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Higher education quality culture and Islamic work ethics effects on improving lecturer competence and performance

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of higher education quality, culture and Islamic work ethics on improving lecturer competence and performance. In Indonesia, the competitiveness of higher education institutions remains moderate, and lecturers' performance is crucial for achieving institutional goals. This study aimed to analyze how quality culture and Islamic work ethics influence lecturer competence and performance at Universitas Mercu Buana in Jakarta. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data from 145 lecturers, which was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS software. The results indicate that while quality culture does not significantly affect lecturer competence, it has a positive and significant impact on lecturer performance. Additionally, Islamic work ethics significantly influence both lecturer competence and performance, with the strongest effect on performance through competence. These findings suggest that fostering a strong quality culture and promoting Islamic work ethics can significantly enhance the performance and competence of lecturers in higher education.

Keywords: Competence, Islamic work ethic, Performance, Quality culture, Structural equation model.

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1. Introduction

The level of competitiveness of higher education institutions in Indonesia remains relatively moderate when compared to institutions in other Asian countries such as Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines [1]. Lecturer performance serves as a fundamental factor in achieving a university's objectives, while alumni are expected to embody strong character and serve as role models within society. Enhancing lecturer performance must be strategically planned and continuously implemented, as it represents a key component in the human resource development strategy designed to meet

institutional needs and adhere to measurable quality standards [2]. To strengthen the competitiveness of higher education in Indonesia, the government has introduced quality assurance systems, with one of the primary goals being the establishment of a robust quality culture within academic institutions.

A good lecturer's performance will determine the best measure of an educational institution. According to Asiaweek magazine, one of the best measures of educational institutions is lecturer resources at 25%, which is the largest percentage among student selection indicators. This highlights the importance of lecturer resources, so it is necessary to conduct regular and periodic evaluations of lecturer performance [3]. Stated by Utin and Yosepha [4], performance originates from the concept of job performance or actual performance, referring to the outcomes or achievements attained by an individual. Performance, in this context, is defined as the quality and quantity of work produced by an employee in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. According to Mathis and Jackson [5], performance is influenced by three main elements: individual factors, psychological factors, and organizational factors. Other factors influence lecturer performance, namely, organizational factors. One of the organizational factors that has been proven to influence lecturer performance is organizational culture. According to Armstrong [6], performance is a multidimensional construct influenced by various contributing factors. These factors can be categorized into intrinsic (individual/personal or human resources) and extrinsic influences, such as leadership, organizational systems, team dynamics, and situational conditions. A detailed explanation of these elements includes: 1) Individual/personal factors, encompassing knowledge, skills, abilities, self-confidence, motivation, and the level of commitment each employee possesses; 2) Leadership factors, relating to the capability of managers or team leaders in providing motivation, direction, enthusiasm, and support for effective work; 3) System factors, referring to organizational work systems, available infrastructure, internal processes, and the existing performance culture; 4) Team factors, involving the degree of support, trust, team cohesion, and the interpersonal relationships among team members; and 5) Contextual or situational factors, which include environmental pressures and changes, both internal and external to the organization. Research on the influence of organizational culture on performance has been conducted by Putra [7], Iskamto [8], Wahjoedi [9], Gaynor [10] and Rachmayani [11]. They found that organizational culture positively affects employee performance.

Quality culture is a system of shared values, beliefs, and norms that prioritize customer satisfaction and continuously enhance the quality of products and services. In organizations that embrace a quality culture, quality is embedded in nearly all aspects of organizational operations, including recruitment and promotion, employee orientation and training, compensation systems, leadership styles, decision-making processes, organizational structure, workflows, and even office layout. The core values and beliefs in quality culture, as stated by Malhi [12] include: 1) Customer focus, where quality is defined and valued based on customer perceptions; 2) Employee engagement and empowerment, enabling employees to serve customers effectively and believe in their ability to make a difference; 3) Open and honest communication, where employees feel safe to express their opinions without fear of retaliation; 4) Problem-solving and decision-making based on facts and reliable data; 5) Continuous improvement as an integral part of work culture; 6) Teamwork across the organization, fostering close collaboration between managers and employees as well as among departments; 7) Process management, ensuring quality is integrated into every stage of the work process; and 8) Rewards and recognition systems based on achieving quality goals and demonstrating appropriate behavior. Additionally, Alberto [13] identifies seven key elements that signify a quality culture: 1) Consistency, 2) Principle of benefit, 3) Learning environment, 4) Honesty, 5) Utilitarian approach, 6) Respect or Appreciation, and 7) Empowerment that encourages employee creativity.

Quality culture is good for increasing lecturer competence, as stated by Rasmussen and Sieck [14], Haris et al. [15], Bollaert et al. [16] and Yanti and Agustian [17]. Research from Hilman et al. [18] proves that quality culture positively and significantly affects the performance in a university. The same results were found by Rifa'i et al. [19] and Vilcea [20]. So, it can be hypothesized that a higher education quality culture affects lecturer performance.

Ethics in the workplace refers to the collection of positive traits that collectively define an organization's workforce, such as integrity, perseverance, dedication, initiative, and more. Work ethic involves how employees apply these values in their roles, leading to job satisfaction and enhanced performance. Ideally, a strong ethical culture in the workplace promotes proper guidance and mentorship from employers, equal treatment from management, and comprehensive care for employees and their families [21]. Islamic work ethics have drawn researchers' interest as a constructive element in the workplace. As noted by Aravik et al. [22] the Islamic work ethic represents a moral framework that distinguishes between right and wrong based on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). this concept provides two key insights: on one hand, it shares similarities with general ethical systems that separate good from bad; on the other hand, it sets itself apart by adhering strictly to Islamic values. According to Hendryadi [23], Islamic work ethics are rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah, following the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The core principles include 1) striving through effort, 2) engaging in healthy competition, 3) promoting transparency, and 4) demonstrating responsible conduct.

Based on previous research by Saepudin et al. [24], Amalia [25] and Purnama [26], work ethics significantly and positively affect the competence of employees. This is attributed to the cumulative effect of positive traits inherent in strong work ethics, such as integrity, perseverance, dedication, initiative, and others, which shape the overall character of an organization's workforce. Islamic work ethics also have positive effects on organizations. Research on the influence of the Islamic work ethic on performance and other positive work behaviors has been conducted by Rahman [27], Yusof et al. [28], Al Jabar and Suharnomo [29], Din et al. [30] and Aflah et al. [31] with the consistent results that Islamic work ethics positively and significantly affected performance and positive work behaviors.

Competence as Hager and Gonczi [32] competence refers to the demonstration of a particular ability as a holistic expression that integrates knowledge, skills, and attitudes, all of which are observable and measurable. Individuals who

possess competence exhibit capabilities that can be identified and assessed. In the context of higher education, lecturers serve as professional educators and researchers with primary responsibilities that include the transmission, advancement, and dissemination of science, technology, and the arts through teaching, research, and community engagement. Competence encompasses a blend of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes, all of which are reflected in consistent patterns of thought and behavior. The consistent application of these patterns allows an individual to be recognized as competent, demonstrating essential understanding, technical ability, and value-driven actions. As noted by Vitello et al. [33]. Competence is the ability to integrate and apply relevant knowledge, practical skills, and psychosocial components (such as beliefs, values, attitudes, and motivations) to perform effectively within a specific field. Competence is an important factor for improving performance [34]. The results of previous studies by Utami et al. [35], Savitri [36], Nugraha [37], Sri Bintari et al. [38], Indradewa and Randi [39], Rohman [40] and Mukhtar and Luqman [41]. Proving that competence had positive and significant effects on performance.

1.1. Research Framework and Hypothesis

Based on the description, this research will examine the title Higher Education Quality Culture and Islamic Work Ethics' Effects on Improving Lecturer Competence and Performance, with the research framework as Figure 1.

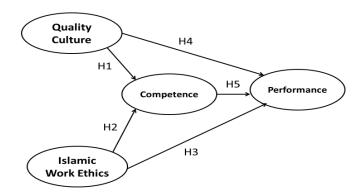


Figure 1.
Research Framework.

1.2. Hypothesis

The hypotheses of this research are:

 H_1 : Quality culture has a positive and significant effect on competence.

H_{2:} Islamic work ethics have a positive and significant effect on competence

 H_3 : Islamic work ethics have a positive and significant effect on performance

 H_4 : Quality culture has a positive and significant effect on performance

 $H_{5:}$ Competence has a positive and significant effect on performance.

2. Research Method

2.1. Research Design and Data Collection

This study employs a survey method and is classified as explanatory research, aiming to explain the relationships between variables through hypothesis testing. The selection of variables is based on theoretical foundations. The research population consists of all lecturers from the Faculty of Business and Economics at Mercu Buana University. A questionnaire was designed to encompass all the variables, with dimensions that are further broken down into indicators. Primary data for the research was collected through a self-administered questionnaire, which was completed by the respondents. A total of 145 lecturers were selected as participants. The respondents completed the questionnaire based on their own perceptions, using a self-rating method. The Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5, was used for measurement. The questionnaires were distributed directly to the respondents, a method considered more effective than mailing as it reduces potential interpretation discrepancies between the respondents and the researchers.

3. Data Analysis

The data are analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) with the AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structure) version 15 software. SEM is chosen because it enables researchers to examine the relationships between complex variables and gain a comprehensive view of the model. Furthermore, according to Byrne [42]. SEM can be used to test: 1) the structural model that depicts the relationship between independent and dependent constructs, and 2) the measurement model, which can be evaluated by examining the loading values between the indicators and the constructs (latent variables).

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Characteristics of Respondents

Respondent profiles based on gender are dominated by male lecturers at 56%, while female lecturers account for 44%. Respondents with lecturer status constitute 71%, and those who hold both lecturer and structural official positions make up

29%. Based on age groups, the majority of respondents are aged >30-40 years, as much as 45%, and 50% are over 40 years old. This shows that the majority of respondents are senior lecturers who have sufficient experience as lecturers. Overall, respondents are dominated by lecturers with work experience >5 to 10 years, as many as 39% and 34% have more than 10 years of experience.

Table 1.

Characteristic Respondents.

| No. | Characteristic | Grouping | Parentage | | |
|-----|----------------|--------------|-----------|--|--|
| 1 | Gender | Male | 56% | | |
| | | Female | 44% | | |
| | | Total | 100% | | |
| 2 | Status | Structural | 29% | | |
| | | Lecture | 71% | | |
| | | Total | 100% | | |
| 3 | Age | 25-30 years | 5% | | |
| | | >30-40 years | 45% | | |
| | | > 40 years | 50% | | |
| | | Total | 100% | | |
| 4 | Period of Work | < 1 years | 8% | | |
| | | 1-5 years | 19% | | |
| | | > 5-10 years | 39% | | |
| | | > 10 years | 34% | | |
| | | Total | 100% | | |

4.2. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

The summary of respondents' responses is shown in Table 2. Respondents' perceptions of Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) indicate that the IWE of lecturers has an average value greater than 4, suggesting that most respondents agree, and thus IWE is in good condition. The highest dimension is the effort in carrying out work. Perceptions of lecturers' performance show an average value less than 4, indicating that lecturers' performance is in poor condition. Perceptions of the quality culture in higher education have an average value of 3.6633, which is less than 4, implying that the quality culture still needs improvement. The highest dimension is speaking with data, while the lowest is professional competence. Perceptions of their competence reveal that lecturers' competence has an average value greater than 4, indicating that competence is in good condition, with personality competence being the highest dimension and professional competence the lowest.

4.3. Measurement Evaluation

Validity testing is conducted through confirmatory analysis using the loading factor criterion for each variable's measurement. A measurement is considered valid if its loading factor exceeds 0.5. Reliability is assessed by calculating the construct reliability, with a value greater than 0.6 indicating reliability. According to these criteria, some dimensions with a loading factor below 0.5 were excluded from further analysis. The results of the validity and reliability tests confirm that the research instrument meets the necessary validity and reliability standards, making it appropriate for this study.

Table 2.

Mean Value, Validity, and Reliability. Variable/Dimension Mean Value **Loading Factor** Validity **Construct reliability** Reliability Quality Culture Quality 3.7056 0.763 valid 0.829 Reliable 3.4333 0.752 NextP valid Speak with Data 3.9667 0.842 valid Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) Accountability 3.8444 0.587 valid 0.758 Reliable 0.949 Teamwork 4.1480 valid 4.1847 0.573 Honesty valid 4.3067 0.503 Effort valid Lecturer Performance 3.7044 0.933 0.624 Reliable Teaching valid 3.9333 0.356 Research valid Lecturer Competence Professional 4.2320 0.492 valid 0.782 Reliable 4.4540 0.790 Social valid 4.2724 0.835 Personality valid Pedagogy 4.2100 0.605 valid

4.4. Outlier and Normality

The first test carried out is the outlier test. The outlier test uses the Mahalanobis distance index criteria, namely by using the P1 and P2 criteria of at least 0.05. The test results show that there are no P1 and P2 values at the Mahalanobis distance with a value of less than 0.05. Thus, the research data has met the assumption of no outliers. Furthermore, the data normality assumption test is carried out using the skewness and kurtosis criteria as presented in Table 3. Based on the test results, the research data meets the normality assumption, considering that the skewness and kurtosis values meet the required criteria.

Table 3. Test of Data Normality.

| Variable | Min | Max | Skew | C.R. | Kurtosis | C.R. |
|---------------|-------|-------|--------|--------|----------|--------|
| Education | 3.710 | 5.000 | 0.824 | 3.429 | -0.460 | -0.957 |
| Personality | 4.000 | 5.000 | 0.190 | 0.790 | -1.600 | -3.331 |
| Social | 3.710 | 5.000 | 1.000 | 4.164 | -0.546 | -1.136 |
| Professional | 3.140 | 5.000 | -0.049 | -0.204 | 0.132 | 0.275 |
| Research | 2.860 | 5.000 | 0.218 | 0.907 | -0.429 | -0.892 |
| Teaching | 3.000 | 5.000 | 0.389 | 1.619 | -0.084 | -0.174 |
| Effort | 3.170 | 4.500 | -0.300 | -1.248 | -0.226 | -0.471 |
| Honesty | 2.670 | 5.000 | -0.208 | -0.865 | 0.796 | 1.656 |
| Teamwork | 3.500 | 5.000 | 0.799 | 3.328 | -0.358 | -0.745 |
| Accountable | 3.400 | 5.000 | 0.291 | 1.211 | -0.984 | -2.049 |
| Speak Data | 2.000 | 5.000 | -1.027 | -4.277 | 1.025 | 2.134 |
| Next Process | 2.750 | 5.000 | -0.308 | -1.282 | 0.050 | 0.103 |
| Quality First | 1.500 | 5.000 | -0.930 | -3.874 | 0.372 | 0.773 |
| Multivariate | | | | | 7.617 | 1.967 |

4.5. Goodness of Fit Model

According to Byrne [42]. There is no single statistical test available to assess or evaluate the accuracy of a model. Instead, several fit indices are used to measure how well the hypothesized model aligns with the data. The goodness-of-fit index used is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Goodness-of-fit Index.

| Goodness-of-fit Index | Cut-of Value | Va <i>l</i> ue | Conclusion Conclusion | |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|--|
| CMIN/DF | <= 2.00 | 1.258 | Good | |
| GFI | >=0.90 | 0.888 | Marginal | |
| AGFI | >=0.90 | 0.837 | Marginal | |
| CFI | >=0.90 | 0.973 | Good | |
| PCFI | >0.50 | 0.729 | Good | |
| RMSEA | 0.03 - 0.08 | 0.043 | Good | |

The model fit was assessed using six criteria, with the cut-off values specified by Tabri and Elliott [43]. The values obtained from data analysis using AMOS were compared to the cut-off values. The results showed that four of the six criteria indicated a good model fit, while two criteria were marginal. Based on this evaluation, the model was deemed suitable for further analysis.

4.6. Result of Hypothesis Test

The test results for hypothesis 1, namely that quality culture has a significant effect on lecturer competence, have a P value or significance of 0.071, which is greater than 0.05, so the hypothesis is rejected. The sign of the estimator parameter is negative, meaning that its influence is opposite to the initial assumption. The better the quality culture of a university, the lower the competence of the lecturers. However, when viewed from the estimated value of -0.077, this influence is relatively low compared to the influence of other constructs.

Table 5. Result of Hypotheses Test.

| result of Hypothese | | | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Conclusion |
|---------------------|---|--------------------|----------|-------|--------|-------|---------------|
| Competence | < | Quality Culture | -0.077 | 0.036 | -2.161 | 0.071 | Not supported |
| Competence | < | Islamic Work Ethic | 0.266 | 0.099 | 2.687 | 0.007 | Supported |
| Performance | < | Islamic Work Ethic | 0.469 | 0.181 | 2.586 | 0.010 | Supported |
| Performance | < | Quality Culture | 0.134 | 0.068 | 1.974 | 0.048 | Supported |
| Performance | < | Competence | 0.919 | 0.307 | 2.994 | 0.003 | Supported |

The test results for hypothesis 2, namely Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), have a significant effect on lecturer competence, with a P value or significance of 0.007, which is smaller than 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. This influence is as expected: the better the lecturer's IWE, the higher the lecturer's competence.

The test results for hypothesis 3, namely Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), indicate a significant effect on lecturer performance, with a P value or significance of 0.010, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. This influence is as expected: the better the Islamic work ethic, the higher the lecturer's performance.

The test results for hypothesis 4, namely that quality culture has a significant effect on lecturer performance, show a P value or significance of 0.048, which is less than 0.05; therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. The better the quality culture in higher education, the better the lecturer's performance. This aligns with the researcher's expectations.

The test results for hypothesis 5, namely lecturer competence, indicate a significant effect on lecturer performance, with a P value or significance of 0.003, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. This suggests that lecturer competence has a positive and significant impact on lecturer performance. As expected, the better the lecturer's competence, the higher the lecturer's performance.

5. Discussion

5.1. The Influence of Quality Culture on Lecturer Competence

The results of testing for hypothesis 1, namely that the quality culture has a significant effect on the competence of lecturers, show a P value or significance of 0.071, which is greater than 0.05; therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. The sign of the estimator parameter is negative, indicating that the effect is opposite to the initial estimate. The better the quality culture of a university, the lower the competence of the lecturers. This result did not support the previous research by Rasmussen and Sieck [14], Haris et al. [15], Bollaert et al. [16] and Yanti and Agustian [17] that stated that quality culture is good for increasing lecturer competence.

5.2. The Influence of Islamic Work Ethics on Lecturer Competence

The results of testing for hypothesis 2, namely Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), indicate a significant effect on the competence of lecturers, with a P value or significance of 0.007, which is less than 0.05; thus, the hypothesis is accepted. This influence is as expected: the better the IWE of the lecturers, the higher the competence of the lecturers. This result supports previous research conducted by Saepudin et al. [24], Amalia [25] and Purnama [26].

5.3. The Effect of Islamic Work Ethics on Lecturer Performance

The test results indicate that the Islamic work ethic has a positive and significant impact on lecturer performance. As anticipated, a stronger Islamic work ethic leads to higher lecturer performance. These findings align with previous research that highlights the importance of Islamic work ethics in enhancing job performance. Research on the influence of the Islamic work ethic on performance and other positive work behaviors has been conducted by Rahman [27], Yusof et al. [28], Al Jabar and Suharnomo [29], Din et al. [30] and Aflah et al. [31]. So this result was consistent that Islamic work ethics positively and significantly affected the performance and positive work behaviors of the employees.

5.4. The Effect of Quality Culture on Lecturer Performance

The results of testing hypothesis 4, which posits that a quality culture significantly influences lecturer performance, show a p-value of 0.048, which is less than 0.05, thus supporting the hypothesis. This indicates that a stronger quality culture in higher education leads to improved lecturer performance, aligning with the researchers' expectations. This result supports the findings of research conducted by Hilman et al. [18] that proved that a quality culture positively and significantly affects the performance of lecturers in universities. The same results were found by Rifa'i et al. [19] and Vilcea [20]. So, it can be concluded that a higher education quality culture affects lecturer performance.

5.5. The Effect of Lecturer Competence on Lecturer Performance

The hypothesis testing results reveal that lecturer competence has a positive and significant impact on lecturer performance. The higher the competence of lecturers in higher education, the better their performance. Lecturer competencies include pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competence. This is in accordance with the expectations of researchers and with several previous research results. Competence is an important factor for improving lecturer performance, as shown in the results of previous studies by Utami et al. [35], Savitri [36], Nugraha [37], Sri Bintari et al. [38], Indradewa and Randi [39], Rohman [40] and Mukhtar and Luqman [41]. That proved that competence had positive and significant effects on lecturers' performance.

6. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that quality culture and Islamic work ethic influence the improvement of lecturer performance through their impact on the development of lecturer competence. Higher education quality culture has a negative but not statistically significant effect on lecturer competence; however, it has a direct positive and significant effect on lecturer performance. The Islamic work ethic positively and significantly affects lecturer performance both directly and indirectly by enhancing lecturer competence.

Considering that the quality culture and Islamic work ethic have a positive and significant influence on lecturer competence and lecturer performance, the development of a quality culture is a culture that needs to be cultivated, namely a culture that emphasizes dimensions such as prioritizing quality, assuming that everything is part of a process, and that

everything must be based on data (speak with data). The dimension with the most dominant influence is the cultural dimension of speaking with data.

The Islamic work ethic is an attitude that should be cultivated or developed because it has a positive and significant influence on lecturer competence and lecturer performance. The dimensions of the Islamic work ethic consist of accountability, teamwork, honesty, and effort in carrying out work. The most important dimension is teamwork, considering that it has the highest loading factor value.

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