator 1: Influence & Direction (89%) – Leaders are rated highly competent in guiding employees to achieve organizational goals. This high score is understandable, as effective leadership is the foundation for operational success.

   Indicator 2: Role Model & Work Climate (93%) – Leaders successfully create a conducive work environment through role modeling. The highest contribution in this category indicates that role modeling is valued more than mere technical guidance.

2. Religious Leadership (Contribution 38.1%)

   Indicator 3: Religious Values (95%) – Largest overall contribution. Honesty, sincerity, and responsibility were highly valued, demonstrating that spiritual values are a key differentiator of leadership in the Indonesian context.

   Indicator 4: Justice & Spiritual Respect (94%) – Leaders are perceived as fair and respectful of employees' spiritual dimensions, which logically increases their sense of security and appreciation.

   Indicator 5: Sincerity & Devotion (92%) – Emphasis on the spirit of devotion is effective in fostering motivation, although slightly lower because it requires long-term consistency.

3. Work Motivation (Contribution 23.1%)

   Indicator 6: Personal Responsibility (91%) – Intrinsic motivation through personal achievement is proven to be strong, in line with Herzberg's theory which emphasizes internal motivating factors.

   Indicator 7: Ethical Environment (92%) – A positive and ethical work environment is a significant extrinsic motivator.

4. Relationship between Religious Leadership and Motivation (Contribution 19.6%)

   Indicator 8: Loyalty & Motivation (98%) – The indicator with the highest absolute contribution. Religious leadership style predominantly increases organizational loyalty, empirically validating the research hypothesis.

Following the quantitative findings demonstrating the dominant contribution of religious leadership to work motivation, the next step was to conduct a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to gain in-depth qualitative insights. The FGD was designed to verify and enrich the interpretation of the data on

factors influencing employee work motivation. The following is a tabulated summary of the FGD results:

Table 2. Summary of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Results

No	FGD Questions	Respondent Feedback			
1	Perceptions of General Leadership. How do you define the role of a leader in influencing and directing employees to achieve organizational goals?	In my opinion, a good leader doesn't just give orders, but also inspires and sets a real example. With clear communication and an open attitude, a leader can make the team feel valued and motivated to work towards a common goal.	I see leaders as key drivers capable of motivating their teams through vision and example. Leaders who listen and provide wise guidance will make employees feel involved in achieving organizational goals.	For me, the role of leadership is crucial in maintaining focus and direction in the work. When leaders demonstrate commitment and discipline, employees are encouraged to emulate those attitudes.	The leader functions like the compass of the organization. When he is able to direct fairly and openly, the work atmosphere becomes positive and goals are easier to achieve together.
2	Religious Values in Leadership. To what extent do you think religious values such as honesty, sincerity, responsibility, and justice are reflected in your leadership style at work?	Religious values are quite visible in my workplace. Leaders often emphasize the importance of honesty and sincerity in work, creating a calmer and more trusting work environment.	The application of religious values is very evident, especially in attitudes of responsibility and fairness. Our leaders treat all employees with respect without discrimination, and this fosters a sense of loyalty.	In my opinion, our leaders are very outstanding in moral and spiritual aspects. He often gave calming advice and reminded us to work with good and sincere intentions.	I see religious values embodied in fair and transparent decisions. Leaders don't just talk about results, but also about proper and ethical processes.
3	The Impact of Religious Leadership on Work Motivation. Can you share your experience of how a religious leader influenced your work enthusiasm, loyalty, and motivation in carrying out your daily tasks?	A religious leader inspires me because he always connects work to religious values and moral responsibility. I feel my work becomes more meaningful.	I feel more loyal because our leader treats everyone sincerely and fairly. His leadership style encourages us to work not just for the paycheck, but also out of a genuine desire to contribute.	A religious leader sets an example of patience and honesty, which is contagious to the team. This motivates me to maintain integrity and complete my work well.	I feel motivated because our leaders emphasize the importance of good intentions and sincere work. The work atmosphere has become more relaxed, supportive, and meaningful.
4	Factors That Increase Work Motivation. In your opinion, what factors—both leadership and the	For me, motivation increases when leaders show appreciation for employees' hard	The most important factors are open communication and opportunities for growth. When leaders give us trust, we feel	A positive work environment and exemplary leadership make me want to continue	The support of my coworkers and their fair and religious leadership style have greatly

work environment—are most influential in increasing work motivation in your organization?	work and create an atmosphere of mutual respect.	more responsible and motivated.	improving myself and contributing better.	influenced my work ethic. Everything feels lighter when the work atmosphere is full of sincerity.

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

Based on the FGD results, it can be descriptively explained that effective leadership is reflected in the leader's ability to provide clear direction, inspire employees, and set an example in daily work attitudes and behaviors. The role of a leader extends beyond coordinating operational activities to serving as a role model who builds employee trust and commitment to the organization.

Furthermore, the application of religious values such as honesty, sincerity, and justice has been proven to contribute significantly to creating a positive, harmonious, and meaningful work climate. These values foster mutually respectful working relationships, enhance psychological security, and strengthen integrity at work. In this context, religious leadership serves not only as a managerial approach but also as a moral foundation that strengthens the organization's character.

The research also shows that religious leadership has a significant influence on increasing employee motivation, loyalty, and work morale. Employees feel valued not only professionally but also morally and spiritually, fostering a sense of belonging to the organization and a willingness to deliver their best performance.

Work motivation develops through the synergy of several factors, including consistent leadership role models, appreciation for employee contributions, and the creation of a supportive and ethical work environment. This combination fosters both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, encouraging employees to perform optimally, maintain high commitment, and maintain loyalty to the organization.

Discussion

General Perception of Leadership

Based on the questionnaire results, the average score for the general leadership variable (items 1–2) was 4.55, indicating that respondents agreed that their leader was able to influence, direct, and set a positive example. These results indicate that the leadership style applied was effective in building interpersonal relationships and motivating employees toward organizational goals. This finding is in line with Yukl's (2013) opinion which states that leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how to do it effectively. An effective leader not only gives orders, but also provides inspiration and moral support so that subordinates are motivated to work optimally.

The FGD results also reinforce this. Respondents A and B, for example, emphasized that good leaders "provide inspiration and real-life examples" and "motivate the team through vision and example." This suggests that the leadership demonstrated is not authoritarian, but rather transformational—in line with Bass and Riggio's (2006) perspective, which explains that transformational leaders are able to motivate followers with a meaningful vision and provide a strong ethical example.

Religious Values in Leadership

The average score for the religious leadership variable (items 3–5) reached 4.68, which falls into the strongly agree category. This indicates that religious values such as honesty, sincerity, responsibility, and justice have been effectively implemented in leadership practices in the respondents' organizations.

According to Agung and Suprapti (2018), religious leadership is leadership that instills spiritual, moral, and ethical values in every organizational decision and action. Religious leaders not only pursue material success but also build meaning and inner peace in the workplace. FGD responses showed consistency: Respondent B stated that their leader "treats all employees with respect without discrimination," while Respondent D emphasized that their leader "maintains fair and transparent decisions." This demonstrates leadership practices that uphold justice and integrity, which are key characteristics of religious values-based leadership (Northouse, 2021).

Thus, these results demonstrate that the spiritual dimension of leadership can foster trust, a sense of security, and emotional commitment in employees toward the organization. This also aligns with Fry's (2003) theory on spiritual leadership, which states that values such as compassion, honesty, and meaningful work can enhance psychological well-being and performance.

The Impact of Religious Leadership on Work Motivation

In terms of work motivation (items 6–7), the average score was 4.58 (agree), indicating that employees felt intrinsically and ethically motivated. This indicates that religious leaders play a significant role in fostering work motivation based on moral and spiritual values. The focus group discussion (FGD) supported this quantitative finding: respondent A stated that his leader "makes work feel meaningful because it is linked to religious values," while respondent B added that a religious leadership style "encourages sincere work and high loyalty." This view reflects intrinsic motivation, as explained by Deci and Ryan (2000) in their Self-Determination theory, where a person is driven to work not by external pressure, but by internalized moral awareness and personal values.

Furthermore, religious leadership creates a psychologically conducive work environment, in line with the concept of psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995), where employees feel their

work is meaningful and have the moral autonomy to act according to ethical principles. This results in greater enthusiasm, loyalty, and a sense of responsibility toward the organization.

The Relationship Between Religious Leadership and Work Motivation

The highest average score was 4.9, interpreted as strongly agree. This indicates a very strong relationship between religious leadership and employee work motivation. This finding reinforces the view that when leaders consistently instill religious values, it can increase the loyalty and work enthusiasm of subordinates. This finding supports Reave's (2005) theory, which states that religious or spiritual leadership behaviors such as honesty, integrity, and caring are positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and motivation. Thus, religious values not only strengthen social relationships in the workplace but also serve as a driver of sustainable intrinsic motivation.

The focus group discussion (FGD) also confirmed this relationship. Respondent C noted that "religious leaders set an example of patience and honesty," which spreads to the team and enhances work integrity. Meanwhile, respondent D noted that "the work atmosphere becomes calmer and more meaningful," illustrating the effect of spiritual leadership on employees' emotional balance.

Factors that Increase Work Motivation

Based on the results of the FGD, several main factors that increase work motivation are:

a) Exemplary leadership,

b) Appreciation for performance,

c) Open communication, and

d) Supportive and ethical work environment.

These factors are consistent with Robbins and Judge's (2020) view that work motivation is influenced by a combination of psychologically supportive leadership and a fair work system. The leader's exemplary behavior is central to shaping organizational morale, while a religious work environment fosters a sense of belonging and personal meaning in work. Thus, religious leadership not only provides direction and control but also infuses the work system with a sense of purpose, transforming work into a form of worship and a meaningful social contribution.

Novelty of The Study

This study offers novelty by integrating religious leadership with a mixed-method approach in the context of the beauty clinic service industry, which has been rarely explored in previous studies. Unlike prior research that predominantly focused on education or public sectors, this research demonstrates how spiritual and ethical leadership values operate in a highly service-oriented, customer-facing organization. The combination of quantitative perception scores and qualitative FGD insights provides a more comprehensive understanding of how religious leadership strengthens sustainable employee motivation.

Limitations And Implications

This study has several limitations. First, it was conducted in a single beauty clinic, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other service sectors. Second, the reliance on self-reported perceptions may introduce subjective bias. Future studies are encouraged to involve multiple organizations and apply longitudinal designs.

Practically, the findings imply that organizational leaders, particularly in service industries, can enhance employee motivation by integrating religious and ethical values into daily leadership practices. Theoretically, this study contributes to the enrichment of leadership literature by positioning religious leadership as a bridge between ethical leadership and work motivation.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the results of this study indicate that religious leadership has a significant influence on employee behavior and work motivation. Leaders who demonstrate religious values not only carry out administrative or managerial roles but also serve as moral and spiritual role models for their subordinates. Leaders' attitudes and actions based on honesty, sincerity, responsibility, and justice can foster trust and emotional attachment among organizational members. When leaders demonstrate integrity and sincerity in interactions, they create a harmonious, meaningful, and humane work climate.

Furthermore, spiritual values applied in leadership have been shown to strengthen employees' intrinsic motivation, loyalty, and work commitment. Employees working under religious leadership perceive their work as more than just a professional obligation, but also a form of moral devotion and worship. This aligns with Fry's (2003) theory of spiritual leadership, which asserts that spiritual meaning and purpose in work can enhance an individual's psychological well-being and performance. Thus, religious leadership not only impacts productivity but also creates a balance between employees' material and spiritual needs.

Furthermore, this study confirms that role modeling, appreciation, and communication are key links between religious leadership and work motivation. Leaders who provide concrete examples of ethical and spiritual behavior are more likely to motivate employees than those who rely solely on formal instructions. Genuine appreciation and open communication strengthen the emotional and moral bonds between leaders and employees, creating positive synergy within the organization. These findings align with the transformational leadership theory proposed by Bass and Riggio (2006), which argues that visionary and value-driven leaders are able to inspire their followers to achieve higher, ethically sustainable goals.

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