



# Mardatilah Values and Islamic Ethical Governance: A Conceptual Framework for Measuring Civil Servant Work Integrity in Muslim-Majority Public Sectors

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## ABSTRACT

This study develops and empirically tests the *Mardatilah* Curiosity Motivation model as an Islamic value-based governance framework for enhancing sustainable performance among civil servants in Muslim-majority public sectors. *Mardatilah*, derived from the Arabic *al-marḍāh* (المرضاة), meaning "seeking Allah's pleasure," is integrated with the curiosity motivation theory to construct a spiritually grounded framework for intrinsic motivation applicable to public organizations. A quantitative design was employed involving 274 civil servants selected via stratified random sampling, with data analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with AMOS 24.0. The model demonstrated acceptable fit (GFI = 0.918; CFI = 0.991; RMSEA = 0.020). *Mardatilah* Curiosity Motivation exerted the strongest influence on Civil Servant Sustainable Performance ( $\beta = 0.425$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), exceeding the effect of Workplace Agility ( $\beta = 0.325$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). At the same time, Ethical Work Climate significantly predicted both Workplace Agility ( $\beta = 0.338$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and *Mardatilah* Curiosity Motivation ( $\beta = 0.268$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These findings advance Islamic Organizational Theory by demonstrating that spiritually grounded motivation is an empirically measurable predictor of sustainable public-sector performance and offer a culturally responsive governance model for Muslim-majority bureaucracies.

**Keywords:** *mardatilah*, curiosity motivation, islamic governance, civil servants, sustainable performance.

## INTRODUCTION

The digital era demands fundamental transformation in governance systems that effectively integrate efficiency, ethics, and long-term sustainability. Indonesia faces distinct challenges in this transformation, particularly because most of its civil servants maintain strong individual religious commitments. Although the national bureaucratic reform index reached 2.79 in 2023, a score officially categorized as "good," considerable scope for improvement remains toward the maximum score of 4.0.<sup>1</sup>

A persistent paradox characterizes Indonesian public administration, whereby high levels of individual religious commitment have not fully translated into ethical organizational behavior. The Indonesian Ombudsman recorded 26,461 public service complaints in 2023, with 40.38% of resolved reports

<sup>1</sup> Indonesia.go.id, 2024

indicating maladministration, specifically service denial, prolonged delays, and procedural deviations. These patterns reflect systemic procedural injustice and a structural disconnect between personal religious values and organizational conduct, suggesting that religiosity alone does not guarantee ethical behavioral outcomes within public institutions. Structural reform of Indonesia's bureaucracy faces persistent institutional inertia that cannot be addressed solely through regulatory mechanisms, as the gap between formal rule systems and internalized ethical behavior requires deeper motivational intervention<sup>2</sup>.

The growing body of scholarship on Islamic governance and work ethics, while substantive, reveals several critical limitations that this study directly addresses. Despite growing recognition that religious values shape administrative behavior, systematic empirical investigation of religion as an active organizational variable in public administration remains limited.<sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup>Dominant frameworks, including the Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) scale, developed by <sup>5</sup> Moreover, subsequently refined by Abbas and Malik (2021), predominantly measure religiosity-oriented work attitudes as normative constructs. These frameworks do not produce operationalizable behavioral indicators suitable for public-sector performance measurement, limiting their applicability in empirical governance research.

Similarly, prevailing Islamic motivation models, including the Tawhidic paradigm frameworks advanced by <sup>6</sup>They tend to position spirituality as a moderating or contextual variable rather than an active motivational mechanism capable of driving specific performance outcomes such as workplace agility and sustainable performance. As a result, the behavioral pathway through which transcendental values produce measurable governance outcomes remains theoretically underspecified. A review of the available literature further indicates that the integration of cognitive curiosity as a spiritually grounded dimension within Islamic organizational theory remains insufficiently developed empirically, leaving the mechanism by which intrinsic motivation is sustained under bureaucratic pressure in need of further theoretical elaboration, particularly within reform-demanding public administration contexts.<sup>7</sup>

These limitations call for a conceptually distinct construct. The *Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation* framework, derived from the Arabic *المرضاة* (al-marḍāh:

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Turner, "Measuring Employee Engagement," *Employee Engagement in Contemporary Organizations* (2020): 193–222.

<sup>3</sup> Ongaro and Tantardini, *Religion and Public Administration: An Introduction*, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Darwish A. Yousef, "Islamic Work Ethic: A Moderator between Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction in a Cross-Cultural Context," *Personnel Review* 30, no. 2 (2001): 152–169.

<sup>6</sup> Khaliq Ahmad and O. K. Ogunsola, "An Empirical Assessment of Islamic Leadership Principles," *International Journal of Commerce and Management* 21, no. 3 (2011): 291–318.

<sup>7</sup> Rafik I. Beekun and Jamal A. Badawi, "Balancing Ethical Responsibility among Multiple Organizational Stakeholders: The Islamic Perspective," *Journal of Business Ethics* 60, no. 2 (2005): 131–145.

seeking Allah's pleasure), departs from existing Islamic motivation constructs across several fundamental dimensions. Rather than treating spiritual orientation and cognitive engagement as separate dimensions, this framework integrates cognitive curiosity with transcendental purpose, producing a unified motivational structure that operates holistically.

It also yields empirically measurable behavioral indicators, including continuous learning, knowledge exploration, and adaptive contribution, distinguishing it from attitudinal IWE scales that capture dispositional tendencies rather than observable behaviors. Furthermore, this framework positions spiritual orientation as a self-sustaining intrinsic driver that functions independently of external rewards, directly addressing the motivational sustainability gap identified in prior literature.<sup>8</sup> The construct is grounded in five core Islamic governance principles: *أمانة* (amanah, trustworthiness), *عدل* (adl, justice), *حكمة* (hikmah, wisdom), *شورى* (shura, consultation), and *مصلحة* (maslahah, public interest)<sup>9</sup>.

The theoretical foundation of this study integrates the triadic reciprocal causation model of Social Cognitive Theory.<sup>10</sup>, which explains bidirectional interactions among behavioral, cognitive, and environmental factors, and the holistic integration perspective of Islamic Organizational Theory, which links individual spirituality to collective performance<sup>11</sup>. This integrated framework enables a systematic empirical examination of how Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation shapes sustainable performance through the mediating effects of ethical work climate, perceived organizational justice, and workplace agility, among 274 civil servants in Semarang City.

Drawing on the theoretical and practical gaps identified, this study addresses three research questions: whether Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation significantly influences civil servant sustainable performance in Semarang City; whether ethical work climate, organizational justice perception, and workplace agility mediate that relationship; and whether the proposed Islamic-based governance model demonstrates acceptable empirical fit within the Indonesian public sector context.

## Literature Review

### Sustainable Performance

Sustainable performance is a comprehensive paradigm that integrates short-term organizational achievements with long-term value-creation capabilities for stakeholders. Built on the Triple Bottom Line Theory, expanded

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<sup>8</sup> J Abbas, K Kumari, and W M Al-Rahmi, "Quality Management System in Higher Education Institutions and Its Impact on Students' Employability with the Mediating Effect of Industry-Academia Collaboration," *Journal of Economic and ...* (2021).

<sup>9</sup> Beekun and Badawi, "Balancing Ethical Responsibility among Multiple Organizational Stakeholders: The Islamic Perspective."

<sup>10</sup> A. Bandura, "Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory.," *Prentice-Hall*. (1986).

<sup>11</sup> Ahmad and Ogunsola, "An Empirical Assessment of Islamic Leadership Principles."

by <sup>12</sup>Organizational success encompasses profit, people, planet, and governance dimensions. Stakeholder Theory reinforces this framework by emphasizing value creation for all stakeholders and the creation of sustainable competitive advantage through balanced distribution. <sup>13</sup>. A systematic review of maqasid al-shariah studies further confirms that integrating Islamic ethical principles into performance measurement enhances organizational credibility and long-term sustainability beyond conventional financial metrics, positioning public welfare as a legitimate organizational performance criterion. <sup>14</sup>.

The Resource-Based View (RBV) posits that sustainable performance arises from dynamic capabilities that enable organizations to adapt, renew, and transform resources into long-term value. <sup>15</sup>. These capabilities, innovation capacity, learning agility, and stakeholder engagement effectiveness serve as sources of sustained competitive advantage. Institutional Theory adds perspective by highlighting that sustainable performance requires organizational legitimacy and social license, achieved by meeting societal expectations and complying with regulations.

Social sustainability focuses on human capital development, employee participation, and community impact, collectively strengthening organizational resilience and public trust. Environmental sustainability involves optimizing resource use, reducing carbon emissions, and adopting circular-economy practices to support regulatory compliance and differentiation. <sup>16</sup>. Governance sustainability promotes ethical leadership, transparency, and accountability, building stakeholder trust.

Integrating all four dimensions requires a comprehensive measurement approach that combines quantitative metrics (efficiency, environmental statistics) and qualitative indicators (employee satisfaction, organizational culture). Recent studies emphasize sustainable performance as systemic, requiring interconnected thinking, committed leadership, stakeholder participation, and an adaptive learning culture while maintaining organizational identity.

### **Workplace Agility**

Workplace agility represents an organization's capacity to rapidly identify and adapt to environmental changes while maintaining core operations and

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<sup>12</sup> V. Loviscek, "Triple Bottom Line toward a Holistic Framework for Sustainability: A Systematic Review," *Revista de Administração Contemporânea* 25, no. 3 (2021).

<sup>13</sup> R Edward Freeman and Robert A Phillips, "Stakeholder Theory and the Resource-Based View of the Firm," *Journal Management* XX, no. X (2021): 1-14.

<sup>14</sup> Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki and Nurdianawati Irwani Abdullah, "Corporate Social Responsibility," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 24, no. 1 (2017).

<sup>15</sup> B. Mirsella, H. N., & Van Hensbergen, "Menyikapi Perkembangan Dan Dinamika Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Alam Di Papua Dari Perspektif Etika Lingkungan," *Berkala Arkeologi* 1 (2022): 105-124.

<sup>16</sup> M Geissdoerfer, D Vladimirova, and S Evans, "Sustainable Business Model Innovation: A Review," *Journal of cleaner production* (2018).

strategic alignment. <sup>17</sup>. Rooted in Dynamic Capabilities Theory, it emphasizes sensing changes, seizing opportunities, and reconfiguring internal resources to achieve competitive advantage amid uncertainty. Complexity Theory complements this by viewing organizations as adaptive systems evolving through dynamic internal and external interactions. Key components include cultural agility, embracing change, continuous learning, and calculated risk-taking, which create psychological safety and foster innovation. <sup>18</sup>. True agility requires ambidexterity: exploiting existing capabilities while exploring new opportunities, maintaining flexibility without losing core competencies.

Strategic agility enables organizations to anticipate sustainability demands and proactively adjust their strategies to lead in green innovation. Operational agility implements sustainable practices through process optimization, resource-efficient technologies, and supply chain modifications, balancing environmental impact with cost management. Organizational agility enhances enterprise-wide flexibility through cross-functional collaboration and rapid decision-making in response to environmental changes. <sup>19</sup>.

Workplace agility fundamentally drives sustainable performance through synergistic integration. Cultural agility sustains learning environments that support continuous improvements in sustainability, encourage experimentation with green technologies, and promote employee engagement in sustainability initiatives. Research demonstrates that workplace agility is a dynamic capability that enables simultaneous economic, social, and environmental performance without trade-offs. <sup>20</sup>. Agile organizations rapidly reallocate resources to meet stakeholder expectations, comply with requirements, and pursue innovative solutions, benefiting multiple stakeholder groups while building resilience essential to long-term sustainability and competitive advantage.

H1: Workplace agility positively and significantly affects sustainable performance

### **Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation**

Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation is a motivational construct that combines a knowledge-seeking drive with spiritual dimensions in organizational contexts, rooted in Islamic principles. This concept integrates Self-Determination Theory with Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), in which the Qur'an and Hadith encourage Muslims to work diligently for success in both the worldly and the hereafter realms. However, existing IWE frameworks have primarily examined work attitudes and commitment, without developing the cognitive curiosity

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<sup>17</sup> David Teece, "Explicating Dynamic Capabilities: The Nature and Microfoundations of (Sustainable) Enterprise Performance," *Strategic Management Journal* 28 (December 2007): 1319-1350.

<sup>18</sup> Yuzhuo Cai, Jinyuan Ma, and Qiongqiong Chen, "Higher Education in Innovation Ecosystems," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 12, no. 11 (2020): 1-12.

<sup>19</sup> Geraldo Tessarini Junior, "Workforce Agility: A Systematic Literature Review and a Research Agenda Proposal," *INNOVAR* 31, no. 81 (2019): 155-168.

<sup>20</sup> Porter et al., "Creating Shared Value," *Harvard business review* 89, no. 1-2 (2011): 62-77.

dimension as an empirically measurable motivational construct applicable to public-sector performance. <sup>21</sup>.

The spiritual foundation originates in the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad SAW: "اقْرَأْ" (Iqra), meaning "read," opening the way for reading, writing, and contemplation. Islam's emphasis on knowledge is evident in the Qur'an, mentioning "عِلْمٌ" (Ilm - knowledge) 750 times, ranking third after Allah and Rab, demonstrating knowledge's elevated position in Islamic teachings.

Allah SWT's command "وقل رب زدني علماً" (Wa qul robbi zidni ilman) - "And say: O my Lord, increase me in knowledge" - emphasizes knowledge-seeking as a recommended prayer <sup>22</sup>. Unlike conventional curiosity motivation, Mardatilah is based on the Prophet's hadith "طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ" (Thalabul ilmi faridhatun ala kulli muslim) - Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim.

This concept integrates Islamic perspectives into workplace curiosity motivation, in which dedication, teamwork, responsibility, social relationships, and creativity become inherent Muslim behaviors. Islamic Work Ethics characteristics include hard work, responsibility, altruism, and the intention of worship, creating a strong foundation for continuous organizational improvement as work becomes "عِبَادَةٌ" (worship) with spiritual value. Working with good intentions becomes "حُسْنُ الْعَمَلِ" (husn al-amal) - goodness in performing deeds <sup>23</sup>.

In sustainable performance, Mardatilah drives continuous learning and innovation through employee contributions that are motivational, cognitive, and behavioral. This aligns with "إِحْسَانٌ" (ihسان) - achieving perfection in every task, ultimately pursuing "الْفَلَاحُ" (al-falah) - true success in this life and hereafter. Empirical studies confirm that Islamic work ethics positively influence intrinsic motivation, affective commitment, and employee performance across public and private-sector contexts. However, the curiosity dimension, as a spiritually grounded motivational component, remains theoretically underdeveloped in the existing literature. <sup>24</sup>.

H2: Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation positively and significantly affects sustainable performance

### **Ethical Work Climate**

The ethical work climate refers to how people in an organization commonly understand and follow both official rules and informal norms that shape moral

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<sup>21</sup> K. N. Aflah et al., "Islamic Work Ethics and Employee Performance: The Role of Islamic Motivation, Affective Commitment, and Job Satisfaction," *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business* 8, no. 1 (2021): 997-1007.

<sup>22</sup> Junior, "Workforce Agility: A Systematic Literature Review and a Research Agenda Proposal."

<sup>23</sup> Ahmad and Jamaluddin, "Leadership Agility for Pandemic COVID-19: Study of The Principal's Role in Implementing 'Teach from Home' Policy," *International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology* 29, no. 5 (2020): 11317-13210.

<sup>24</sup> Aflah et al., "Islamic Work Ethics and Employee Performance: The Role of Islamic Motivation, Affective Commitment, and Job Satisfaction."

behavior. Furthermore, an ethical work climate comprises shared perceptions of procedures, norms, and expectations that define appropriate workplace conduct. This construct is derived from a theoretical model that integrates two dimensions: the basis for moral judgment (egoism, goodness, principle) and the locus of analysis (individual, local, cosmopolitan), yielding a typology of nine ethical climate categories.

EWC significantly influences Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation by fostering psychological safety, thereby enabling Muslim employees to express knowledge-seeking motivation that aligns with Islamic values. A favourable ethical climate, exceptionally caring and independent, fosters intellectual freedom aligned with the Islamic principle of the obligation to seek knowledge. Research shows that HRM practices that enhance capabilities are associated with an organizational ethical climate that fosters curiosity and motivation rooted in spiritual values.<sup>25</sup>

In the context of Sustainable Performance, research shows a relationship between responsible leadership and employee sustainable performance, with ethical climate as a potential mediator.<sup>26</sup> Environmental ethics are positively correlated with sustainable performance, process innovation, and product innovation.<sup>27</sup> EWC creates a foundation for sustainable performance by encouraging consistent ethical behaviour, supporting continuous learning, and facilitating responsible innovation. The ethical climate in the workplace is related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment, thereby affecting organizational productivity.<sup>28</sup>

H<sub>3</sub>: Ethical Work Climate has a positive and significant effect on Mardatilah's Curiosity Motivation

H<sub>4</sub>: Ethical Work Climate positively and significantly affects sustainable performance.

### Organizational Justice Perception

Organizational Justice Perception is a fundamental concept in organizational behavior, referring to an individual's subjective perception of fairness in compensation, decision-making processes, and interpersonal relationships within an organization<sup>29</sup>. This concept includes employees'

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<sup>25</sup> Lee-Chin Tay, Fee-Yean Tan, and Khulida Kirana Yahya, "The Power Of Ability-Motivation-Opportunity Enhancing Human Resource Management Practices On Organizational Ethical Climate," *International Journal of Business and Society* 18, no. 3 (2017): 547-562.

<sup>26</sup> Zeba Khanam, Sheema Tarab, and Zebran Khan, "Examining the Link between Responsible Leadership and Employee Sustainable Performance: The Mediating Role of Ethical Climate," *Journal of Economic and Administrative Sciences* ahead-of-p, no. ahead-of-print (January 2023).

<sup>27</sup> Elhassan Enbaia et al., "The Interplay Between Environmental Ethics and Sustainable Performance: Does Organizational Green Culture and Green Innovation Really Matter?," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 16, no. 23 (2024).

<sup>28</sup> Mpolokeng G. Ramajoe et al., "Is There a Relationship between Ethical Climate, Work Engagement and Job Satisfaction in the Public Sector?," *SA Journal of Human Resource Management* 22 (2024): 1-12.

<sup>29</sup> Chaimaa Zayer et al., "The Consequences of the Perceived Organizational Justice: A Holistic Overview National School of Business and Management The Consequences of the

evaluations of the extent to which they are treated fairly by the organization, in terms of resource distribution, procedures, and social interactions in the workplace.

Complex psychological mechanisms mediate the relationship between perceptions of organizational justice and curiosity motivation. When employees feel they receive fair treatment from the organization, they tend to develop positive attitudes and beliefs that foster intrinsic motivation to explore new ideas and seek innovative solutions. Organizational justice is a crucial job resource that provides intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, fostering positive work attitudes among employees. An environment perceived as fair fosters psychological safety, enabling individuals to take intellectual risks and express their curiosity without fear of negative consequences.

The influence of perceptions of organizational justice on sustainable performance manifests through various interrelated pathways. Organizational justice is significant in creating new value through innovative organizational structures and diverse personnel management systems to achieve sustainable growth.<sup>30</sup> Employees who perceive fairness in the organization tend to show higher commitment, lower turnover, and consistent long-term performance. Organizational justice is known to promote organizational sustainability by influencing favorable employee attitudes and behaviors.<sup>31</sup> Positive perceptions of justice lay a foundation of trust that enables organizations to sustain performance through optimal employee engagement and dedication.

H<sub>5</sub>: Organizational Justice Perception has a positive and significant effect on Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation

H<sub>6</sub>: Organizational Justice Perception positively and significantly affects sustainable performance.

## METHODS

This study employed a quantitative explanatory survey design to examine causal relationships within the Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation model among civil servants in Muslim-majority public sectors. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was selected as the primary analytical approach to simultaneously test direct and indirect effect pathways among constructs.

The study population comprised all civil servants within the Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) of Semarang City. Stratified random sampling was applied at the position level (structural, functional, implementing) and the OPD type (agency, board, office, sub-district) to ensure proportional

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Perceived Organizational Justice: A Holistic Overview Abstract ;," *International Journal of Accounting Finance, Auditing, Management & Economic* 1, no. 3 (2020): 91-108.

<sup>30</sup> Henry and Ho, "A One-Year Prospective Study of Organizational Justice and Work Attitudes: An Extended Job Demands-Resources Model," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 40, no. 1 (2026): 21-36.

<sup>31</sup> Seung-Kyu Rhee and June-Young Rha, "Public Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction: Exploring the Attributes of Service Quality in the Public Sector," *The Service Industries Journal* 29, no. 11 (2009): 1491-1512.

representation of the population. The final sample of 274 respondents meets the minimum ratio of 5 to 10 observations per indicator recommended by Hair et al. (2010), yielding an average ratio of 8.8:1 across 31 model indicators. This sample further meets the 200-responder threshold for moderate-complexity SEM established by Kline (2016), and statistical power analysis following MacCallum et al. (1996) confirmed adequate power ( $f^2 = 0.15$ , power = 0.80,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) to detect medium effect sizes.

Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation is a newly developed construct defined as an intrinsic drive to continuously learn, contribute, and adapt with a transcendental orientation of seeking Allah's pleasure (Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008). Construct development followed three systematic stages: conceptual analysis of the Islamic Work Ethics Scale<sup>32</sup> and the Curiosity Scale<sup>33</sup>; item adaptation for the Indonesian public sector context; and content validation through expert judgment involving three Islamic management scholars and two bureaucratic practitioners. The construct was operationalized through three dimensions: Spiritual Curiosity (four indicators), Transcendental Learning (four indicators), and Adaptive Contribution (three indicators). A pilot study administered to 30 respondents outside the primary sample confirmed item readability and internal consistency prior to the main data collection.

Remaining constructs were adapted from internationally validated scales. Civil Servant Sustainable Performance was adapted from the Triple Bottom Line framework.<sup>34</sup> with six indicators. Workplace Agility used the Dynamic Capabilities Scale.<sup>35</sup> with five indicators. Ethical Work Climate employed the Ethical Climate Questionnaire.<sup>36</sup> with six adapted indicators. Organizational Justice Perception used the Colquitt et al. (2007) scale across four dimensions, comprising 13 indicators. All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered directly across OPD offices from March to May 2024. All procedures adhered to prevailing ethical research standards, including formal institutional approval and written informed consent from each participant, guaranteeing anonymity and voluntary participation. Data analysis followed the two-step procedure of Anderson and Gerbing (1988) using AMOS 24.0. The measurement model was assessed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), evaluating convergent

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<sup>32</sup> Ali and Al-Owaihan, "Islamic Work Ethic: A Critical Review."

<sup>33</sup> Michael F. Steger et al., "Understanding the Search for Meaning in Life: Personality, Cognitive Style, and the Dynamic between Seeking and Experiencing Meaning," *Journal of Personality* 76, no. 2 (2008): 199-228.

<sup>34</sup> Loviscek, "Triple Bottom Line toward a Holistic Framework for Sustainability: A Systematic Review."

<sup>35</sup> Teece, "Explicating Dynamic Capabilities: The Nature and Microfoundations of (Sustainable) Enterprise Performance."

<sup>36</sup> Aveline Cloitre, Victor Dos Santos Paulino, and Christina Theodoraki, "The Quadruple/Quintuple Helix Model in Entrepreneurial Ecosystems: An Institutional Perspective on the Space Case Study," *R and D Management* 53, no. 4 (2023): 675-694.

validity via AVE ( $> 0.50$ ), discriminant validity via the Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT ratio ( $< 0.90$ ), and reliability via Composite Reliability ( $> 0.70$ ) and Cronbach's Alpha ( $> 0.70$ ). The structural model was subsequently tested using path analysis to determine direct and indirect effects among variables, after verifying the assumptions of multivariate normality, linearity, and multicollinearity.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic Respondent

This study's demographic profile of 274 State Civil Apparatus reflects strategic diversity for developing government organizational performance. The balanced gender composition (47% Male and 53% Female) provides a more comprehensive perspective in decision-making, where this diversity has been shown to increase creativity and innovation in solving bureaucratic problems. The varied age distribution of respondents facilitates cross-generational knowledge transfer, combining senior experience with the dynamism of younger generations, who are adaptable to technological change and modern work methodologies.

The diverse levels of education in this sample are valuable intellectual assets, as the combination of formal education and practical experience creates optimal synergy to increase organizational capacity. The variation in respondents' length of service enables an in-depth analysis of the evolution of motivation, perceptions of justice, and career development, thereby identifying relevant patterns to inform the development of effective personnel policies. Job-level variations among respondents provide useful insight into how the organizational hierarchy shapes perceptions of justice and motivation at work. In addition, participation in Islamic organizations underscores a spiritual dimension that strengthens ethical values and integrity in public service. This spiritual grounding supports a strong moral base for achieving sustainable performance in government institutions focused on community well-being.

### Measurement Model

The measurement model analysis demonstrates that all research constructs possess good psychometric properties. AVE values range from 0.604-0.642 ( $>0.5$ ), composite reliability from 0.837-0.894 ( $>0.7$ ), and Cronbach's Alpha  $>0.8$ . Indicator loading factors of 0.705-0.805 show significant contributions. The Sustainable Performance construct has the highest reliability (0.894). The statistical assumption tests are satisfied, supporting the instrument's use in subsequent SEM analysis.

### Structural Equation Model Testing

The results of the structural equation modeling analysis using AMOS indicated acceptable model fit and several significant findings. The model fit indices showed good performance: GFI = 0.918, AGFI = 0.901, and CFI = 0.991, indicating strong empirical support for the proposed theoretical model. The very

low RMSEA = 0.020 value indicates minimal approximation error, strengthening the model's validity.<sup>37</sup>

The main findings reveal complex relationships between constructs in civil service. Ethical Work Climate positively influences Workplace Agility ( $\beta = 0.34$ ), indicating that an ethical environment is essential for organizational adaptability. Organizational Justice Perception affects Workplace Agility ( $\beta=0.33$ ) and Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation ( $\beta=0.29$ ), confirming that perceptions of justice drive workplace agility and knowledge exploration.

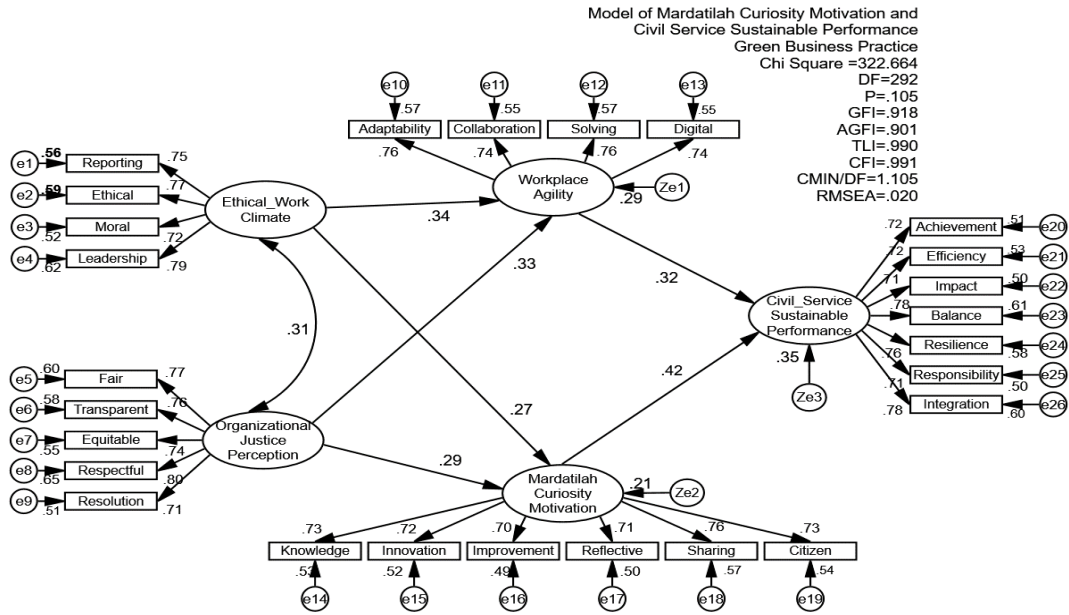


Figure 1: Full Model Structural Equation Model

Workplace Agility mediates Civil Service Sustainable Performance ( $\beta = 0.32$ ), demonstrating that adaptive capability is crucial for achieving long-term targets. Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation contributes to Sustainable Performance ( $\beta = 0.21$ ) by integrating Islamic spiritual values. This model reveals that sustainable civil service performance results from complex interactions among ethical climate, perceptions of justice, organizational agility, and spiritually based motivation, rather than from a single factor.

Table 1: Standardized Regression Weight

	Path	Std Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Organizational Justice Perception	→ Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation	.294	.060	4.106	***
Organizational Justice Perception	→ Workplace Agility	.327	.070	4.506	***
Ethical Work Climate	→ Workplace Agility	.338	.081	4.692	***
Ethical Work Climate	→ Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation	.268	.070	3.707	***
Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation	→ Civil Service Sustainable Performance	.425	.075	5.912	***

<sup>37</sup> Imam Ghozali, *Structural Equation Modeling Dengan Metode Alternatif Partial Least Squares (PLS)*, 5th ed. (Semarang: Badan Penerbit Undip, 2021).

	Path	Std Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
<b>Workplace Agility</b>	→ Civil Service Sustainable Performance	.325	.061	4.818	***

The results of the hypothesis tests show that all structural paths in the research model are statistically significant ( $p$ -values < 0.001; \*\*\*), providing strong empirical support for the overall hypothesis. Organizational Justice Perception has a significant positive effect on Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation ( $\beta = 0.294$ , C.R. = 4.106) and Workplace Agility ( $\beta = 0.327$ , C.R. = 4.506). This finding confirms that perceptions of organizational justice are essential predictors of knowledge exploration motivation and ASN work agility.

When civil servants feel they are treated fairly, they tend to be more motivated to explore innovative solutions and adapt to change. Ethical Work Climate also significantly impacts Workplace Agility ( $\beta = 0.338$ , C.R. = 4.692) and Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation ( $\beta = 0.268$ , C.R. = 3.707). An ethical work climate serves as a foundation for fostering adaptive capabilities, sustained curiosity, and intrinsic motivation. The outcome variable, Civil Service Sustainable Performance, is greatly influenced by Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation ( $\beta=0.425$ , C.R.=5.912) and Workplace Agility ( $\beta=0.325$ , C.R.=4.818). Among these, Curiosity motivation rooted in Islamic values exerts the strongest effect, suggesting the critical role of spiritual dimensions in promoting sustainable performance in the public sector.

## Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a motivational architecture considerably more complex than that modeled by prevailing theories of public administration. Contrary to the dominant assumption that positions spirituality as a background or moderating variable, structural model results demonstrate that transcendental orientation, operationalized through the Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation construct, functions as a primary motivational mechanism that consistently outperforms organization-based predictors in determining civil servants' sustainable performance.

The strongest path coefficient in the model, from Ethical Work Climate to Workplace Agility, carries theoretical implications that extend well beyond mere confirmation of a causal relation. Useship. Within Social Exchange Theory <sup>38</sup>This relationship has conventionally been understood as a reciprocal, calculative social exchange. The present findings, however, suggest that within the Indonesian public bureaucracy grounded in Islamic values, the operative mechanism is normative rather than transactional.

When ethical norms are consistently enforced through leadership exemplarity, civil servants do not merely respond to social exchange incentives

<sup>38</sup> P M Blau, "Reciprocity and Imbalance-A Citation Classic Commentary on Exchange and Power in Social-Life by Blau, PM," ... /*Social & Behavioral Sciences* (... SCI INFORM INC 3501 MARKET ST ..., 1989).

but also internalize those norms as constitutive elements of their professional identity. This finding extends Social Exchange Theory by introducing a moral dimension absent from its original formulation, centered on cost-benefit calculation.<sup>39</sup> Ethical work climate in this context, therefore, operates as a value infrastructure rather than simply an organizational control mechanism, a distinction with direct consequences for how bureaucratic reform strategies are designed and implemented.

The relatively balanced distribution of Organizational Justice Perception's influence across Workplace Agility and Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation offers important insight into psychologically distinct pathways from justice to work behavior. The difference in magnitude between these two effects reflects the observation that distributive and procedural justice produce operational behavioral change more rapidly than intrinsic motivational change, which requires a deeper internalization process.

This pattern directly challenges the tendency within Western organizational justice models to treat justice as a uniform predictor of diverse outcomes.<sup>40</sup> From an Islamic governance perspective, justice is not merely a mechanism for distributing resources but a manifestation of the principle of *adl*, a cosmological moral ordering in which fair treatment reflects a higher normative imperative. Consequently, justice perception in this context not only activates adaptive behavior but simultaneously creates the psychological conditions necessary for spiritual motivation to develop and sustain itself over time.

The most theoretically consequential finding in this study concerns the dominance of Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation over Civil Servant Sustainable Performance, which surpasses Workplace Agility's contribution by a substantive margin. This result fundamentally challenges the foundational assumptions of Western motivation theory, particularly Self-Determination Theory.<sup>41</sup> which conceptualizes intrinsic motivation exclusively in terms of secular psychological dimensions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation introduces a fourth dimension of a transcendental nature, namely, an orientation toward divine pleasure, which not only reinforces motivational sustainability but also provides a foundation that is more resistant to external bureaucratic pressures. This finding aligns with Alibašić's (2023) critique of the universalist claims of Western motivation theory, arguing that Islamic spirituality-based governance models possess explanatory capacity that cannot be reduced to secular frameworks. The superiority of

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<sup>39</sup> C H Lee and B C Ha, "The Impact of Buyer-Supplier Relationships' Social Capital on Bi-Directional Information Sharing in the Supply Chain," *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing* (2018).

<sup>40</sup> J. A. Colquitt, B. A. Scott, and J. A. LePine, "Trust, Trustworthiness, and Trust Propensity: A Meta-Analytic Test of Their Unique Relationships with Risk Taking and Job Performance," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 92, no. 4 (2007): 909-927.

<sup>41</sup> Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being," *American Psychologist, University of Rochester* 55, no. 1 (2000): 296-312.

spirituality-based motivation further suggests that in Muslim-majority public-sector contexts, sustainable performance is more effectively cultivated by developing spiritual-intellectual capacity than by organizational systems engineering alone.

From the perspective of the Dynamic Capabilities View <sup>42</sup>The mediating role of Workplace Agility introduces an important qualification to a framework developed almost exclusively within profit-oriented private-sector contexts. This study demonstrates that sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring capabilities within public bureaucracies cannot be analytically separated from the ethical climate that underlies them. When civil servants operate within environments characterized by ethical consistency and perceived fairness, their dynamic capabilities assume a proactive rather than reactive character, driven by spiritually grounded curiosity rather than by competitive market pressures. This finding identifies a conceptual gap in the Dynamic Capabilities View that requires adaptation when applied to public sector organizations in Muslim-majority governance contexts, where motivational dynamics operate through mechanisms different from those assumed in the original framework.

Taken together, these findings advance a theoretically coherent argument that integrating Islamic spirituality into organizational motivation models does not constitute a particularistic cultural exception but represents a substantive extension of existing organizational theories. The Mardatilah model demonstrates that transcendental motivation can be empirically operationalized, measured through behaviorally anchored indicators, and shown to possess superior predictive validity for sustainable performance. These results open an important cross-cultural research agenda to examine whether comparable spiritual dimensions have similar explanatory power in other Muslim-majority governance contexts, including Malaysia, Pakistan, and the Gulf Cooperation Council states.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the structural relationships among ethical work climate, organizational justice perception, workplace agility, and Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation in shaping sustainable performance among 274 civil servants in Muslim-majority public-sector organizations, using structural equation modeling.

Empirical results confirmed all proposed hypotheses with strong statistical support. Ethical work climate exerted the strongest influence on workplace agility, indicating that values-based work environments directly strengthen organizational adaptability. Perceptions of organizational justice had balanced effects on both mediating constructs, with a marginally stronger pathway toward workplace agility. Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation produced the largest effect on civil servants' sustainable performance, exceeding the contribution of

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<sup>42</sup> Teece, "Explicating Dynamic Capabilities: The Nature and Microfoundations of (Sustainable) Enterprise Performance."

workplace agility, suggesting that spiritually grounded intrinsic motivation constitutes a substantively important predictor of long-term public sector performance.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature in three demonstrable ways. It extends Social Exchange Theory by showing that ethical climate in Muslim-majority bureaucracies operates through normative internalization rather than calculative reciprocity, adding a moral dimension absent from the theory's original formulation. It advances the Dynamic Capabilities View by demonstrating that sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring capabilities in public organizations are conditioned by ethical and justice climates, a contextual qualification that the framework has not previously addressed. It also offers an empirically validated alternative to Self-Determination Theory's exclusively secular conceptualization of intrinsic motivation, demonstrating that a transcendental orientation constitutes a measurable, predictive motivational dimension in organizational settings.

These findings carry direct implications for Islamic governance frameworks grounded in *maqasid al-shariah*, which hold that the preservation of intellect (*hifz al-aql*), religion (*hifz al-din*), and public welfare (*maslahah*) are foundational objectives of governance. This position is grounded in the classical *maqasid al-shariah* tradition, which positions *maslahah* as the normative objective of governance and encompasses public welfare as a legitimate and measurable criterion for organizational performance (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007; Alam et al., 2024). The demonstrated superiority of Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation empirically supports the argument that governance systems aligned with Islamic ethical principles produce more sustainable performance outcomes than those designed solely around structural incentives.

Concretely, this study recommends four evidence-based policy directions. Public sector reform initiatives should systematically embed the development of an ethical climate into institutional design, recognizing that ethical norms are operational prerequisites for organizational agility rather than aspirational values. Islamic governance policy frameworks should incorporate *maslahah*-oriented performance indicators that evaluate civil servant contributions to public welfare alongside conventional efficiency metrics. ASN competency development programs should integrate spiritual-intellectual dimensions, including curiosity-driven continuous learning anchored in Islamic work ethics, as measurable competency standards within national civil service training curricula. Ethics-based bureaucratic transformation should be pursued through structured leadership exemplarity programs that reinforce the normative internalization of justice and integrity, addressing the documented gap between individual religious commitment and organizational ethical behavior in Indonesian public administration.

This study carries methodological limitations that qualify the generalizability of its findings. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference over time, and the sample's geographic concentration introduces potential cultural specificity. Future research should pursue longitudinal designs

to examine how Mardatilah Curiosity Motivation evolves under varying bureaucratic conditions, conduct cross-cultural validation in other Muslim-majority governance contexts, including Malaysia, Pakistan, and Gulf Cooperation Council states, and develop more granular measurement instruments capable of capturing the nuanced dimensions of spirituality-based constructs across diverse professional settings.

#### **Author's Contribution**

Endang Sarwiningsih: Contribute to formulating research ideas, collecting data, processing data, and interpreting data

Emiliana Sri Pudjiarti: Contributing to writing systematics-research methods, analyzing interpretation results, compiling a literature review and language proofreading.

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The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Ethical approval: No patient-identifying parts in this paper were used or known to the authors. Therefore, no ethical approval was requested.

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