

THE IMPACT OF ISLAMIC WORK ETHIC ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE-SHARING BEHAVIOR IN INDONESIA'S FAST-FOOD COMPANIES

Ahmat Setiabudi^{*1}, Anggraini Sukmawati^{**}, Siti Jahroh^{*}

^{*}School of Business, IPB University
Jl. Pajajaran, Bogor 16151, Indonesia

^{**}Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Management, IPB University
Jl. Agatis, IPB Dramaga Campus, Bogor 16680, Indonesia

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Abstract

Background: Studying the impact of Islamic work ethics on knowledge-sharing behavior and employee performance is intriguing since ethics play a crucial role in shaping the company's core values.

Purpose: This research examined the impact of Islamic work ethic (IWE) on knowledge-sharing behavior (KSB) and employee performance (EP). Considering the importance of knowledge exchange on employee performance, the external validity of the IWE concept was addressed to examine the mediating effect of knowledge-sharing behaviors on employee performance.

Design/methodology/approach: Valid questionnaires (132 respondents) were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine a comprehensive organizational situation. This research also collects views from organizational behavior and performance experts to enrich the discussion regarding how Islamic work ethics influence employee performance and knowledge-sharing.

Findings/results: Analysis using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) found that Islamic work ethics influence the attitudes and behavior of employees at fast-food companies in Indonesia. In general, Islamic work ethics greatly influences employee performance and knowledge-sharing behavior. However, Islamic work ethics have a more significant influence than knowledge-sharing behavior in influencing employee performance.

Conclusion: Managers who wish to improve the attitudes and behavior of their employees are strongly advised to prioritize the concept of Islamic work ethics in the workplace. Implementing this concept is beneficial in knowledge-sharing behavior for better employee performance, ultimately increasing organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

Originality/value (State of the art): This research contributes to the knowledge of how Islamic work ethics predict employee performance and knowledge-sharing behavior and examines the mediating effect of knowledge-sharing behavior influencing employee performance.

Keywords: Islamic work ethic, knowledge-sharing behavior, employee performance, fast-food company, Structural Equation Modeling.

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¹Corresponding author:
Email: ahmat.setiabudi@apps.ipb.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

The concept of modern work ethic, the Protestant work ethic (PWE), was first introduced by Weber (1905). Its concept emphasizes frugality, individualism, discipline, and hard work. Researchers found that Protestant and non-Protestant communities with diverse religious beliefs had different work ethics as they developed. As a result, most research on the work ethic that initially focused on PWE in Western societies is not omnipresent (Arslan, 2001; Niles, 1999). Even so, experts still believe religion is essential to studying work ethics. Research has produced exciting findings exploring work ethics influenced by various beliefs such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism (Parboteeah et al. 2009). Besides, Islamic work ethics (IWE) also has its developments in influencing performance and behavior (bin Salahudin et al. 2016; Gheitani et al. 2019). Holistically, IWE and PWE share the same values, especially regarding cooperation, commitment, and dedication to work. However, Yousef (2001) stated that the emphasis on intention is stronger in IWE, and this justification is also reflected in the Prophet Muhammad's teaching that actions are judged based on intention. Furthermore, actions that cause mass harm are considered unlawful in Islam even though the output is beneficial for some people (Ali & Al-Owaidan, 2008).

The IWE concept, firmly rooted in the Al-Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, underscores that globalization perspectives do not influence the ethics believed by Muslims (Yousef, 2000). However, IWE is a complete set of ethical standards that separates good from evil and distinguishes right actions from wrong (Abuznaid, 2009). As a result, many researchers over the last three decades have increasingly explored how business ethics from an Islamic perspective contributes globally to addressing the diversity of the workforce and the complexity of aspects of life. The rapidly growing business world requires innovation and collaboration to achieve success. Besides, companies that can respond to changes in customer demand through innovation will expand rapidly. Several studies have investigated the effect of IWE on organizational performance. They have proven that the positive behavior cast by employees successful in carrying out their duties will further improve their performance for other jobs (Alegre et al. 2016; Rayton & Yalabik, 2014; Shah et al. 2017). These findings are supported by Gheitani et al. (2019), who found that IWE influences job satisfaction,

ultimately influencing employee performance in the organization. Positive behavior from particular beliefs, especially IWE, will drive employees to voluntarily and involuntarily contribute to their communities (Guzeller & Celiker, 2020; Jang et al. 2021).

The ethics adopted influence employee commitment and involvement in determining the company's success. Although business ethics plays a vital role in influencing company performance, research primarily focuses on the context of working performance in higher education lecturers (Noer, 2022; Romi et al. 2020), green human resource practices, environmental performance (Satrianto & Gusti, 2023), Islamic banks (Suryani et al. 2021), and Islamic motivation, affective commitment, job satisfaction, and employee performance in the general standings (Ali, 1988; bin Salahudin et al. 2016; Gheitani et al. 2019). Therefore, research comprehensively exploring the impact of IWE on employee performance and knowledge-sharing behavior is still remarkably limited, especially in top fast-food companies in Indonesia. The present study is essential in developing theories on how IWE plays a vital role in the management domain of attitudes, performance, and behavior among organizational members. The data obtained from various job levels in several regions of Indonesia can hopefully provide a good vision regarding the stance of IWE in organizational activities, especially in local fast-food companies in Indonesia. Therefore, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how local fast-food companies in Indonesia heighten the IWE concept to improve the performance of their employees and optimize knowledge-sharing behavior activities.

The Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) method using SmartPLS in this research consists of two stages: testing the measurement and structural models. Model evaluation was carried out to determine the model's suitability, show the relationship of each indicator with its latent variable, and test the validity and reliability of each latent variable indicator. By evaluating the model (Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, and Composite Validity), researchers can be confident that the latent variables or constructs that are the basis for assessing relationships in the structural model can be measured and are accurate. By employing SEM-PLS, this research examines the impact of IWE on knowledge-sharing behavior (KSB) and employee performance (EP).

Considering the importance of knowledge exchange on employee performance, the external validity of the IWE concept will be addressed to examine the mediating effect of knowledge-sharing behaviors on employee performance.

METHODS

A purposive-homogeneous sampling technique that focused on one particular subgroup was used as the sampling method in this research. This technique allowed researchers to ensure a logical relationship between research objectives and focus (Saunders et al. 2009). This method enabled researchers to explore the data more effectively because the samples taken could provide more representative values. Primary data covering Islamic work ethic (IWE), knowledge-sharing behavior (KSB), and employee performance (EP) were collected from the top six fast-food brands spread across Greater Jakarta, Banten, West Java, East Java, Sulawesi, and Sumatra. Data were collected through online questionnaires and offline interviews over four months (June-October 2023) from employees working in various positions, including crew members, directors, managers, and supervisors. By distributing online questionnaires, the final feedback produced 132 responses. All respondents were confirmed to be Muslim to ensure the quality of the responses. In addition to containing respondents' views regarding IWE, KSB, and EP, various descriptions such as gender, age, marital status, department, and total work experience were also collected. Valid questionnaires were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling to examine a comprehensive organizational situation. This research also gathered insights from organizational behavior and performance experts regarding how Islamic work ethics influenced employee performance and participation in knowledge sharing.

Measures

All variables were assessed by self-reported data employing a 6-point Likert scale (one point denotes strongly disagree, and six points denotes strongly agree.)

Islamic work ethics (IWE)

IWE was measured with a 17-item scale developed by Ali (1988), such as laziness as a vice, dedication to work as beneficial to oneself and others, and more free time as a benefit to society and others. The reliability of this variable was 0.958 on the 12-item scale, which was consistent with the reliability reported by Khan et al. (2015).

Knowledge-sharing behavior (KSB)

KSB was measured using a 16-item scale developed by Andrawina & Govindaraju (2009): I always share work experiences with other employees in the organization, I always teach what I know to other employees in the organization when I am asked, and I can provide information related to work to other employees in different departments. Reliability for this variable was above the conventional standard (0.965).

Employee performance (EP)

EP was measured with a 21-item scale developed by Williams & Anderson (1991): I completed the assigned tasks well and helped others who were absent. The reliability of this measurement was above conventional standards (0.960).

Hypotheses

Researchers in organizational changes (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Proost et al. 2015) proposed considering comprehensive dimensions when studying employee performance. Organizational strategists must consider the complex dimensions required to boost employee performance, including their work ethics. Work ethic influences an organization's success because the performance of organizational members is measured by their attitude, job output, and efficiency on a day-to-day basis. The present study seeks to understand the influence of Islamic work ethic on employee performance and knowledge-sharing behavior variables. Therefore, the research framework for constructing the research hypotheses is presented in Figure 1.

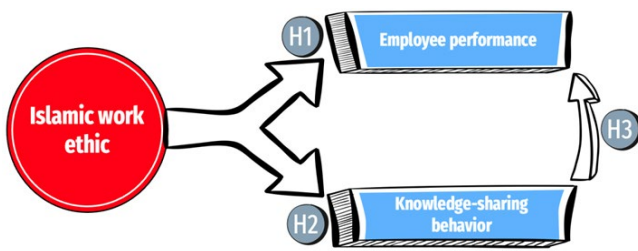


Figure 1. Research framework

Impact of Islamic work ethics on employee performance

The relationship between IWE and EP can be explained through Meglino & Korsgaard's (2004) "other orientation theory," which explains individual responses to the welfare of others, be they individuals, groups, or organizations. This theory states that individuals with "high" in other orientations tend to override rational self-interest (Sparrow et al. 2010). The IWE concept has always emphasized individuals performing their duties exceptionally well and exerting extra effort to contribute to the progress and prosperity of their organizations. Therefore, the IWE concept is closely related to the other orientation model, which emphasizes that individuals respect the principles of other persons.

A study by Mirels & Garrett (1971) found that individuals who adhere to the Protestant work ethic are more likely to accept authoritarian orders. Uniquely, they perform well despite their authoritarian leaders, which is often disliked by most modern societies. The current study believes that employees who strongly adhere to IWE tend to perform well at work because the values in IWE clearly emphasize caring for others for the sake of collective progress and prosperity. This research believes that individuals who adhere to IWE tend to be willing to work hard and will always try to show improved performance. In addition, IWE, which underscores the principle of always helping others, allows its adherents to exert additional efforts to contribute to the organization's welfare through knowledge-sharing activities. Apart from the many previous studies that explored the influence of IWE in influencing employee personality and efforts, further research exploring the impact of IWE on employee performance, especially for employees of local fast-food companies in Indonesia, is limited. Based on this justification, the present study formulates the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Islamic work ethic positively influences employee performance.

Impact of Islamic work ethics on knowledge-sharing behavior

Involuntary and informal knowledge creation often occurs through various types of communication from organizational members to large-scale institutions (Andrawina & Govindaraju, 2009). In addition to the many studies on knowledge creation at the organizational level (Song, 2008; Tsai & Li, 2007), several studies also found that knowledge creation at the member level plays an important role (Connelly & Kevin Kelloway, 2003; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2007). Furthermore, Nonaka (2009) emphasized that new knowledge always starts from the individual. Creating and sharing knowledge is essential to produce innovative ideas, services, and products (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2007). Furthermore, Reid (2003) stated that sharing knowledge within an organization will enable the organization to gain a competitive advantage through personalized service to customer requests. Organizations need to increase their employees' exposure to knowledge and encourage cooperative and effective knowledge-sharing activities (Lin & Lee, 2004). Therefore, several studies have long emphasized the importance of knowledge resources for organizations (Grant, 1996; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2007). The Al-Quran, the Holy Book for Muslims, highlights that humans are representatives of Allah (God) on earth, gifted with knowledge, and must share knowledge in all aspects of life, including the workplace (Chaudhary et al. 2023).

Besides, the Prophet Muhammad SAW taught Muslims to share knowledge to contribute to the development and welfare of society. Specifically, the Al-Quran emphasizes that the evidence and guidance given by Allah as knowledge given to humankind must not be hidden. According to Islam, generosity in sharing knowledge is a special act. The focus on the importance of sharing knowledge in Islam is also related to the exchange of knowledge through nourishing discussions. Healthy discussion in sharing knowledge is a noble act, primarily when the discussion focuses on glorifying Allah and His commandments (Mohamed et al. 2010). Islamic work ethics, based on the Al-Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, is believed to influence organizational behavior and performance significantly. Organization members who adhere to the ethical principles contained in the Al-Quran and

Sunnah are expected to perform knowledge-sharing behavior well. Indeed, Islamic teachings will always promote activities in education because the Al-Al-Quran and Sunnah advise Muslims to practice sharing knowledge in their environment. The present study believes that individuals with high IWE are more likely to demonstrate good KSB because sharing knowledge is regarded as a moral obligation. Exploration of how IWE influences employees' willingness to share knowledge in their environment, especially among workers of local fast-food companies in Indonesia, is scarce and needs further enrichment. Based on this justification, the present study formulates the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Islamic work ethic positively influences knowledge-sharing behavior.

Impact of knowledge-sharing behavior on employee performance

Specific spans or prerequisites do not limit opportunities to share knowledge. Employees can share insights from their internal and external surroundings, including information that contributes to increasing personal and organizational capacity. According to Rohim & Budhiasa (2019), activities within the workplace need to be seen as considerably crucial because they influence employee performance. These findings are supported by Sanosra et al. (2022), who found that knowledge-sharing behavior positively and significantly affects employee performance. Any culture constructed within

a workplace determines how employees behave. The present study believes that employees who practice an Islamic work ethic will be better at expressing themselves through knowledge development and collaboration. Their characteristic of always being optimistic will guide each individual to collaborate well for mutual success. The IWE concept, rooted in Islamic teachings, prioritizes intentions and honesty in every action. Therefore, employees with high IWE will have high confidence, optimism, and self-resilience in every task. Studies of positive attitudes towards work in local fast-food companies are minimal, especially in Indonesia. Therefore, the present study formulates the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Knowledge-sharing behavior positively influences employee performance

RESULTS

The validity and reliability of research tests were evaluated using two main criteria: loading factor and average variance extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al. (2011), the loading factor value should be equal to or greater than 0.70. Evaluation of the inner model using SmartPLS 3.0 found that 14 indicators were invalid because the loading factor value was below 0.70. After repeating the PLS algorithm by eliminating invalid indicators, the final research model with 41 valid indicators was produced, as shown in Figure 2.

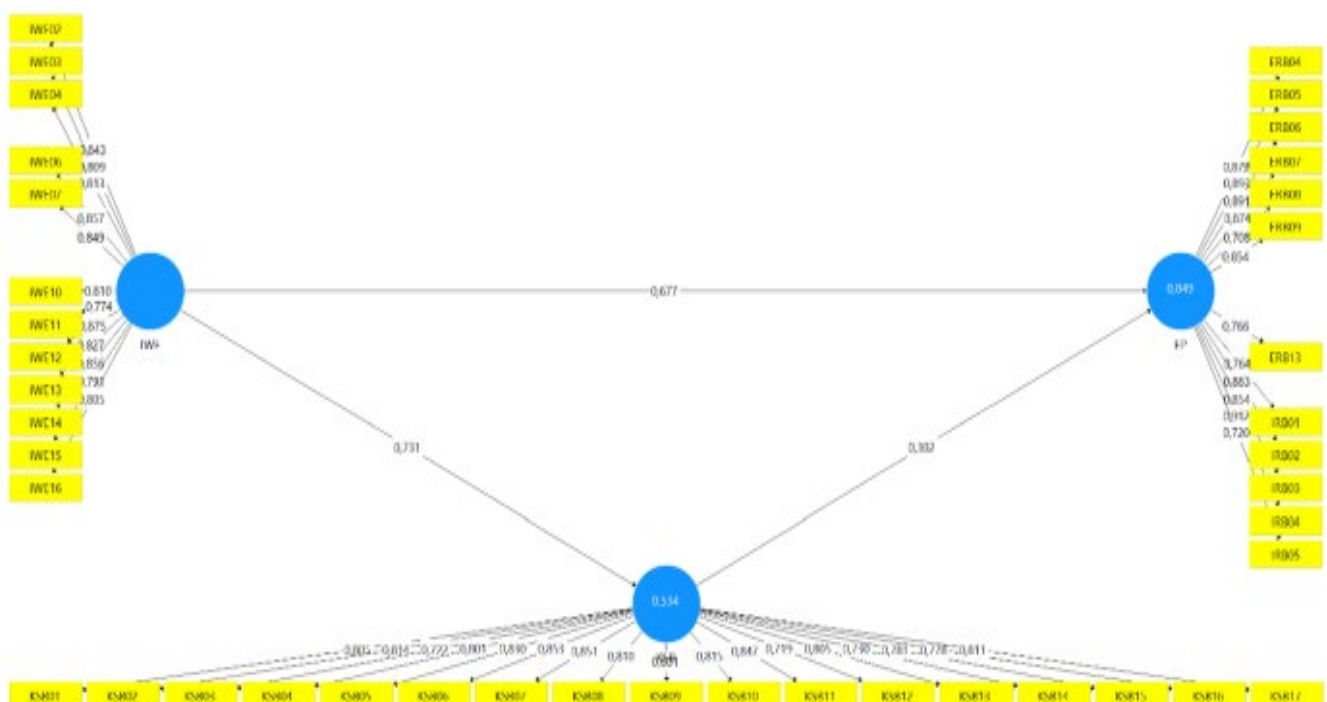


Figure 2. Final research model

The loading factor value should be equal to or greater than 0.70, and the AVE value must be equal to or greater than 0.50 for the convergent validity to be deemed solid. The present study has fully completed the required criteria as presented in Table 1.

Discriminant validity in the present study was assessed based on cross-loading values and the correlation between latent variables. The correlation between constructs should be smaller than the square root of the AVE. The present study has met the criteria for discriminant validity, which means the different constructs are unrelated and can effectively explain the factors contributing to employee performance. Composite reliability is used in this study to evaluate model reliability. Hair et al. (2011) stated that the composite reliability value must exceed 0.70 to be deemed reliable. Still, as stated in Table 1, employee performance, Islamic work ethics, and knowledge-sharing behavior have shown good reliability. Therefore, the research model shows good discriminant validity and reliability. After testing validity and reliability, the

structural model was evaluated using the bootstrapping method. According to Hair et al. (2011), the resulting R-Square values are categorized into three: weak (0.25), medium (0.50), and high (0.75), as presented in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, employee performance can be explained by the Islamic work ethic and knowledge-sharing behavior with a high correlation (84.7%). Therefore, employee performance is greatly influenced by knowledge-sharing behavior and Islamic work ethics. This research also found that other variables outside this model contributed to employee performance by 15.3%. These unanalyzed factors may include other external or internal factors not included in the model but still impact employee performance. In addition, knowledge-sharing behavior can be explained by the Islamic work ethic in a model with moderate correlation. The results of the bootstrapping analysis to determine the direction and direct influence between variables are presented in Table 3.

Table 1. Construct reliability and validity

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Conclusion
EP: Employee performance	0.960	0.963	0.965	0.699	Valid and reliable
IWE: Islamic work ethic	0.958	0.959	0.963	0.683	Valid and reliable
KSB: Knowledge-sharing behavior	0.965	0.971	0.968	0.639	Valid and reliable

Table 2. R-Square

Variables	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted	Conclusion
EP: Employee performance	0.849	0.847	High correlation
KSB: Knowledge-sharing behavior	0.534	0.531	Moderate correlation

Table 3. Bootstrapping analysis

Variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Conclusion
IWE: Islamic work ethic → EP: Employee performance	0.677	0.663	0.067	10.181	0.000	Positive and significant
IWE: Islamic work ethic → KSB: Knowledge-sharing behavior	0.731	0.729	0.067	10.845	0.000	Positive and significant
KSB: Knowledge-sharing behavior → EP: Employee performance	0.302	0.315	0.063	4.826	0.000	Positive and significant

The Islamic work ethic greatly influences employee performance and knowledge-sharing behavior. Precisely, Islamic work ethics have a more significant influence than knowledge-sharing behavior in influencing employee performance. Since the attitudes and behavior of employees are strongly affected by Islamic work ethics, it is beneficial to pay more attention to how this concept ultimately increases organizational effectiveness and efficiency. The significant impact of IWE through this research has been proven to influence individual attitudes and behavior in organizations significantly. This influence is strongly driven by the belief that Muslims must practice ethical work principles daily. Khan et al. (2015) firmly stated that highly compliant employees with IWE prioritize hard work, dedication, honesty, and loyalty to achieve organizational success. The present study believes that individuals and organizations that obey the Al-Quran's commandments will work diligently, resulting in job satisfaction and psychological well-being. Bootstrapping analysis in this research found that organizational members who adhere to IWE principles are believed to perform well in their duties (p-value of $0.000 < 0.005$). Thus, it can be said that increasing Islamic work ethics by one unit will boost employee performance in Indonesia's fast-food companies by 67.7% (Table 3).

The teachings and guidelines believed in IWE will strengthen the principles of organizational members in seeing their work as valuable and productive activities for collective goals. This research believes that IWE will hone organizational members' respect for their leaders when faced with challenging situations. De Clercq et al. (2019) found that the workplace and self-dedication cannot be separated. The workplace, where employees spend a lot of their time, is a place where employees can actualize self-satisfaction with job performance (De Clercq et al. 2019) and work engagement (Khan et al. 2015). Self-satisfaction when completing good work is closely related to work involvement because these two elements will provide a sense of belonging when the work done together turns out to have a positive and massive impact on the organization on a large scale. The encouragement of Islamic religious teachings for its followers to always collaborate in the workplace makes individuals with strong IWE more likely to engage in knowledge-sharing behavior. The Islamic work ethic variable in this research was found to have a positive and significant effect on knowledge-sharing behavior (p-value of $0.000 < 0.005$). Therefore,

the present study believes that a solid encouragement to collaborate in the workplace following IWE principles will enable increased capabilities at the individual level. Therefore, an increase in Islamic work ethics by one unit will increase knowledge-sharing behavior in Indonesia's fast-food companies by 73.1% (Table 3).

Sustainable KSB activities will increase the enrichment of cross-sector knowledge and will cumulatively impact the overall intelligence of all company members. Islam firmly asks its adherents to view collaboration and mutual assistance as a moral obligation. The study by Martín-Santana et al. (2021) found that leaders have a significant role in shaping and developing employee work attitudes. Furthermore, their findings prove that leaders who can set examples of ethical, moral, and fair behavior will influence how employees view integrity, altruism, and honesty. This principle covers proactive activities supporting colleagues and organizations for the common good, which is clearly emphasized in the IWE concept. Therefore, companies with a leadership style that highly upholds the IWE concept are very likely to be able to improve the attitudes of all employee members, both employees with low and high IWE backgrounds.

The sustainability of knowledge-sharing behavior is closely related to how knowledge in the organization is managed effectively. Imran et al. (2017) stated that good knowledge management influences a company's success in achieving its goals. The study by Singh et al. (2021) of 404 SMEs in the manufacturing sector in the United Arab Emirates revealed that knowledge-sharing practices are directly proportional to open innovation. Furthermore, Popa et al. (2017) found that open innovation in organizations boosts organizational performance because knowledge circulating within the company triggers constructive discussions and feedback. As a result, knowledge-sharing practices can give rise to the needed in-depth exploration of knowledge. The results of previous research findings strengthen the findings in the present study: knowledge-sharing behavior in the workplace has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (p-value of $0.000 < 0.005$), and an increase in one unit of knowledge-sharing behavior influences an increase in employee performance by 30.2% (Table 3). The present study also believes that knowledge-sharing and knowledge-creation practices work bi-directional in influencing innovation and company performance. Open innovation will allow employees to express

ideas openly. Consequently, these ideas are developed and discussed in the sustainable management of knowledge assets. The output from mature knowledge management is then recirculated within the company and refined with fresh constructive discussions through exploration, identification, nurturing, refining utilization, re-construction, and internalization.

Managerial Implications

By fostering the adoption of IWE, organizations can improve job performance and promote knowledge-sharing in their workplace, especially in Indonesia's fast-food companies. Therefore, managers should support the mutual understanding regarding IWE concepts encompassing several activities, including planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. IWE principles are expected to enhance how Indonesia's fast-food companies better manage their performance in making decisions, strategy, tactics, and financial planning. Consequently, their knowledge-sharing engagement could improve through good structure, defined initiative, and continuous improvements.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The Islamic work ethic significantly influences employee performance and knowledge-sharing behavior. Furthermore, Islamic work ethics have a tremendous effect on employee performance compared to knowledge-sharing behavior. Managers who wish to enhance the attitudes and behavior of their employees are strongly advised to prioritize Islamic work ethics. Implementing this concept greatly benefits knowledge-sharing behavior and better employee performance, ultimately increasing organizational effectiveness and efficiency. This research contributes to the expanding literature on the Islamic work ethic by investigating its impact on employee performance and knowledge-sharing behavior. Theoretically, the external validity of the IWE concept further strengthens the theory that IWE has practical relevance in real-world contexts, specifically in influencing behavior and attitude in organizational changes. In addition, exploring IWE's role in private companies prioritizing knowledge-sharing behavior proves that IWE has been crucial in increasing employee performance in Indonesia's fast-food companies.

Recommendations

It is vital to acknowledge three limitations of this study: 1) the cross-sectional nature means that causal relationships in this study cannot be determined with certainty. Therefore, the longitudinal design is expected to provide information that better explains the causal relationship and impact of IWE on KSB and EP; 2) the nature of the data from self-reports can cause bias in the findings. This problem can be resolved using peer-reported data; 3) negative contextual factors such as abusive supervision or politics in the workplace were excluded in this research. Therefore, exploring how IWE can act as a buffer against the adverse impacts of these factors will provide bolder results. To eliminate idea generalizations from the present findings, especially regarding the impact of IWE on employee performance in fast food companies in Indonesia, future research is expected to explore more diverse work environments and company cultures, including more unique variables such as creativity, work engagement, and deviant behavior. Future research could test whether Islamic and Protestant work ethics have different impacts in identical workplaces to provide more exciting results.

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