



THE ROLE OF INTERNALIZATION OF RELIGIOUS VALUES IN THE FORMATION OF EMPLOYEE WORK ETHOS AT PT BAKRIE SUMATERA UTARA PLANTATION TBK

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal the role of internalization of religious values on the formation of employee work ethic at PT Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk. With a qualitative approach and phenomenological method, this research deeply explores the subjective experiences of employees through interviews, observations, and documentation of religious activities. The main focus is how Islamic values internalized through programs such as routine recitation, congregational prayers, and spiritual lectures shape Islamic work attitudes and behaviors. The results show that the process of internalizing religious values is carried out gradually and consistently, both through formal and informal approaches, and has the support of management and internal company religious leaders. The main findings show that values such as discipline, responsibility, honesty, and the spirit of togetherness began to materialize in employee work behavior. The work environment that previously tended to be individualistic has become more harmonious, collaborative, and worship-oriented. Thus, the internalization of religious values is proven to make a significant contribution in improving a productive and integrative Islamic work ethic. This study recommends that companies continue to strengthen religious programs and expand spiritual approaches into the sharia-based human resource management system.

A. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of the trade and industrial sectors has encouraged an increase in work culture in various companies and institutions. In this competitive climate, many organizations are competing to increase the productivity of their employees in order to optimally achieve company targets and goals (Yusuf & Fauziah, 2022). However, in reality, many companies face various obstacles in achieving maximum performance, mainly due to the mismatch between the company's needs and the quality of its human resources. One of the main causes of this obstacle is the tendency of workers to choose institutions that promise high financial rewards, without considering the quality of work ethic that should be the basis of work (Khaeruman et al., 2023).

Social and cultural factors in the surrounding environment also have a major influence on the formation of a person's work ethic, including in the context of education and the world of work. As in the world of education, the family, school and community environment has not fully supported the formation of an Islamic work ethic consistently. This is exacerbated by the influence of popular culture that tends to be more attractive to the younger generation, making the values of hard work, responsibility, and sincerity increasingly faded (Putra & Suryani, 2020; Prakas et al., 2022; Jayadi, 2025).

As a solution, experts propose the importance of developing an integrative and applicable religious education approach in shaping individual work character. The cultivation of spiritual values is not only done theoretically, but also through exemplary and habituation in the work environment. Synergistic support between family, company and community is an important element so that employees are able to apply Islamic work ethic values in their daily professional activities (Mawaddah & Elisa Harahap, 2021). However, a previous study conducted by (Darmawan Abdul et al., 2025), shows that although religious values can shape individual character, the relationship between socio-cultural dimensions and work ethic is still rarely explored comprehensively in the context of the world of work.

Religiosity is one of the important variables that is considered to play a role in shaping employee work ethic. According to Adriana Gumbira, (2025), confirms that a high level of internalization of religious values in a person has a positive impact on productive and responsible work behavior. Karina Dewi's research also

shows that religiosity has a significant correlation with employee performance in SOEs, which indicates that religious values are able to create a positive and professional work attitude. Individuals who have spiritual depth usually show integrity, discipline and perseverance in carrying out their duties.

More, Dillah et al., (2023a) revealed that individual behavior at work is strongly influenced by the value orientation believed. An understanding of religious values makes a person more appreciative of responsibility, maintain ethics, and have the spirit to continue to develop despite facing challenges. Therefore, the internalization of religious values is very instrumental in shaping a strong and sustainable work ethic, including in work environments such as PT Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk, which requires quality human resources, integrity, and has high work endurance. This research uses Value Internalization Theory (Milton Rokeach). This theory explains that values are relatively stable beliefs about what is considered important, and value internalization occurs when a person accepts certain values as part of his belief system, which then shapes attitudes and behavior (Nadhiva & Azharotunnafi, 2022). In the context of this research, this theory explains how religious values are instilled, accepted, and realized in the daily work behavior of employees.

The main problem that occurs in the work environment of PT Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk is the weak practical application of religious values in the daily lives of employees. Although most employees have a religious background, the internalization of religious values has not fully formed ideal work behaviors such as discipline, responsibility, honesty, and social care. Phenomena such as the lack of empathy among coworkers, the low spirit of togetherness in religious activities, and the practice of exclusivism in work relationships show that the value of ukhuwah Islamiyah has not been implemented thoroughly. This is exacerbated by da'wah patterns that tend to be formalistic and less adaptive to the socio-cultural dynamics of employees.

In the midst of complex work challenges and the increasingly strong influence of digital culture, religious values are often marginalized in shaping a strong Islamic work ethic. The existence of the religious section as an agent of spiritual development has not been able to fully reach all levels of employees effectively. The da'wah strategy implemented has not touched the personal and

daily aspects of employee work in depth, so that the formation of character and work ethic based on religious values is less than optimal. Therefore, it is necessary to study how a more relevant, contextual, and participatory religious value internalization strategy can strengthen the Islamic work ethic in the plantation work environment, especially at PT Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk.

B. METHOD

This research is a field research with a qualitative approach (Moleong, 2012). This research uses the phenomenological method to deeply explore the subjective experiences of employees related to the internalization of religious values in the formation of work ethic. The main focus of this research is to understand how religious values applied through da'wah activities in the work environment affect employees' attitudes, behaviors, and work ethic. Data were collected through indepth interviews, direct observation, and documentation of various religious activities carried out by the religious section in the company. Using a phenomenological approach, the researcher sought to capture employees' meanings and perceptions of spiritual values in their daily work lives.

Data collection was carried out at PT Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk by involving informants such as religious section administrators and community leaders involved in religious activities in the company. Primary data was obtained from interviews and direct observation, while secondary data came from documents on religious activities and supporting references (Meleong, 2017). Teknik analisis data menggunakan Matthew B. Miles & A. Michael Huberman (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Sugiono, 2017) which includes three stages: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Through this technique, the research is expected to reveal the extent to which the internalization of religious values contributes to shaping a positive work ethic, such as discipline, responsibility, and integrity in the world of work.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Process of Internalizing Religious Values in the Work Environment of PT Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk

The process of internalizing religious values in the work environment of PT Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk is an important part of building an Islamic organizational culture based on sharia principles. This internalization is not only reflected in spiritual activities such as the implementation of worship, but also in the application of the values of honesty, justice, responsibility, and integrity in every aspect of work. Through a human resource management approach that is in line with Islamic law, such as a fair recruitment process, morality-based training, and proportional compensation, the company seeks to instill religious values thoroughly in employees. Thus, religious values are not just a slogan, but become the spirit that enlivens the spirit of work, improves professional ethics, and forms harmonious relationships in the work environment.

As the results of an interview with Alfin Salim Siagian Sy as the head of the religious section at PT Bakrie explained that; (Alfin Salim Siagian Sy, 2025).

"One of the processes of internalizing religious values that still needs to be improved in the work environment of PT Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk is in the aspect of ukhuwah Islamiyah between employees. Although religious activities such as routine recitation and congregational prayers have been running, social relations between employees have not shown a closeness that reflects the value of brotherhood in Islam. Interaction between employees is still considered formal and limited to work matters, so that a truly intimate and mutually supportive work atmosphere has not been created. This shows that values such as compassion, empathy, and solidarity, which are part of Islamic teachings, have not been fully internalized in the daily work culture. Therefore, further efforts are needed from the management to present programs that can foster togetherness, such as community service, social activities, or breaking the fast together, so that the value of ukhuwah Islamiyah is truly rooted and reflected in the work ethic of employees.

The results of the interview with Suyanto as the religious coordinator at PT Bakrie explained that; (Suyanto, 2025).

"The process of internalizing religious values in the company's work environment is carried out gradually and integrated through various Islamic programs that are educative and participatory. He mentioned that the company seeks to form an Islamic work culture by instilling values such as responsibility, honesty, hard work, and a spirit of togetherness through routine activities such as recitation, congregational prayers, and commemoration of Islamic holidays involving all work units. In addition to formal activities, informal approaches are also prioritized, such as building spiritual communication through casual

religious discussions and work unit-based religious guidance. Values such as trustworthiness and integrity are also internalized through soft skills training linked to Islamic teachings. According to him, this effort aims not only to form employees who are individually obedient, but also to encourage the creation of an Islamic work ethic that encourages productivity, loyalty, and work harmony. He added that support from management is very important in strengthening this internalization process, both in the form of policies, provision of time, and facilities. The biggest challenge in this process is the different religiosity backgrounds of employees and the busy operational activities, but an adaptive and dialogical approach is considered capable of bridging this. He also emphasized the importance of providing exemplary leadership as moral figures who can inspire employees in carrying out Islamic values at work. Suyanto believes that the stronger religious values are internalized in the work culture, the greater the impact on improving work quality, the spirit of mutual cooperation, and strengthening ukhuwah Islamiyah in the plantation environment."

In line with the expression of Rahmad Kurniawan as a lecturer at PT Bakrie explained that; (Rahmad Kurniawan, 2025)

"Internalizing religious values in the work environment is an important foundation in shaping the character of employees who are professional as well as moral. He emphasized that through religious activities such as routine lectures, spiritual guidance, and Islamic discussions during breaks, employees not only gain religious knowledge but are also motivated to apply it in their work routines. According to him, values such as discipline, honesty, and responsibility are most effectively instilled when directly linked to Islamic teachings. Rahmad believes that when religious values are truly internalized by employees, a harmonious, worship-oriented, and conflict-free work culture will be created based on good intentions and strong self-control."

Based on the results of interviews with three key informants, it can be concluded that the process of internalizing religious values in the work environment of PT Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk has been carried out through various formal and informal religious activities, such as routine recitation, congregational prayers, spiritual lectures, and work unit-based coaching. Values such as responsibility, honesty, hard work, ukhuwah Islamiyah, and integrity are the main focus in shaping the Islamic character of employees. However, there are still challenges in the aspect of implementing ukhuwah Islamiyah, where social relations between employees are still considered formal and do not reflect the value of warm brotherhood. Management support and exemplary leadership are key to the success of this process, accompanied by programs that build togetherness and adaptive approaches that take into account the religiosity background of employees. With a

strong internalization of Islamic values, it is expected that a harmonious work culture will be formed that increases work ethic, productivity, and employee loyalty.

The process of internalizing religious values in the work environment of PT Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk is a strategic effort in building an organizational culture that is not only professional, but also based on Islamic values. Through various structured religious programs and a humanist approach, the company seeks to instill values such as responsibility, integrity, hard work, and ukhuwah Islamiyah as a foundation in shaping the Islamic work ethic. Despite the positive steps taken, challenges such as social relations between employees that are still formal in nature show that the internalization of religious values needs to be continuously strengthened, especially in the aspects of togetherness and social care. Therefore, continuous support from management and exemplary leadership are needed so that these values do not only become symbols, but really take root and form harmonious, productive, and worshipful work behavior.

The process of internalizing religious values at PT Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk has shown a significant positive impact on the formation of an Islamic work ethic among employees. Through religious programs such as congregational prayers, routine recitation, spiritual lectures, and tausiyah, the company not only conveys Islamic teachings theoretically, but also forms employee habits and behaviors that reflect these values. The values of honesty, responsibility, discipline, and integrity began to be strongly embedded in daily work. This is in line with Milton Rokeach's theory of value internalization, which states that values that have been embedded in individuals will shape attitudes and behaviors consistently. In this context, employees do not only work because of professional obligations, but as a form of worship to Allah, which ultimately increases their motivation and work quality.

This finding is also in line with the study of Adhan Arfah (2022), which emphasizes the importance of an adaptive and collaborative da'wah approach to foster ukhuwah Islamiyah. In PT Bakrie's work environment, religious interaction through study forums, recitations, and social activities is an effective medium in forming emotional closeness and increasing awareness among employees. With a non-coercive approach and tailored to the needs and conditions of the audience, these activities succeed in building a harmonious and mutually supportive work

environment. The existence of shared spiritual moments, such as breaking fast together or social religious activities, strengthens emotional bonds and increases empathy and solidarity between employees. This proves that Islamic values can be used as a foundation in building healthy and productive social relations in the workplace (Rahmi, 2019).

In addition, the da'wah approach used at PT Bakrie also adopts the mau'izhah hasanah method, as explained by (Siti Fatimah, 2020). In practice, da'wah material that is delivered gently and adapted to the reality of employees' lives becomes easier to accept and imprints on them. Moral and spiritual messages do not only become passive information, but trigger positive changes in behavior and mindset. For example, employees who used to lack discipline and were reluctant to work together, now show more concern, mutual cooperation, and a spirit of helping in completing work. This is an indicator of the success of value internalization that not only reaches the spiritual aspect, but also touches the social and professional dimensions as a whole.

According to Ira Gea Astrada (2021), The internalization of religious values carried out through da'wah strategies in this work environment has succeeded in carrying out the four main functions of ukhuwah Islamiyah, namely strengthening brotherhood, creating harmony, fostering social solidarity, and improving the quality of faith. Dawah programs such as routine studies, dhikr together, and social activities have strengthened emotional relationships between employees that used to be formal. Now, the work atmosphere is more conducive, open, and full of family spirit. Employees do not only work as individuals who earn a living, but as part of a Muslim community that reminds and supports each other in goodness. This approach proves that a consistent and structured da'wah strategy can be an effective instrument in building a harmonious and sustainable Islamic work culture (Maryam & Sakdiyah, 2023; Rahmat et al., 2023; Jayadi & Adabiyah, 2024).

This is in line with Ridwan et al., (2024) Internalized Islamic values on work ethic is tawakkal, which is surrendering to Allah in all matters. Although today is marked by extraordinary technological advances, individuals who internalize the value of tawakkal still believe that all results and success come from Allah. They realize that technology is only a tool used to achieve goals, while the final result remains in His hands. This helps maintain a balance between the use of technology

and a strong belief in Allah. Furthermore, the value of ihsan is also important in the 5.0 era. Technological advancements often separate individuals from direct interaction with fellow human beings, but the principle of ihsan teaches the importance of doing good in every aspect of life, including in the increasingly virtually connected world of work. Internalizing the value of ihsan means that individuals always maintain ethics in communication, provide good service, and interact with others with politeness and empathy, both physically and through technology platforms Taqwa is also a relevant work ethic value in the 5.0 era. In the context of technology, privacy and data security are major concerns. Internalizing the value of piety reminds individuals to act with honesty, respect the privacy of others, and maintain the security of the data they manage. This is important to avoid misuse of technology or privacy violations that go against the values of piety taught by the Qur'an. Furthermore, the values of steadfastness and patience are also indispensable in the 5.0 era. Rapid technological developments often bring new challenges and difficulties in the world of work. However, individuals who internalize the value of steadfastness and patience do not give up easily or despair when facing difficulties or failures (Kasetyaningsih sufia & Oktifasari Antin & Zamakhsari, 2019).

The Impact of Internalization of Religious Values on the Formation of Employee Work Ethic at PT Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk

The impact of internalization of religious values on the formation of employee work ethic at PT Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk is an important aspect in creating a harmonious, productive, and spiritual values-oriented work environment. The internalization process carried out through religious activities and spiritual guidance has influenced the way employees work, both in terms of discipline, responsibility, honesty, and spirit of togetherness. These values not only serve as individual moral guidelines, but also form a collective work culture of mutual respect and support. With the internalization of strong religious values, employees' work ethic develops not only based on professional obligations, but also as a form of devotion and worship, thus encouraging an overall improvement in the quality of work in the company environment.

As the results of an interview with Alfin Salim Siagian Sy as the head of the religious section at PT Bakrie explained that; (Alfin Salim Siagian Sy, 2025).

"The existence of routine spiritual guidance such as recitation, congregational prayers, and tausiyah, employees become more disciplined, responsible, and honest in carrying out their duties. He also added that the Islamic values taught are not only limited to theory, but have become part of the employees' daily attitudes and behaviors. This can be seen from the employees' increased awareness of the importance of working with integrity, mutual respect, and upholding justice in every action. Employees begin to understand that working is not only to fulfill professional obligations, but also as a form of worship that is worthy of reward. Alfin emphasized that the religious approach applied by management consistently helps create a more harmonious and responsible work atmosphere. In fact, the spirit of mutual cooperation and social care among employees is also growing, reflecting the strong value of ukhuwah Islamiyah. He hopes that this religious program will continue to be developed and integrated into the HR management system so that the work ethic based on sharia is increasingly rooted in the company environment."

The results of the interview with Suyanto as the religious coordinator at PT Bakrie explained that; (Suyanto, 2025)

"Before the internalization of religious values at PT Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk, some employees still often ignore work discipline. Many come late, leave early, and are less responsible for their duties. Teamwork was often hampered due to lack of mutual trust and low spirit of togetherness. Some were even less than honest in submitting reports or work results. However, after the company consistently internalized religious values through activities such as congregational prayers, routine recitation, and spiritual lectures, there was a significant change. Employees began to show better work attitudes. They are more honest, disciplined, and responsible for their assigned tasks. For example, many employees now arrive early and do not leave before their duties are completed because they realize that work is part of worship. In addition, the values of sincerity and patience are also increasingly embedded in their daily lives. In working together, employees look more compact, help each other, and do not give up easily when facing challenges. According to Suyanto as the religious coordinator, all of this is the result of a process of habituation and reinforcement spirituality that is inculcated continuously in the work environment."

Based on the results of the interview above, it can be concluded that the internalization of religious values at PT Bakrie has had a significant positive impact on employee work attitudes and behavior. Through spiritual development programs such as recitation, congregational prayers, and tausiyah, a more harmonious, disciplined, honest, and responsible work environment is created. Islamic values are not just a theory, but have been embedded in employees' daily lives as a form of worship at work. Employees also show improvement in work ethic, sense of togetherness, sincerity, and spirit of mutual cooperation that reflects the strength of ukhuwah Islamiyah in the company environment. This

transformation is considered to be the result of a process of habituation and spiritual strengthening that is consistently applied by the company's management.

The impacts felt include; Increased Work Discipline, Growing Sense of Responsibility, Increased Honesty, Awareness of Work as Worship, Creating a Harmonious Work Atmosphere, Growing the Spirit of Mutual Cooperation, Embedded Islamic Values in Behavior, Increased Social Care and Ukhuwah Islamiyah, Increased Morale and Integrity and Support for Sharia HR Management Systems.

This is in line with Rofiqoh Dillah et al., (2023) The impact felt in the formation of the Islamic work ethic carried out by the Religious Affairs Office is to use several steps such as; Transformation of good values towards employees, managing employees by providing training and providing motivation so that employees are more enthusiastic in working, forming an Islamic work culture and re-evaluating the work of employees from the top level to the lowest level. The cultivation of the Islamic work ethic of employees at the Siliragung Religious Affairs Office in an effort to improve employee performance uses several systems as follows, including: Discipline, Responsibility, Honesty, Hard Work and Rationality at work (Taghavi & Segalla, 2023).

This is also found in Hasyim et al. (2024) The concrete impact of religiosity on employee performance encompasses psychological, moral, and ethical aspects. Religious practices such as prayer and self-reflection form the basis for psychological well-being, provide additional motivation, and improve work quality. Furthermore, the moral values emanating from religiosity guide decision-making and responses to obstacles, shaping employees who are not only professionally productive but also ethically characterized. Therefore, a deeper understanding of the concrete influence of religiosity on employee performance provides valuable insights for more holistic and sustainable human resource development policies and management practices (Alqhaiwi et al., 2024).

The importance of religious activities in the workplace opens the door to interesting discussions about its impact on the spiritual well-being and social support of workers (Ridwan et al., 2024). Although only a small number of respondents referred to religious activities in the workplace, active participation in these activities was considered an important aspect that provides a foundation for

their spiritual well-being. At the individual level, religious activities can be a source of emotional support and psychological well-being, creating deep social bonds among coworkers. This reflects the importance of developing a strong community in the workplace, where religious values serve as a point of unity (Linando et al., 2023).

The Islamic work ethic creates and strengthens an organizational culture that supports desirable traits such as honesty, commitment and responsibility, discipline, and cooperation. The work ethic must reinforce a culture of honesty within the organization. Honesty must be present in every aspect of the organization's work, from dealing with customers to treating coworkers and managers (Ashoumi et al., 2022). This is defined as doing the right thing under any circumstances, even if no one notices our mistakes. Employees who prioritize Islamic ethics consider God to be the overseer of their actions, which enhances their self-control. From the moment they are hired by a company, individuals are assigned specific responsibilities and tasks to carry out. Accurately performing these tasks will be crucial for employees if a strong work ethic and a culture of accountability are established within the individuals and the organization. These individuals will also be willing to dedicate all their efforts to achieving the best results (Tambak et al., 2021).

From the results of the path analysis, the p-value of the relationship between the Islamic work ethic variable and employee performance is 0.00. This means that when comparing the p-value of 0.00 with its critical value of 0.05, the hypothesis stating that there is a positive influence between Islamic work ethics and employee performance is accepted. In other words, Islamic work ethics has been statistically proven to have a positive and direct influence on the performance of small business employees. The construct of Islamic work ethics is built from 13 indicators, namely work is a good activity, useful, working towards perfection, working better, working together, optimal effort, competing, helping each other, respecting time, honesty, trustworthiness, intelligence, and tabligh (amaliah et al., 2019).

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the internalization of religious values in the work environment of PT. Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk, it can be concluded that the company has implemented various religious programs in a structured and sustainable manner to instill Islamic values in the work culture. This internalization process is realized through formal activities such as regular religious studies, congregational prayers, religious sermons, and work unit-based coaching, as well as informal approaches such as relaxed religious discussions. Values such as responsibility, honesty, integrity, and Islamic brotherhood are the focus in shaping the character of employees who are not only professionally competent but also have noble morals. However, challenges remain in the aspect of social relations, particularly in fostering a warmer sense of togetherness among employees, so that strengthening programs that encourage social interaction and caring for each other is needed.

The impact of internalizing these religious values has proven significant in developing a productive and harmonious Islamic work ethic. Employees have demonstrated increased discipline, honesty, responsibility, and an awareness of work as part of worship. The previously rigid and individualistic work environment has gradually transformed into a more collaborative, collaborative, and spiritually oriented work environment. The values of sincerity, patience, and social concern are increasingly evident in employees' daily behavior. Overall, the internalization of religious values at PT. Bakrie Sumatera Utara Plantation Tbk has been an effective strategy in building an Islamic work culture, which has resulted in improved human resource quality and overall organizational performance.

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