

The influence of Islamic leadership on work performance in service industry: an empirical analysis

Influence of
Islamic
leadership

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Halil Zaim

Alfred University, Alfred, New York, USA

Erdem Erzurum

Bahçeşehir University Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey

Selim Zaim

Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim Üniversitesi, Istanbul, Turkey

Burhan Uluyol

*Department of Islamic Economics and Finance,
Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim Üniversitesi, Istanbul, Turkey, and*

Gökhan Seçgin

Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim Üniversitesi, Istanbul, Turkey

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to propose a practical, virtue-centric model of leadership based on Islamic principles. The structure of the Islamic leadership construct is validated through confirmatory factor analysis. Its relationship with performance and organizational commitment is examined and the mediating role of organizational commitment is assessed.

Design/methodology/approach – Islamic leadership model is tested using confirmatory factor analysis with data collected from employees working in the services sector in Turkey. Relationships between Islamic leadership, organizational commitment and performance are examined through a path analysis.

Findings – The factor analysis results presented a good fit for the proposed Islamic leadership model, which consists of wisdom, religiosity, justice and kindness dimensions. Regarding path analysis, findings indicated a positive relationship between Islamic leadership and job performance. Moreover, organizational commitment partially mediated the relationship between Islamic leadership and job performance.

Originality/value – Previous studies on Islamic leadership contain a very little number of empirical models. This study proposes a valuable empirical model of Islamic leadership consisting of moral values, spirituality, ethics and wisdom. In addition, the proposed model is supported with empirical pieces of evidence. Evidence of the partial mediating role of organizational commitment between Islamic leadership and job performance is also revealed by the study.

Keywords Islamic leadership, Leadership, Job performance, Organizational commitment, Islamic values, Islamic work ethics

Paper type Research paper



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1. Introduction

Leadership is a complex phenomenon, an evolving discipline and the science and art of influencing people toward achieving goals. It can be defined as an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes (Daft, 2018). Leadership studies have given significant attention to moral aspects, ethical, social and cultural values. Accordingly, religion and religiosity have been a center of attraction for researchers in leadership field and that formed almost a consensus on the significant influence of religion on leadership behaviors (Hage and Posner, 2015). However, Islam and Islamic values have not attracted much of attention until recent years because of the influence of Western culture on the existing leadership literature.

Leadership from Islamic perspective has many commonalities with contemporary leadership approaches such as servant leadership, ethical leadership and spiritual leadership. However, Islam has its own value system which comprises all aspects of human life (Zaim *et al.*, 2021). Particularly in the Middle East, where the majority of the population is composed of Muslims, Islamic values have a significant impact on behaviors of leaders and followers (Ali, 2011). Furthermore, it is suggested that Islam provides a comprehensive understanding of leadership through its highly developed and modern ethical system (Toor, 2008). Therefore, to understand leadership from Islamic perspective, a unique and holistic approach is needed. For that reason, it is important to research the leadership issues from Islamic perspective to enlighten the leaders about gaining the sake of Allah while they are implementing responsibilities of leadership to reach the desired goals (Toor, 2008). A capable Islamic leader must possess spiritual awareness (slave of Allah) and rational awareness (vicegerent of Allah), which will lead to mental, spiritual and emotional balance that drives activities and behaviors favored by Allah.

Islamic religion and philosophy put special emphasis on leadership. It is mainly because leadership is perceived to be the most significant instrument in Islam that facilitates realization of an ideal society that is based on justice and compassion (Ali, 2009). Looking from an Islamic point of view, Mir (2010) defines leadership as the worldly mission that a Muslim must fulfill. Islam has a comprehensive perspective, which encompasses everything in one's life (Hassan *et al.*, 2011). Islam does not separate actions that are good for one's life in this world and those that are good in the hereafter, as all actions of a person are considered religious duties. Therefore, leadership in Islam is an integrated part of life, which is connected to other requirements and responsibilities for performing religious duties.

Building on this understanding, this study proposes a practical model of leadership based on Islamic principles. The model is derived from Islamic leadership literature with special reference to Al-Ghazali's virtue of ethics perspective (Al-Ghazali, 2014). Al-Ghazali is considered as one of the greatest jurists, theologians and mystical thinkers in the Islamic tradition and remained one of the most celebrated scholars in the history of Islamic thoughts (Shamsudheen and Rosly, 2018).

The structure of Islamic leadership construct is explored, and the emergent structure is tested. Subsequently, its relationship with performance and organizational commitment is assessed. In the research model, organizational commitment is considered as a mediator between Islamic leadership and performance. This study is structured in the following manner. Theoretical background was reviewed in the following section, where basis for this study's conceptual model and hypotheses was formed. Section 3 presents the research methodology. Analyses and their results are reported in Section 4. Section 5 ends this study.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Leadership according to Islam

As one of the early studies, Campbell (2008) examines the succession to Muhammad (SAW) to define kind of the dynamics of succession play in effective leadership practice from a history of religions perspective. Islamic conceptualization of leadership is derived from two main sources: *Quran* (The Holy book of Islam) and *Sunnah* [which concerns the exemplary life, words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)]. According to Islam, leadership is considered as one of the most important elements to shape and direct a community, an organization and a state. In a Hadith (words of Prophet Mohammad) reported from Abu Sa'id Al Khudri and Abu Hurairah was emphasized on appointing a leader even in a small group. "The Messenger of Allah said, when three persons set out on a journey, they should appoint one of them as their leader" (An-Nawawi, 2021).

Leadership according to Islam is similar to conventional leadership approaches, which also serves as a bridge used by leaders to influence their followers' attitudes and behaviors to achieve organizational objectives except its religious, moral and human roots (Ahmad and Ogunsola, 2011; Ahmad *et al.*, 2019). According to Galanou and Farrag (2015), Islamic approach incorporates business life to religious life and proposes a virtue-centric view to leadership dominated by moral values, spirituality, ethics and wisdom. Ali (2009) underlines the importance of shared influence and responsibility. In a famous hadith narrated from Abdullah bin Umar refers the guiding: The Prophet (SAW) said:

Every one of you is a guardian and every one of you is responsible (for his wards). A ruler is a guardian and is responsible (for his subjects); a man is a guardian of his family and responsible (for them); a wife is a guardian of her husband's house and she is responsible (for it), a slave is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible (for that). Beware! All of you are guardians and are responsible (for your wards) (Al-Bukhari, 2021).

Leaders in Islam are perceived as guardians who protect their followers against dangers and pay attention to their needs and threats even in a small group such as family (Faris and Parry, 2011). In the conventional literature, Newstead *et al.* (2019) examined how virtue informs good leadership in multiple domains. Wang and Hackett (2020) used the concept of moral identity to advance a new construct – virtues-centered moral identity.

Islamic perspective of leadership is modeled by the Prophet Muhammad and other Prophets. The Qur'an describes him as a great model for Muslim leaders:

There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and (who) remembers Allah often (Al-Ahzab 33/21) (Mohsen, 2007).

Once again, the verse refers to the character of the Messenger of Allah: "And indeed, you are of a great moral character" (Al-Qalam 68/4). The prophet Muhammad strongly indicated three basic values for leadership, which are mercy, kindness and justice. In addition to this, during the period of four caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, Ali ibn Abi Talib), it was understood that three basic principles (the approval of followers, justice and performance) were fundamental to present effective leadership (Ali, 2009).

Leadership in Islam refers to the process of encouragement and actuating followers to reach desired organizational objectives with a clear vision that is suitable for laws of Allah (Abed, 2006). There are two main sources of jurisprudence according to Islamic leadership: revelation and human intellect. Revelation refers to Quran and Sunnah (exemplary words and life of Prophet Mohammad) (Ahmad, 2015) and human intellect refers to using reasoning, current knowledge and science for the right purpose (Daud *et al.*, 2014). The literature of Islamic leadership can be broadly grouped into three main categories: research

explaining Islamic leadership attitudes, principles, values and behaviors; research proposing a theoretical model regarding Islamic leadership; and research providing empirical results and outcomes of implementing Islamic leadership.

2.2 Attitudes, principles and behaviors of Islamic leadership

There is long list of Islamic leadership attitudes and principles compiled by authors (Ahmad and Ogunsola, 2011). For example, Beekun and Badawi (1999) suggested that traits of Islamic leadership are derived from four basic Islamic principles which are *Iman* (true belief, faith), *Islam* (following the orders of Islam), *Taqwa* (forever mindful of Allah the Almighty) and *Ihsan* (kindness and care while feeling the presence of Allah). Hassan *et al.* (2011) also propose an Islamic leadership model where pillars of Islam and characteristics of a Muslim leader are combined. They grouped the characteristics of a Muslim leader into three categories: belief (*aqidah*), good disposition (ethical behaviors such as righteousness, compassion and humility) and human relationships (such as mercy, justice and consideration). Marbun (2013) claims that a capable Islamic leader must possess spiritual awareness and rational awareness and lists the requirements of Islamic leadership as intention (*Niyya*), piety (*Taqwa*), kindness (*Ihsan*), trustworthiness (*Sidq*), justice (*Adl*), sincerity (*Ikhlās*), self-improvement (*Itqan*), trust (*Emanah*), consultation (*Shura*) and patience (*Sabar*).

Keeping all these in mind, this study proposes an Islamic leadership model based on six attributes. These attributes are justice (*adl*), religiosity (*taqwa*), integrity (*ihsan*), wisdom (*hikmah*), shared vision and humbleness. Theoretically, three of these attributes (justice, integrity and wisdom) are taken from Al-Ghazali's virtue of ethics approach. Zaim *et al.* (2021) composed an ethical leadership model based on Islamic values suggested that these attributes are among the most comprehensive values according to Islamic tradition. Shared vision and humbleness are inspired from ethical leadership theory (Mihelic *et al.*, 2010; Brown *et al.*, 2005) and Senge's (1997) Fifth Discipline. Religiosity is added by the authors based on Islamic leadership literature (Ali, 2011; Marbun, 2013; Rafiki, 2020).

2.2.1 Justice. Justice "reflects the perceived fairness of an authority's decision making" (Colquitt *et al.*, 2017). According to Ali (2009), an ideal society is based on "justice" and "compassion" which are integral parts of Islamic leadership. Justice is the mainstay of a nation and leaders are held responsible for promoting and enforcing justice. In Islamic literature, justice can be referred as to put something in the right position and judge some situation or idea fairly. It is a prominent concept of Islam as cited in the Quran (Al-An'am 6/115). Justice is described by two words in Quran "adl", which means equity and balance, and "qist", which refers to highest level of justice (Beekun, 2012). Allah says that He raised and imposed the balance, established the justice and it is humans' duty to keep it that way and not make deficient the balance (Ar-Rahman, 7, 8, 9). Prophet Muhammed (SAW) also emphasized the importance of justice particularly for leaders. He mentioned that just ruler is among the people of *Jannah* and among the seven groups of people whom Allah will give protection with His Shade on the Day when there will be no shade except His Shade (An-Nawawi, 2021). For this reason, according to Islam, leaders are strongly encouraged to behave justly toward all, which is nearest to piety (Mohiuddin *et al.*, 2013). They are expected to work toward establishing *adl* (justice) and the *mizan* (balance or equilibrium) within their responsibility area (Faris and Abdalla, 2017).

2.2.2 Religiosity. Religiosity reflects degree of adaptation and level of commitment to a faith (Hage and Posner, 2015). Beekun and Badawi (1999) asserted that religiosity of leadership in Islam is based on trust. Followers trust their leaders to guide them and treat them fairly (Herijanto, 2022). They imputed to the leaders the servant, guardian and

transformational aspect of leadership. Servant leaders serve followers for their well-being (Zia *et al.*, 2022). The guardian leaders protect followers from danger and suppression for their sense of confidence. Transformational leaders inspire and empower followers to develop themselves (Faris and Parry, 2011). According to Alabed (2017), Muslim leader should act in accordance with the injunction of Allah and His Prophet and must develop a strong Islamic moral character. This moral character will be reflected by his conviction (*Yaqin*) and will lead to behaviors such as trustworthiness, righteousness and keeping promises. Beekun and Badawi (1999) identified four layers of this moral character, which indicate leaders' religiosity: *Iman* (faith), *Islam* (peace and submission), *Taqwa* (Awe of Allah) and love of Allah.

2.2.3 Kindness (*Ihsan*). *Ihsan* (kindness) is an Arabic word which means goodness and excellence (Haddara and Enanny, 2009). "Ihsan has two literal meanings, doing something well and perfectly and doing someone a favor. According to a prophetic saying, Ihsan (perfect goodness or doing what is beautiful) means worshipping God as if you see Him; "for even if you do not see Him, He certainly sees you" (Alabed, 2017). Ahmad (2015) explained Ihsan as loving Allah deeply and performing effectively to gain pleasure of Allah. Prophet Muhammed (SAW) advised Muslims to do their tasks perfectly like Allah is watching them. Ihsan motivates the leaders to do his/her best (Haddara and Enanny, 2009). Leaders and followers with *ihsan* love to present excellent works in the organization. They are voluntary to do their tasks in a best way without expecting a reward (Beekun, 2012). Moreover, the concept of *ihsan* includes being kind to others and caring about their needs and expectations. Prophet Muhammed (SAW) was always kind to others and advised his followers to treat a worker or a servant kindly (Beekun, 2012).

2.2.4 Wisdom. Wisdom is defined as the ability to best use of knowledge for establishing and achieving desired goals based on good judgement. It is the combination of divine knowledge with scientific knowledge and fueled by consistent passions (Anwar *et al.*, 2013). The first word of revelation was "Iqra" meaning "read". In Quran, believers are strongly encouraged to use their intellectual and spiritual faculties to learn and to implement what they have learnt effectively (Beekun, 2012). Accordingly, it is emphasized to seek for wisdom and guidance rather than blind acceptance. According to Islamic leadership, the pursuit of knowledge is considered as a religious task and a responsibility (Galanou and Farrag, 2015).

2.2.5 Shared vision. Strong goal orientation, consultation (*shura*) and promoting a shared vision are other important dimensions of Islamic leadership (Baig, 2012). Consistent with spiritual leadership (Parameshwar, 2005), Islamic leadership also underlines the importance of displaying ethical values, attitudes and behaviors and starts with creating a shared vision through which organization participants experience a sense of calling that gives meaning to their work (Daft, 2018). Ahmad and Ogunsola (2011) mentions that "in Islam leadership is a process of inspiring and coaching voluntary followers in an effort to achieve a clear and defined shared vision" (p. 294). To build an effective individual who can think critically, analyze and discuss, which makes influential followers with strong personalities, it is suggested to seek advice and benefit from counsel and collective wisdom (Alabed, 2017; Mir, 2010). Quran encourages "who conduct their affairs by mutual Consultation" (42/38) and directs his Prophet (SAW) to consult with his companions (3/159). That is why according to Islam, leaders must promote a shared vision and a mutual understanding among their followers (Mohiuddin, Ather, and Sobhani, 2013).

2.2.6 Humility. Humility is another dimension of Islamic leadership. According to Collins (2006), effective leaders are those who can blend extreme personal humility with intense professional will. From the Islamic leadership perspective, humility is a common virtue of prophets. Quran greatness belongs to Allah the Almighty and praises people with humility

(25/63). As the ultimate role model, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) exemplified humility encouraged in leadership positions so that no aggression or oppression is committed (Faris and Abdalla, 2017).

2.3 Islamic leadership and performance

Theoretically, Islamic leadership aims to integrate rational excellence (vicegerent of God) and emotional and spiritual balance (slave of God) through possession of spiritual and rational awareness of leaders (Husti and Mahyarni, 2019). Accordingly, Islamic leadership theoretically results in high ethical standards and expected to be an effective leadership style pursuing success, happiness and peace for the followers and the organizations (Saeed *et al.*, 2014). Islamic leadership theory suggests that the quality of Islamic leadership can foster organizational development by conducting different managerial activities on basement of ethical standard (Gazi, 2020) and can positively influence the attitudes of followers by bringing higher levels of satisfaction, motivation, performance, positive energy and organizational loyalty (Daud *et al.*, 2014; Iqbal *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, Ahmed *et al.* (2021) found that the spiritual values could add value to the performance of the organization. Hassan *et al.* (2022) investigated the culture of spirituality in the workplace that significantly affects the public service motivation of employees.

The relationship between Islamic leadership and employee performance is well documented in theory. However, there is limited number of empirical findings supporting this suggestion. For example, according to Aini (2020) Islamic ethics is directly and indirectly (through Islamic work ethics and motivation) affecting employees' performance. Similarly, Jumainig (2017) provides empirical evidence proving that Islamic leadership has a positive and significant effect on employees' job performance through employee morale. Similarly, Husti and Mahyarni (2019) investigated the effects of Islamic leadership on small and medium-sized enterprises performance and found positive relationship mediated by innovation and competitive advantage. Zaim *et al.* (2021) also found a positive relationship between leadership according to Islamic values and performance at team level based on data collected from North Iraq. Nonetheless, these limited research findings are not sufficient for proving the so-called relationship between Islamic leadership and employees' performance. Hence, it can be hypothesized that Islamic leadership has positive impact on job performance:

H1. Islamic leadership is positively related to performance.

2.4 Islamic leadership and organizational commitment

Organizational commitment is defined as "the desire on the part of an employee to remain a member of the organization". Organizational commitment influences whether an employee stays a member of the organization (is retained) or leaves to pursue another job (Colquitt *et al.*, 2014).

The correlation between leadership in general and organizational commitment is well acknowledged in the literature (Jain and Duggal, 2018; Peachey *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, there are a number of research findings revealing the relationship between Islamic work ethics and organizational commitment (Hayati and Caniago, 2012; Yousef, 2001). There are also research findings suggesting the positive effects of leadership on organizational commitment based on data collected from Islamic countries (Malik *et al.*, 2017; Sani and Maharani, 2012; Yahouchi, 2009). Even though there is no sufficient empirical evidence regarding the direct effects of Islamic leadership on organizational commitment, it is

generally accepted that implementing Islamic values in leadership is positively associated with organizational commitment (Saeed *et al.*, 2014).

According to several researches, organizational commitment is perceived as exhibiting loyalty to the organization and identification of employees to the organization (Salem and Agil, 2012). Mowday, Porter and Steers (2013) defined organizational commitment as the process of engagement to the organization that refers to integrating personal goals and desires with organizational goals. There are a number of research findings that advocate the positive relationship between leadership and organizational commitment (Emery and Barker, 2007; Avolio, 2004).

From Islamic perspective, some researchers (Moayed, 2009; Yousef, 2001) claim that Islamic work ethics and values positively influence organizational commitment. Despite the scarcity of empirical findings, there are a number of theoretical and conceptual studies (Zaim *et al.*, 2020; Budur, 2018; Mohiuddin *et al.*, 2013; Marbun, Attributions and requirements of Islamic leadership, 2013; Hassan *et al.*, 2011; Ahmad and Ogunsola, 2011) which suggest that implementing Islamic values in leadership such as collaboration, justice, wisdom and sincerity enhances the effectiveness of leadership, which will lead to an increase in organizational commitment (Saeed *et al.*, 2014). Islamic leadership emphasizes high ethical standards in leadership, and ethical leadership literature acknowledges that ethical behaviors possessed by the leaders have positive impact on organizational commitment of the followers (Çelik *et al.*, 2015; Zaim *et al.*, 2021; Bahadori *et al.*, 2021). Sutherland (2010) provides empirical evidence regarding the positive effects of ethical leadership on affective and normative commitment. Hassan *et al.* (2014) also claim that perceptions of procedural fairness, supportive leadership behavior and ethical leadership have a positive influence on organizational commitment. The existing literature needs more empirical justification regarding the effects of Islamic leadership on organizational commitment. Therefore, we present the following hypothesis for Islamic leadership and organizational commitment relationship:

H2. Islamic leadership is positively related to organizational commitment.

Along its links with many other organizational phenomena, organizational commitment has been found to increase performance. As the commitment levels of an organization's members increase, they sustain higher levels of performance. The relevant literature provides sufficient theoretical and empirical support regarding the positive effects of organizational commitment on job performance (Tolentino, 2013; Angle and Lawson, 1994; Meyer *et al.*, 1989). Our next hypothesis was formed accordingly:

H3. Organizational commitment is positively related to performance.

There is also empirical evidence regarding the mediating role of organizational commitment between leadership and work-related outcomes including job performance (Abbas *et al.*, 2020; Jabbar *et al.*, 2020). Yousef (2000a, 2000b) and Ayuningtyas and Suryani (2019) claim that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between Islamic work ethic and attitudes toward organizational change. However, the mediating role of organizational commitment between Islamic leadership and job performance is not that clear in the literature. Accordingly, more research is needed to reveal the mediating role of organizational commitment between Islamic leadership and job performance. For example, Meyer *et al.* (1989) revealed that affective commitment is positively associated with job performance. Similarly, Suharto and Hendri (2019) found that organizational commitment has a direct influence on job performance. Riketta (2002) also found a positive correlation

between attitudinal organizational commitment and job performance based on a meta-analysis. Building on this basis, we proposed the following hypothesis regarding the mediated influence of Islamic leadership on job performance through organizational commitment:

H4. Islamic leadership has a positive effect on performance through organizational commitment.

Based on these hypotheses, the theoretical model used in this study was formed, as shown in Figure 1.

3. Research methodology

This study had two main objectives. The first objective was to develop an Islamic leadership scale, followed by the second objective of identification and examination of the relationships between Islamic leadership, organizational commitment and work performance.

3.1 Scale development

For the development of Islamic leadership scale, the authors followed the process outlined in Table 1. Throughout the development process, suggestions by Netemeyer *et al.* (2003) and Hair *et al.* (2019) were applied to guide scale development efforts.

As the first step of scale development, relevant literature was examined to identify items related to Islamic leadership. Borrowing from the existing literature and Al Ghazali's virtue theory, 46 items were selected and included in the preliminary item pool.

Consequently, a focus group was held with the participation of Islamic scholars, academicians and practitioners to group the attributions of Islamic leadership and rank them according to their importance, doability and accessibility. The experts included in the focus group were chosen and invited by the authors based on their knowledge and experience. Five of these experts were chosen from academy and other five were from interest-free finance sector. The group were of varying ages between 35 and 60. All participants were males and held at least an undergraduate degree. From the participants, four had Economics, two had Business Administration, two had Engineering and two had Econometry as major degrees. After a couple of sessions, the experts have chosen six attributes which are mostly cited, theoretically significant and easy to evaluate. The main dimensions of Islamic leadership were determined by this group's evaluation. The preliminary group of attributes that consisted of 46 items was reshaped and shrunk to form six dimensions. These dimensions were labeled as

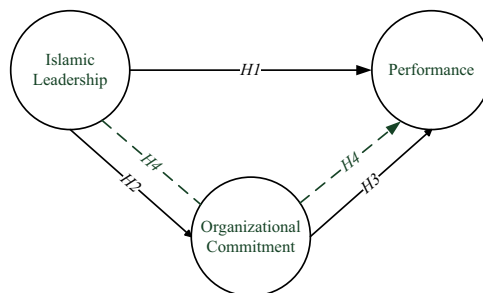


Figure 1.
Theoretical research model

Table 1.
Scale development
steps

Scale development stage	Procedure
Construct and item definitions and scale domain	Examination of relevant literature Identification and clarification of main and sub-constructs with the first focus group session Establishment of operational definitions and scale domain Generation and pooling of initial items for main and sub-constructs Exploration of inclusion convenience of the items in relation to the construct dimensions with second focus group session
Item correction and reduction	Pilot study with 150 Muslim employees Exploratory factor analysis Factor loading evaluation 20 items removed because of low factor loading or multicollinearity issue Obtainment of four-dimensional structure composed of 20 items Reliability evaluation
Evaluations of validity	Final survey to 229 participants Confirmatory factor analysis One item removed Four-dimensional structure composed of 19 items retained Convergence validity Discriminant validity

religiosity (8 items), justice/adl (7 items), kindness/ihsan (10 items), wisdom/hikmah (5 items), vision (8 items) and humility (8 items).

Following the first focus group, another focus group session was conducted. The aim of this second focus group was to investigate the items and discuss their wording, convenience of inclusion and content validity. Six items were discarded at the end of this evaluation because of irrelevance to the Islamic leadership construct or similarity to other items, leaving a total number of 40 items in the item pool.

3.2 Pilot study

To ensure applicability of the questionnaire and investigate the existence of the proposed dimensionality, a pilot study was conducted with 150 Muslim employees from a firm operating in service sector. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted with the data to investigate the dimensionality of Islamic leadership. Principal components extraction method with varimax rotation was used for the analysis. The inclusion criteria for the items were to have significant factor loadings higher than 0.5, to have a significant loading on only one factor and to have an acceptable communality value higher than 0.5. All four factors had eigenvalues over 1. Three items from religiosity, one item from justice, five items from kindness and one item from wisdom questions were removed because of low factor loadings. The items proposed for vision and humility dimensions were found to either lack significant factor loading or load on multiple factors and were therefore discarded for lack of evidence of structural validity. At the end of the analysis, a four-factor structure composed of 20 items was revealed. The Cronbach's alpha values of these factors ranged between 0.943 and 0.899, thus presenting good internal reliability. The authors also checked Cronbach's alpha score changes when items were removed. In all four factors, no item removal was found to cause upward changes in alpha scores.

3.3 Participants and sampling

The data used in this study was drawn from Muslim white collars who worked in service sector at various companies. Farah *et al.* (2020) also examined the leadership succession in different types of organizations. Random sampling method was used to gather the data.

Population of this research was the service firms in Istanbul city of Republic of Turkey. Research data were collected from financial organizations (NACE code 18) which are classified by the Istanbul Chamber of Industry as operating in service sector. Survey forms were prepared as self-administered questionnaire and were distributed to 900 firms.

Two inclusion criteria were set by the researchers. The first criteria required participants to be practicing Muslims. This would ensure that they would have enough familiarity with the religion to comprehend leadership issue from Islam's perspective. The second criteria required participants to have at least one year of work experience.

From the 900 finance companies, a total of 422 candidates responded. From these 422 replies, 229 satisfied inclusion criteria and were properly filled. Thus, the final sample included 229 respondents, yielding a response rate of 54%. The majority of respondents were males ($n = 165$) and constituted 72% of the sample, with females ($n = 64$) forming the remaining 28%. A total of 8% ($n = 18$) were born between 1960 and 1969; 37% ($n = 85$) were born between 1970 and 1979; 45% ($n = 145$) were born between 1980 and 1989; and 10% ($n = 23$) were born after 1990. A total of 2% ($n = 5$) of participants did not have further education after finishing high school, 3% ($n = 7$) had an associate's degree from a two-year college education, 57% ($n = 130$) had a bachelor's degree, 28% ($n = 64$) had a master's degree and 10% ($n = 23$) had a doctoral degree. Most respondents were subordinates with an 85% ($n = 195$) and only 15% ($n = 34$) held a manager's position. Professional work experience of participants varied between ranges of 1–5 years (29%), 6–10 years (23%), 11–15 years (14%), 16–20 years (19%) and over 20 years (15%).

3.4 Measurement

The survey instrument used in this study was composed of four sections. The first part was demographics questions and asked the participants brief questions about their gender, age, education, job position and professional work experience. The second part included the questions about Islamic leadership obtained as a result of the pilot study and EFA. The third part of the survey, organizational commitment measure, was adapted from Fry's (2003) spiritual leadership scale and the final part regarding individual performance was adopted from Zaim *et al.* (2013).

3.5 Validity evaluation of Islamic leadership scale

Following the data collection, structural equation modeling statistical analysis tools were used. First-order and second-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to establish validity of Islamic leadership scale. Constructs used in these analyses are presented in Figures 2 and 3.

From the various goodness-of-fit indices that are used by scholars in research literature, Chi square over degrees of freedom (χ^2/df), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), root mean square residual (RMR) and root mean square of error approximation (RMSEA) were selected and reported in this study.

After removing one item from Kindness construct, no problems were detected with goodness-of-fit values of both models. The first-order model's fit scores were $\chi^2/df = 1,648$ ($p < 0.0001$), GFI = 0.902, AGFI = 0.873, RMR = 0.043, CFI = 0.974, TLI = 0.970 and RMSEA = 0.053. The second-order model's fit index values developed as $\chi^2/df = 1.688$

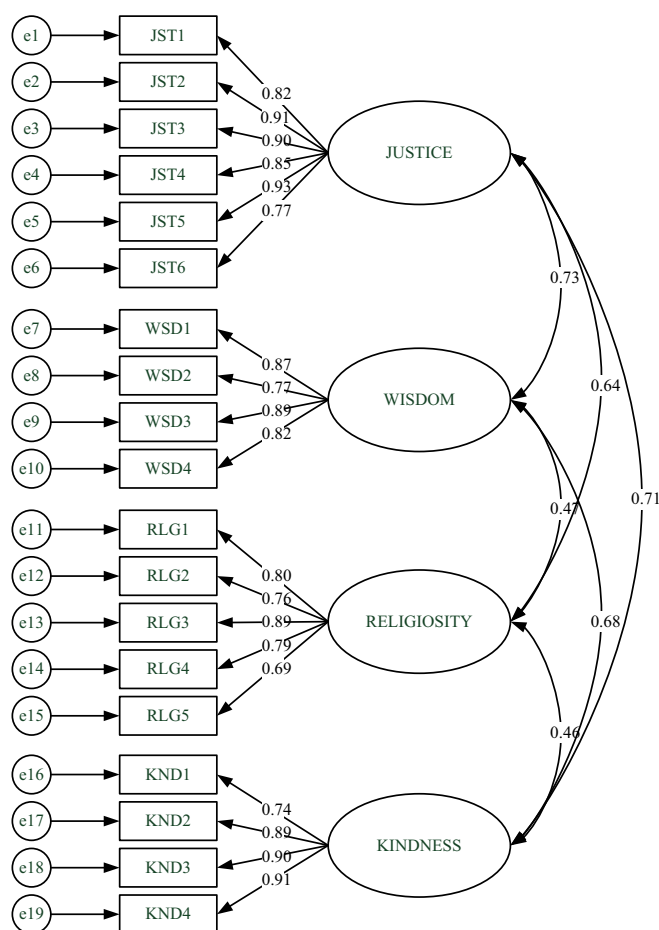


Figure 2. First-order analysis of Islamic leadership dimensions

($p < 0.0001$), GFI = 0.897, AGFI = 0.868, RMR = 0.048, CFI = 0.972, TLI = 0.968 and RMSEA = 0.055. These results indicate no concern regarding construct validity of the scale.

When comparing different models from same data, Akaike's information criteria (AIC) or consistent Akaike's information criteria (CAIC) can be used to select the better alternative (Schermelleh-Engel and Moosbrugger, 2003). The selection rule dictates that the model with the lowest AIC or CAIC value shall be considered as the best fitting model. CAIC value from the first-order model was 573.721, whereas the second-order model's CAIC value emerged slightly lesser as 520.094. Evidently, the second-order model had a lower CAIC value and was thus used in the next analysis.

After checking the model-fit, reliability and validity were examined. Tables 2 and 3 present the findings regarding convergent and discriminant validity and reliability. Cronbach's alpha values represent internal reliability level of a construct. A value of 0.7 or above is considered acceptable. The alpha values of Islamic leadership constructs implied good reliability, ranging between 0.884 and 0.945. The column named "Composite reliability (CR)" in the table shows internal consistency adequacy of constructs, which assert whether a

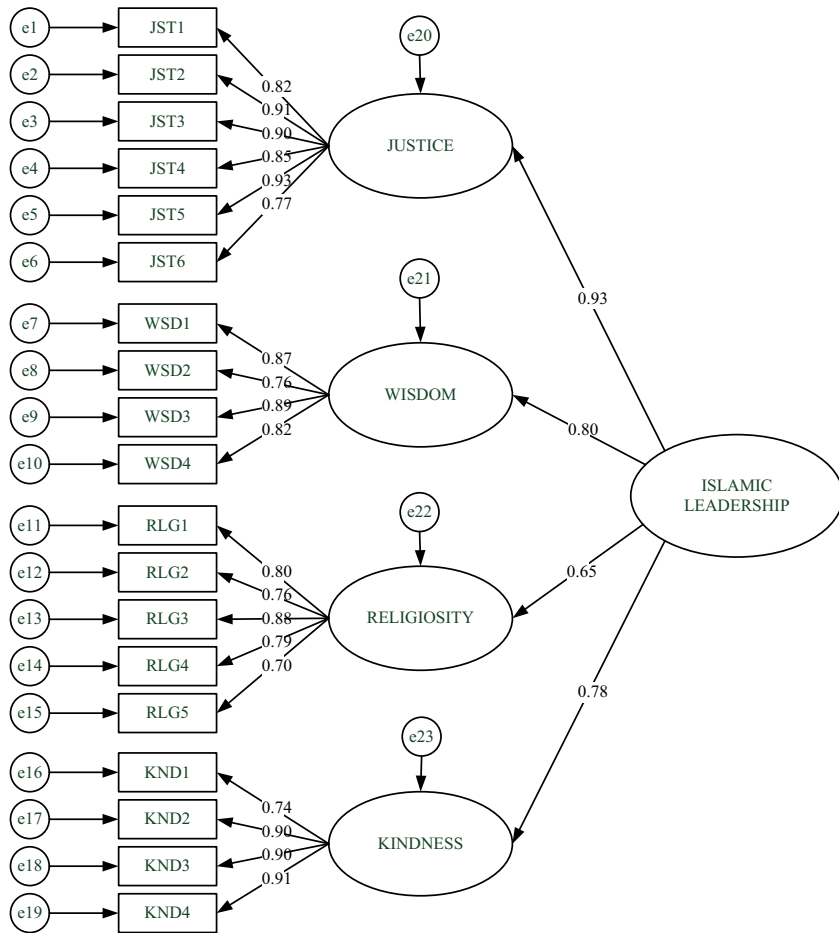


Figure 3.
Second-order analysis
of Islamic leadership
dimensions

Islamic leadership dimensions	Religiosity	Wisdom	Justice	Kindness
Religiosity	0.788			
Wisdom	0.470	0.838		
Justice	0.641	0.735	0.865	
Kindness	0.458	0.679	0.713	0.864

Table 2.
Islamic leadership
scale discriminant
validity results

number of items that are contained in the same scale truly measure the same thing. A CR score of 0.7 or higher is generally considered acceptable. All constructs used in the study produced much higher results that range from 0.889 to 0.946. Findings regarding convergent validity are summarized in the column titled Average variance extracted (AVE). An AVE value of 0.5 or above is accepted as a proof of convergent validity. All constructs passed this threshold. Assessment of discriminant validity is conducted through comparing square root

Constructs	Items	Standardized regression weights	Average variance extracted	Composite reliability	Cronbach's alpha
<i>Islamic leadership</i>					
<i>Justice</i>					
My manager acts fairly about promotions	JS1	0.823	0.748	0.947	0.945
My manager is being fair to his/her subordinates	JS2	0.912			
My manager always avoids favoritism (e.g. Nepotism)	JS3	0.897			
My manager equally employs the rules for everyone	JS4	0.846			
My manager acts fairly regarding the decisions about his/her subordinates	JS5	0.934			
My manager allocates the workload fairly	JS6	0.766			
<i>Religiosity</i>					
I think my manager is a religious person	RLG1	0.798	0.621	0.890	0.884
My manager uses religious sources as a guide in his work life	RLG2	0.760			
My manager avoids actions that his religion prohibits	RLG3	0.885			
I believe that my manager's core values originate from his religion	RLG4	0.789			
My manager is sensitive about religious practices	RLG5	0.695			
<i>Kindness</i>					
My managers always can control his anger	KND1	0.737	0.746	0.921	0.918
My manager is a tolerant person	KND2	0.895			
My managers behaviors are balanced	KND3	0.903			
I think my manager is a polite person	KND4	0.909			
<i>Wisdom</i>					
My manager has technical knowledge about his job	WSD1	0.875	0.702	0.904	0.902
My manager is an intellectual	WSD2	0.765			
My manager's knowledge is one of the most important criteria for his right decision-making	WSD3	0.889			
My manager has the ability to use right knowledge at right time	WSD4	0.817			

Table 3. Confirmatory factor analysis, convergent validity and composite and internal reliability test results for Islamic leadership scale

of AVE values of correlation among constructs. This comparison allows researchers to identify how distinct a construct is from others included in a model. Lack of high inter-correlations between indicators of different constructs establishes discriminant validity of the research model.

A Q^2 value assists in determining if a model has predictive relevance. As a result of the blindfolding procedure, the Q^2 values of justice, kindness, religiosity and wisdom were 0.854, 0.646, 0.533 and 0.672, respectively. The fact that the Q^2 values of the model were higher than zero indicates that the research model has a predictive relevance feature (Rokonuzzaman *et al.*, 2022; Cao *et al.*, 2015). The results regarding predictive validity calculations are given in Table 4.

This analysis concluded the scale development phase and, consequently, SEM methods were applied to test the research model and hypothesis regarding the relationships between Islamic leadership, organizational commitment and performance.

4. Analysis and results of the model

The proposed research model as displayed in Figure 1 was tested by SEM using IBM AMOS Statistical Analysis Software version 22. The data analysis was undertaken at three steps. In the first step, a CFA with maximum likelihood estimation was conducted to confirm the underlying dimensions of the constructs Islamic leadership, Organizational commitment and Performance. Next, common method bias was checked. Finally, we tested our hypothesized relationships using covariance-based SEM.

Figure 4 presents the final measurement model. One variable was dropped from Performance construct to increase model fit and eliminate multicollinearity. After the removal, measurement model's goodness-of-fit was found to be satisfactory. The goodness-of-fit values emerged as $\chi^2/df = 1.803$ ($p < 0.0001$), GFI = 0.851, AGFI = 0.818, RMR = 0.051, CFI = 0.952, TLI = 0.946 and RMSEA = 0.059. All indexes were within generally accepted value ranges of either an acceptable or a good fit.

The information regarding reliability and validity of the model is summarized in Table 5. The Cronbach's alpha results were found to be between 0.884 and 0.945. The CR scores ranged between 0.889 and 0.946. AVE values were higher than 0.5 for all constructs, providing proof for convergent validity. Table 6 lists the results of discriminant validity calculations. Absence of high inter-correlations between constructs was accepted as a sign of discriminant validity.

Common method bias is one of the important issues which researchers can face during a study. It can be simply defined as variance which emerges because of a problem stemming from measurement method rather than construct measures. One way to protect a study from this problem is to take the necessary preventive measures during research design phase. Statistical means can also detect and eliminate the issue during analysis. One method to investigate the existence of common method variance in a study is to use Harman's Single-Factor Test. This test is conducted through EFA by forcing all items included in the study to form a single factor. If this single factor turns out to explain 50% or more of the total variance, it is accepted that the study is suffering from common method variance problem. Regarding this study, Harman's single-factor test result did not reach or exceed the problematic 50% threshold.

Islamic leadership dimensions	RMSE	MAE	$Q^2_{predict}$
Justice	0.386	0.285	0.854
Kindness	0.604	0.421	0.646
Religiosity	0.700	0.528	0.533
Wisdom	0.579	0.437	0.672

Table 4.
Results of Q^2 values

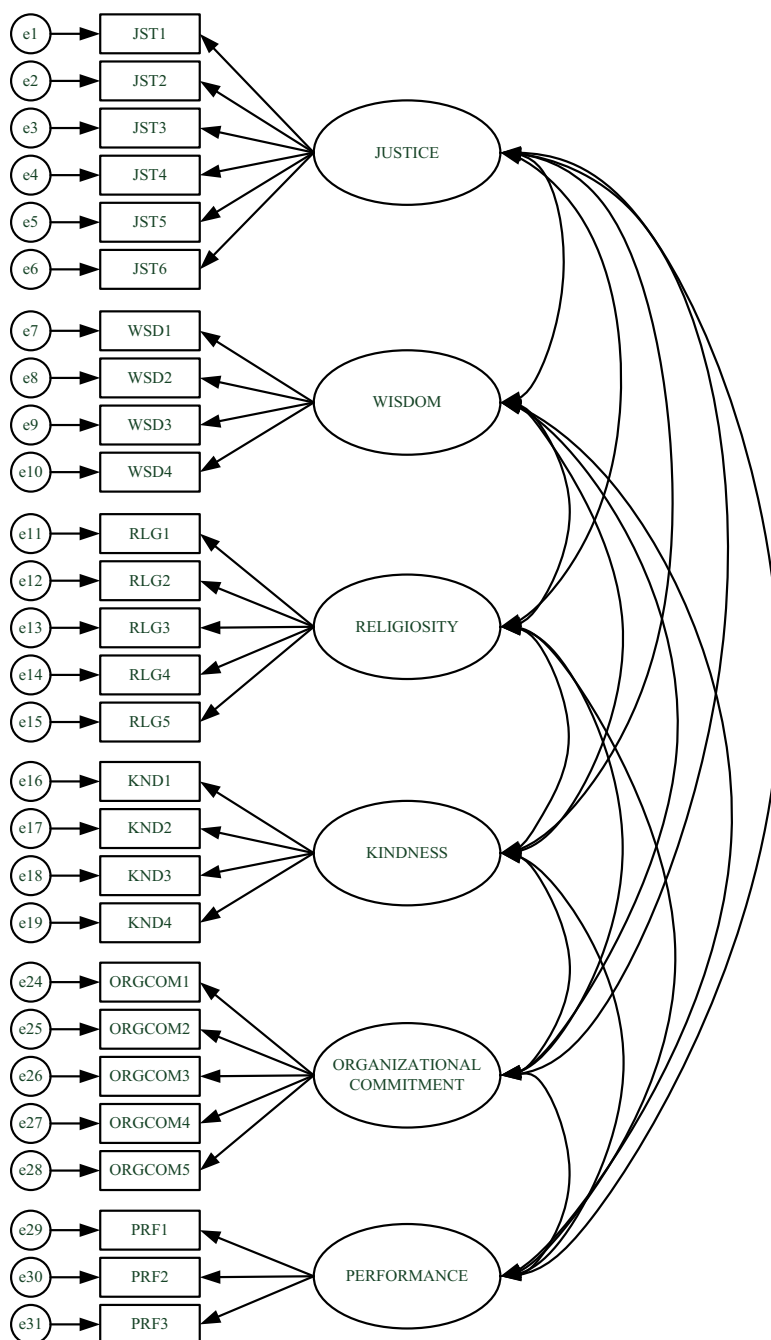


Figure 4.
Final measurement
model

Constructs	Items	Standardized regression weights	Average variance extracted	Composite reliability	Cronbach's alpha
<i>Islamic leadership</i>					
<i>Justice</i>	<i>JUSTICE</i>		0.747	0.946	0.945
My manager acts fairly about promotions	JS1	0.822			
My manager is being fair to his/her subordinates	JS2	0.912			
My manager always avoids favoritism (e.g. Nepotism)	JS3	0.896			
My manager equally employs the rules for everyone	JS4	0.846			
My manager acts fairly regarding the decisions about his/her subordinates	JS5	0.933			
My manager allocates the workload fairly	JS6	0.767			
<i>Religiosity</i>	<i>RELIGIOSITY</i>		0.618	0.889	0.884
I think my manager is a religious person	RLG1	0.809			
My manager uses religious sources as a guide in his work life	RLG2	0.750			
My manager avoids actions that his religion prohibits	RLG3	0.893			
I believe that my manager's core values originate from his religion	RLG4	0.774			
My manager is sensitive about religious practices	RLG5	0.690			
<i>Kindness</i>	<i>KINDNESS</i>		0.747	0.921	0.918
My manager always can control his anger	KND1	0.737			
My manager is a tolerant person	KND2	0.895			
My manager's behaviors are balanced	KND3	0.903			
I think my manager is a polite person	KND4	0.910			
<i>Wisdom</i>	<i>WISDOM</i>		0.702	0.904	0.902
My managers has technical knowledge about his job	WSD1	0.874			
My manager is an intellectual	WSD2	0.765			

Table 5. Confirmatory factor analysis, reliability and validity test results for research model

(continued)

Constructs	Items	Standardized regression weights	Average variance extracted	Composite reliability	Cronbach's alpha
My manager's knowledge is one of the most important criteria for his right decision-making	WSD3	0.889			
My manager has the ability to use right knowledge at right time	WSD4	0.817			
<i>Organizational commitment</i>	<i>ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT</i>		0.654	0.904	0.899
I feel like "part of the family" in this organization	ORGCOM1	0.705			
I really feel as if my organization's problem are my own	ORGCOM2	0.761			
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization	ORGCOM3	0.812			
I talk up this organization to my friends as a great place to work for	ORGCOM4	0.834			
I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization	ORGCOM5	0.916			
<i>Performance</i>	<i>PERFORMANCE</i>		0.731	0.891	0.887
In my department, everyone gives his/her best efforts	PRF1	0.880			
In my department, work quality is a high priority for all workers	PRF2	0.891			
My work group is very productive	PRF3	0.791			

Table 5.

Islamic leadership dimensions	Religiosity	Wisdom	Commitment	Performance	Justice	Kindness
Religiosity	0.786					
Wisdom	0.470	0.838				
Commitment	0.707	0.514	0.809			
Performance	0.651	0.380	0.690	0.857		
Justice	0.640	0.735	0.551	0.506	0.865	
Kindness	0.456	0.679	0.484	0.400	0.713	0.864

Table 6.
Discriminant validity results

Following the establishment of reliability and validity, the research variables and the relationships between them were examined on correlations from discriminant validity table. According to the correlation results, each variable significantly correlates with other variables. All correlations are positively signed and differ from weak (>0.3 and <0.7) to

moderate (>0.5 and <0.7) strength. An examination of these relationships convinced the authors to move forward to investigate causal relationships between these constructs by testing the research hypotheses regarding these links.

Islamic leadership was included in the model as a second-order independent variable formed by justice, wisdom, religiosity and kindness sub-dimensions. Performance constituted the dependent variable in the model. In addition, organizational commitment was inserted as a mediating variable between Islamic leadership and Performance.

Examination of model goodness-of-fit revealed no problem with any of the indexes. χ^2/df was 1.976 and statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). The other index values can be summed as follows: GFI = 0.832, AGFI = 0.800, RMR = 0.073, CFI = 0.940, TLI = 0.934 and RMSEA = 0.065.

Figure 5 exhibits the path model used in the last analysis of this study with standardized path estimates. Total effect of Islamic leadership on Performance was found as a score of 0.564, which is significant at a level of 0.01. The direct influence of Islamic leadership on Performance was found to be significant ($\beta = 0.18, p < 0.05$) but weaker than organizational commitment's influence on Performance ($\beta = 0.59, p < 0.01$). Islamic leadership also emerged as a meaningful predictor of organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.66, p < 0.01$). We computed indirect effects between Islamic leadership and Performance using organizational commitment as a mediator. Through Sobel test, existence of partial mediation effect was discovered (Sobel test statistics = $\beta = 0.396, p < 0.01$).

5. Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

The research findings have three major contributions to the existing literature. The first contribution is proposing an empirical model of Islamic leadership, organizational commitment and job performance. Considering the scarcity of Islamic leadership literature where there are only few empirical models of Islamic leadership (Ali, 2009; Ahmad and Ogunsola, 2011; Beekun, 2012), proposing a useful model and supporting it with empirical evidences can be considered as a significant contribution. Providing empirical evidence on Islamic leadership dimensions and their comparative importance constitutes the second contribution to extant literature. The third contribution is made by providing empirical evidence regarding the partial mediating role of organizational commitment between Islamic leadership and job performance.

The research findings indicate that there is a positive relationship between Islamic leadership and job performance. This finding is aligned with conventional leadership literature. There is already a sufficient number of empirical evidences regarding the positive effects of contemporary leadership styles. Previous studies found positive relationships between performance and ethical leadership (Bello, 2012; Piccolo *et al.*, 2010), authentic leadership (Wang *et al.*, 2014) and transformational leadership (Piccolo and Colquitt, 2006). However, there is very limited empirical evidence regarding the effects of Islamic leadership on job performance. Galanou and Farrag (2015) found that Islamic leadership is positively and significantly associated with perception of leader effectiveness and innovation outcomes. Based on empirical findings, Hayati and Caniago (2012) concluded that Islamic work ethic has a greater effect on intrinsic motivation and organizational commitment than on job satisfaction and job performance. Despite the scarcity of empirical findings, there is a number theoretical and conceptual studies (Alabed, 2017; Mohiuddin *et al.*, 2013; Marbun, Attributions and requirements of Islamic leadership, 2013; Ahmad and Ogunsola, 2011; Hassan *et al.*, 2011), suggesting that implementing Islamic values will enhance the

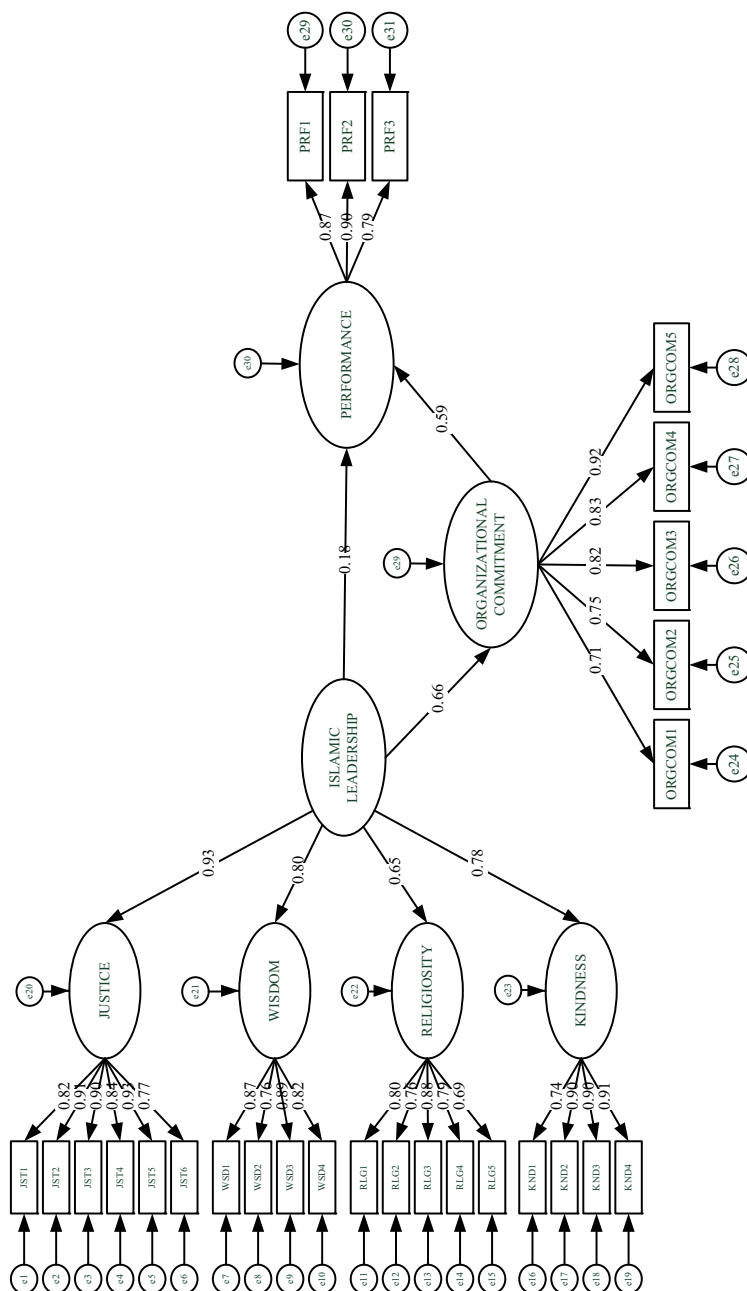


Figure 5. Path model

effectiveness of leadership, which as a natural consequence will lead to an increase in job performance.

The research findings reveal that organizational commitment partially mediates the relationship between Islamic leadership and job performance. Even though the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance is clearly explained (Riketta, 2002; Meyer *et al.*, 1989), the number of empirical studies investigating the mediating role of organizational commitment between leadership and job performance particularly in Islamic context is insufficient. One of these rare studies was conducted by Yousef (2000a, 2000b), who concluded that organizational commitment mediates the relationships of leadership behavior with both job satisfaction and job performance in a non-Western context. Yousef (2001) also claimed that Islamic work ethic directly affects both organizational commitment and job satisfaction, and that it moderates the relationship between these two constructs.

Among the dimensions (attributes) of Islamic leadership, justice appeared to be the most significant one. It is already acknowledged that justice is associated with several organizational outcomes, including organizational commitment and job performance (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001). Moreover, from Islamic leadership perspective, justice is considered to be the heart of leadership (Beekun, 2012; Ali, 2009). For this reason, it was not considered as a surprise to find that justice is significantly correlated with Islamic leadership.

This study also reveals that other dimensions investigated (religiosity, kindness and wisdom of leaders) are also significantly associated with Islamic leadership. El Garah *et al.* (2012) researched practical wisdom of management in the Islamic tradition context. Anfara *et al.* (2008) identified qualifications of courageous leaders. Wiltshire (2011) suggested to the leaders to possess the virtue of temperance to control themselves before trying to control followers. Pillai *et al.* (1999) investigated the relationship between leadership and organizational justice considering cultural effects. Ehrhart (2004) perceived justice as basic point of organizational citizenship behavior and he researched its relationship with leadership. Jamian and Radzi (2013) described functions of justice from the view of Islamic leadership. From this perspective, this study has provided a comprehensive evaluation of Islamic leadership and found the significant correlations between them and job performance.

5.2 Limitations

The basic limitation for this study stems from the inadequacy of Islamic leadership literature. The Qur'an and the Hadith constitute the main sources of Islamic leadership. In terms of other sources, however, there is a scarcity. Although Islamic leadership has a theoretically strong background, it is difficult to conceptualize the construct and its dimensions because of the limited number of empirical models analyzing Islamic leadership.

Another limitation arose from data collection, which affected the study sample size. A great part of the collected data was eliminated from the research because of lack of qualification. Because of that reason, the final sample size obtained remained relatively small ($n = 229$) as compared to what is commonly considered decent when making analysis with SEM tools. A large sample size is required in SEM analyses to get a good fit to the hypothesized model. The study also included only one sector and a limited number of organizations; hence, it is not possible to constitute general statements from the findings of this study. Removal of humility and vision dimensions of Islamic leadership also limited the study. Information regarding these constructs could not be analyzed, and as it is, their relationship to Islamic leadership and its subdimensions remain unidentified.

5.3 Future research

Considering the limitations of this study, the authors propose the following topics as subjects for future research in the field. First, researchers may develop a conceptual study that includes broaden subjects to contribute as a core source to Islamic leadership literature. Developing a scale consisting of different items would contribute a lot to the study of Islamic leadership. It can allow researchers to cover a larger part of Islamic leadership construct, which can possibly encapsulate the dimensions that are not yet identified and included, and those such as vision and humility that could not be included in this study because of measurement problems. Finally, this study was applied to service sector, and the researchers would like to determine different sectors to conduct the study.

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Further reading

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Corresponding author

Burhan Uluyol can be contacted at: borhanseti@gmail.com