



The Impact of Work Motivation and Religiosity on Faculty Member Performance: The Mediating Role of Meaningful Life

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the influence of work motivation and religiosity on faculty performance, underscoring the central role of meaningful life as a mediator. A comprehensive quantitative analysis was conducted on data collected from 250 faculty members in varied academic environments from Java, Bali, and Sulawesi. The study reveals that both work motivation and religiosity have a significant impact on faculty performance. The meaning of life emerged as a partial mediator in this relationship. This indicates that the enhancement of faculty performance is also heavily contingent on how faculty members derive a sense of purpose and fulfillment from their professional roles and religious beliefs. This aspect is further mediated by the individual's ability to construct a meaningful life from their daily activities. These findings provide fresh insights into the complex interplay between personal values and professional outcomes, highlighting the necessity of fostering work environments that support the realization of meaningful experiences for each faculty member. The study significantly contributes to the existing literature by demonstrating the vital importance of meaningful life in understanding and improving faculty performance.

INTRODUCTION

In the diverse and dynamic realm of academic environments, faculty performance stands as a key determinant of educational quality and institutional success. This performance is intricately influenced by a myriad of factors, including personal values, professional roles, and the surrounding environment. Among these factors, work motivation and religiosity emerge as pivotal yet often underexplored elements. Work motivation drives faculty dedication and effort in professional tasks, while religiosity provides a moral and value-based framework that guides personal and professional conduct (Roth et al., 2007; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018).

Despite their importance, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding how work motivation and religiosity converge to impact faculty performance. Specifically, the role of 'meaningful life' as a mediating factor in this relationship remains largely unexplored. This concept, central to personal fulfillment and purpose, is crucial in understanding faculty performance (Frankl, 1985; Wardiana & Asroyani, 2022). The interplay between these factors is not only academically intriguing but also essential in shaping effective educational strategies and policies in higher education.

To address these gaps, this study investigates the impact of work motivation and religiosity on faculty member performance, with a special focus on the mediating role of a meaningful life. Utilizing a quantitative approach, we analyze data collected from 250 faculty members across various academic environments in Indonesia. Our objectives are twofold: firstly, to understand the direct effects of work motivation and religiosity on faculty performance, and secondly, to examine how these effects are mediated by the faculty members' sense of a meaningful life (Hutchison, 2016).

Extensive scholarly discourse has examined teacher motivation through diverse lenses, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivational dimensions, identity formation, motivational typologies, and antecedents of student disengagement. It has also explored pedagogical effectiveness, instructional styles, and educational practices (Han et al., 2016). However, the specific interplay between life's meaning and motivational dynamics within the educational sector remains scantily addressed (Utami, 2017).

Preliminary studies, like the one conducted by Usholeha (2010), have identified a positive correlation between life's meaning and the motivational levels of educators. Yet, this nascent body of research often relies on quantitative methodologies, which overlook the in-depth understanding that qualitative research can offer about the experiential realities of educators. Our study seeks to fill this research void by providing a comprehensive examination of how a meaningful life mediates the relationship between work motivation, religiosity, and faculty performance, thus contributing to a more nuanced understanding of these dynamics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of life's meaning in academia is pivotal, grounded in philosophical and psychological roots extending back to the 19th century. (Carlyle, 1889) early musings on liberty began a conversation that (Frankl, 1985) would later catalyze into a broader examination of life's meaning as an intrinsic motivational force. His logotherapy, developed amidst the adversities of the Holocaust, suggests that finding purpose in even the most challenging circumstances is essential for psychological resilience—a principle highly relevant to faculty members who often face significant professional challenges (Frankl, 1985).

Contemporary scholars like (Park, 2010; Ryff, 1989) have further refined the construct, proposing that coherence, purpose, and significance are pillars of a meaningful existence, which are directly linked to motivation and by extension, to academic performance. (Smith, 2017) suggests that belonging, storytelling, and transcendence are key elements of meaning that can enhance one's engagement with their work and life.

Religiosity, often intertwined with personal values and work ethics, is another dimension that influences faculty performance. The impact of religiosity on academic settings has been highlighted in various studies, which suggest that spiritual beliefs can deeply affect an individual's work motivation and sense of purpose (Zohar, 2005). The notion of spiritual intelligence and its pathways, such as the pursuit of personal transformation and fraternity, can significantly contribute to a faculty member's understanding of their professional role and their commitment to it (Ginanjar, 2001).

Work motivation among faculty members is multifaceted, encompassing both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic motivation is often characterized by a deep-seated passion for teaching and a desire to make a meaningful impact on students' lives. In contrast, extrinsic motivation may stem from rewards, recognition, or compliance with institutional demands. The balance between these motivational types is critical for optimal faculty performance, as it influences their engagement and productivity (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The interplay between the meaning of life and work motivation is especially significant in educational settings. Faculty members who perceive their work as meaningful are more likely to exhibit higher levels of motivation and, consequently, performance. Mansfield et al. (2016) have found correlations between a sense of life's meaning and job satisfaction among educators, suggesting that a meaningful professional life can bolster motivational resilience and performance even in the face of adversity.

Faculty performance is a critical indicator of the quality of higher education institutions. It is a complex construct affected by individual capabilities, organizational support, and psychological factors such as perception, attitude, and motivation (Steger et al., 2006). Organizational support in terms of resources, work conditions, and a supportive work environment plays a fundamental role in facilitating effective teaching and research outcomes.

While the literature provides insights into the individual aspects of faculty life—meaning, motivation, and religiosity—there is a dearth of integrated studies that examine the confluence of these factors. The existing research often considers these elements in isolation, overlooking the holistic experience of faculty members. This review identifies the need for a comprehensive analysis that synthesizes these dimensions to understand their collective impact on faculty performance.

METHODS

This investigation was anchored in a correlational research framework, scrutinizing the relationships among religiosity, work motivation, the meaning of life, and work performance. The participant group consisted of 250 lecturers from several universities across Java, Bali, and Sulawesi, offering a heterogeneous sample of educators from these distinct Indonesian islands.

Data were collated between November and December 2023 via a systematically developed survey, administered through a web-based platform to leverage its extensive reach and efficiency in collecting data across geographically dispersed institutions.

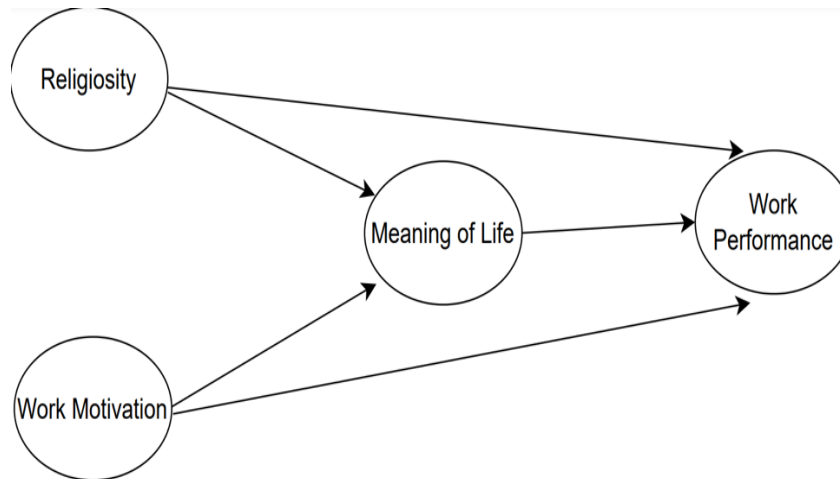
The instrument comprised various segments designed to quantify the four targeted constructs. Religiosity was measured using an iteration of the Glock & Stark religiosity scale, specifically adapted for this study. Work motivation was gauged by a tailored variant of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), and the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) was employed to assess participants' perceived sense of life's meaning. Work performance was quantified through a bespoke set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) appropriate for the academic sector. Rigorous pre-validation procedures were conducted for each scale to ensure reliability and validity, thus confirming the integrity of the survey items. The questionnaire encompassed 33 items in total, exceeding the minimum sample size calculated to ensure statistical power.

Before hypothesis testing, a series of preliminary analyses were enacted to ascertain the appropriateness of employing multiple regression analysis. This included the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess data normality, with non-significant results indicating a normal distribution. Multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity were also examined, utilizing VIF, tolerance levels, and the Breusch-Pagan test, respectively, to ensure the robustness of the regression models.

The inferential analysis consisted of multiple regression tests to clarify the direct relationships between the studied variables. Mediation analyses were subsequently performed to dissect the potential mediating influence of the meaning of life on the links between religiosity and work

performance, as well as work motivation and work performance. The model tested is shown in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Research Model



Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), facilitated by the advanced capabilities of LISREL 14, served as the statistical tool for this intricate analysis, providing the capacity to explore and validate the proposed mediation effects within our conceptual framework.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

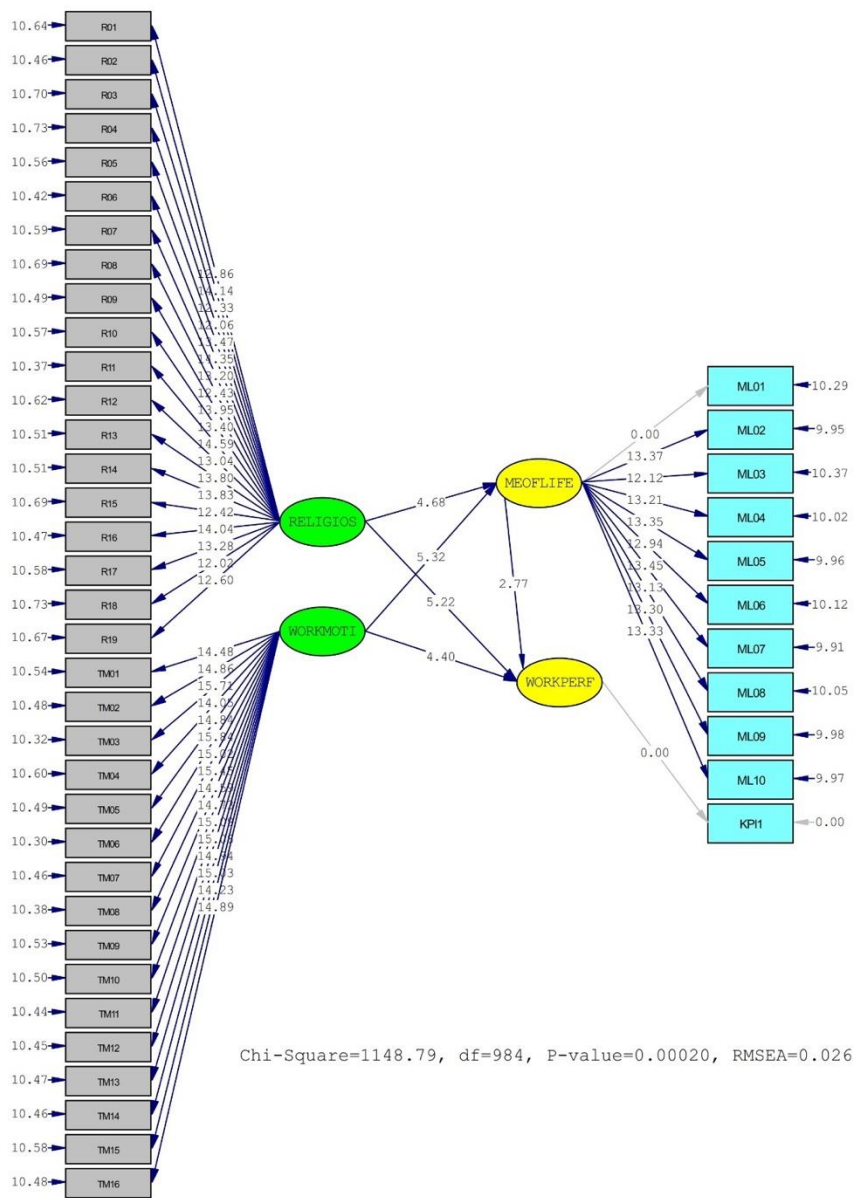
The study's empirical analysis yielded significant findings, demonstrating that work motivation and religiosity are impactful determinants of faculty performance. Model testing using Lisrel shows the models as follows:

Meaning of Life = $0.30 * \text{Religiosity} + 0.34 * \text{Work Motivation} + \text{error variance} = 0.75$, $R^2 = 0.25$ while Work Performance = $0.18 * \text{Meaning of Life} + 0.31 * \text{Religiosity} + 0.27 * \text{Work Motivation} + \text{error variance} = 0.68$, $R^2 = 0.32$

The results above show that the variable Meaning of Life is explained by Religiosity and Work Motivation with an R^2 of 0.25. This means that about 25% of the variation in the Meaning of Life can be explained by religiosity and Work Motivation together. While the variable Work Performance is explained by Meaning of Life, Religiosity, and Work Motivation with an R^2 of 0.32. This indicates that approximately 32% of the variation in Work Performance can be explained by the Meaning of Life, Religiosity, and Work Motivation collectively.

Work motivation presents a substantial correlation with faculty performance, with a t-score of 5,32, indicating a notable positive influence. Religiosity also contributes to faculty performance but to a lesser extent, as reflected by a t-score of 4,68 suggesting a significant influence. The meaning of life emerged as a partial mediator in the relationship between work motivation, religiosity, and faculty performance. The variables Meaning of Life, Religiosity, and Work Motivation all have a significant relationship with Work Performance in the model. The t-values for these three variables (2.77, 5.22, and 4.40) exceed the critical t-value (1.96 for $\alpha = 0.05$), indicating that the relationships between these three variables and Work Performance are statistically significant.

Figure 2. Model Testing Result



This finding suggests that the model fits to explain the working performance of faculty members. It also shows the extent to which individuals derive purpose and fulfillment from their roles and beliefs is instrumental in their professional effectiveness. While religiosity showed a weaker direct effect on work performance compared to work motivation, its influence became considerably stronger when mediated by the meaning of life. This implies that religiosity's impact on performance may be more profound when it contributes to a faculty member's sense of a meaningful professional life. In comparing the influence of the studied variables, it is evident that although all are significant, they contribute to faculty performance to varying degrees. The meaning of life stands out as the most potent individual predictor, suggesting that initiatives to

enhance faculty performance should prioritize fostering a sense of purpose and fulfillment within the work environment.

These findings enrich the current literature on faculty performance by highlighting the intricate interplay between personal values and professional outcomes. The significant contribution of the meaning of life to understanding faculty performance adds a new dimension to motivational theories in the educational context. For higher education institutions, the study emphasizes the necessity of creating work environments that cultivate meaningful experiences. Policies and practices should be directed towards not just incentivizing performance but also enabling faculty members to find a deeper sense of purpose in their work, which in turn could enhance their performance.

In conclusion, this study not only provides empirical evidence for the significant role of work motivation and religiosity in enhancing faculty performance but also introduces the meaning of life as a pivotal factor that can elevate the performance outcomes of faculty members. By recognizing the importance of a meaningful life in the academic setting, educational leaders can better support their faculty and, by extension, contribute to the advancement of educational quality for higher education institutions.

CONCLUSION

The investigation explored the intricate dynamics between work motivation, religiosity, and the meaning of life, and their collective influence on faculty performance. The results unequivocally indicate that while both work motivation and religiosity significantly affect faculty performance, the meaning of life serves as a powerful mediator in this relationship. Work motivation has a pronounced direct effect, whereas religiosity's influence is augmented when it contributes to one's sense of a meaningful life.

These findings underscore the profound impact that an individual's internal drive and spiritual beliefs have on their professional efficacy. The enhancement of faculty performance is closely tied not only to external motivators but also to the internal fulfillment and purpose that individuals glean from their work and beliefs. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by underscoring the importance of cultivating a work environment that nurtures meaningful experiences, aligning personal aspirations with professional roles.

To extend the research on the interplay between work motivation, religiosity, the meaning of life, and faculty performance, future studies should adopt a multifaceted approach. A longitudinal research design is recommended to trace the evolution of these relationships over time, providing a temporal perspective on the dynamic interplay of these factors. Furthermore, broadening the scope to include diverse educational contexts, such as different university types and cultural backgrounds, would enhance the generalizability and applicability of the findings.

It is also suggested that subsequent research undertakes a multi-dimensional analysis of religiosity and work motivation, exploring their various facets and the extent to which they influence the meaning of life and, ultimately, work performance. Incorporating qualitative methods could yield a more granular understanding of faculty members' subjective experiences and the nuances of how they find meaning in their professional lives. This could be complemented by interventional studies aimed at boosting work motivation and instilling a greater sense of meaning, thereby offering actionable insights for improving faculty performance.

Additionally, cross-cultural studies could shed light on the cultural contingencies that shape the constructs of work motivation, religiosity, and the meaning of life. Finally, comparative research across different academic disciplines could illuminate discipline-specific dynamics, providing a

comprehensive understanding of how these relationships manifest in various academic fields. Together, these recommendations aim to deepen our understanding of the factors contributing to faculty performance, fostering an environment conducive to both personal fulfillment and professional excellence.

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