

DRIVING ETHICAL EXCELLENCE: THE ROLE OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP IN VALUE CONGRUENCE, CREATIVITY, AND PERFORMANCE IN INDONESIAN ISLAMIC BANKING

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Abstract

This study bridges the gaps identified in the literature on authentic leadership, value congruence, and personal creativity in influencing employee performance in Islamic banking institutions in Indonesia. The research limits its scope to the instance of PT Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) by involving a number of branch offices in the Surabaya area. While previous studies have confirmed the leadership-performance relationship, few have investigated the moderating role of authentic leadership on an Islamic banking context based on ethics and values rooted in Sharia principles. Using a quantitative approach with 98 participants from several BSI branches, data were examined using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results show that authentic leadership highly magnifies the role of value congruence and personal creativity towards Islamic banking performance. The novelty of this study relies on integrating Social Exchange Theory with Islamic values by focusing on achieving a balance between innovation and ethical compliance. In practice, the findings suggest that authentic leadership development programs in Islamic banking institutions need to be reinforced to produce innovation with ethics and to uphold organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: Authentic leadership, creativity, employee performance, Indonesian Islamic banking, value congruence.

Introduction

The Indonesian financial landscape has seen remarkable growth with the rapid development of Islamic banking, which operates based on Sharia laws that prioritize fairness, justice, and transparency. As the biggest Muslim majority country, Indonesia has placed Islamic banking as one of its key pillars of the financial system. The Islamic banking market share in Indonesia was 7.63% of the total national banking sector during June 2023, and as reported by Otoritas Jasa Keuangan (OJK), this indicates continued financial inclusion contribution growth. It has also been accompanied by challenges for striking a balance between innovation and the stringent ethical boundaries imposed by Sharia law (Alzghoul et al., 2018).

Leadership is one of the most vital components of addressing such challenges. Authentic leadership, as expressed through self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective, is more and more regarded as capable of building trust and commitment in organisations (Duarte et al., 2021). This

potential is supported by recent Indonesian research. For instance, Adriansyah (2019) found that authentic leadership significantly enhances affective commitment and resourcefulness, which in turn promote employee creativity and performance in Islamic banking environments. Similarly, a *Jurnal Manajemen dan Kewirausahaan* study confirmed that Islamic leadership influences employee performance positively through intrinsic and extrinsic motivation with a focus on ethical leadership practices in Indonesian banking (Mubarok & Siswanto, 2024).

The second consideration is value congruence, or the extent to which organizational and personal values concur. In Islamic banking, this concurrence is especially important since Shariah doctrines explicitly define organizational ethics. Value congruence has been shown to advance organizational performance and commitment by building trust and collaboration (Edwards and Cable 2009; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson 2005). Yet another recent meta-analysis also confirms that person-organization value fit positively correlates with employee engagement and performance outcomes in cultural settings

(Jufrizen et al., 2023). But in Islamic banking, the salience of congruence of values is all the more important since employees need to imbibe Islamic ethical values in work behavior (Mubarok & Siswanto, 2024).

At the same time, individual creativity has been singled out as one of the key drivers of competitiveness in the financial industry. Innovative employees develop new ideas and solutions that raise service quality and customer satisfaction. Cross-cultural evidence has attested to the fact that authentic leadership positively affects employees' creativity and innovative behavior both on the individual and group levels (Duarte et al., 2021). But Islamic banking will need to be within the periphery of Sharia compliance and will need leaders who will promote innovation as well as moral standards at the same time (Siswanti & Muafi, 2025).

Despite these findings, there are notable research gaps. Most of the previous studies in Indonesia were carried out in single institutions or branches, which constrained the generalizability of their findings (Adriansyah, 2019). Aside from this, although authentic leadership has been linked with creativity and performance, its moderating role in strengthening the relationship between value congruence, creativity, and performance has not been sufficiently addressed within the context of Islamic banks. These gaps are addressed by this study, which involves a number of PT Bank Syariah Indonesia branches in Surabaya to examine the moderation of authentic leadership on the relationship between value congruence, creativity, and employee performance.

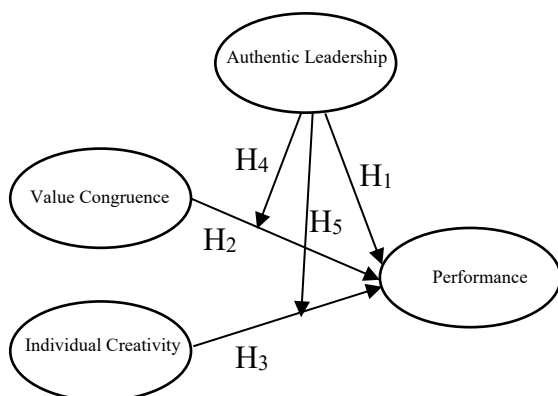


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Compiled by authors

By integrating Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory with Sharia teachings, this study contributes theoretically by showing how reciprocity and trust

can be facilitated by authentic leadership in Islamic banking. Practically, it provides implications for policymakers and leaders to develop leadership programs that balance innovation and ethical compliance, and thus sustain organizational performance in the Indonesian Islamic banking industry.

Authentic Leadership and Employee Performance

It is considered to be important because it is founded on the basis of transparency, ethical leadership, and integrity in interpersonal relationships, hence suitable for value-based organizations like Islamic banks. According to empirical research, authentic leadership is positively related to improved employee performance through psychological safety, trust, and intrinsic motivation (Banks et al. 2016; Duarte et al. 2021; Islam et al. 2021).

According to Social Exchange Theory, authentic leadership is regarded as important because it can lead to the development of a relationship between employees who are motivated to improve their performance, especially in Islamic banks.

However, research findings in this domain have also shown some complexity, as it was assumed that the effectiveness of authentic leadership could depend on some conditions, such as organizational culture, characteristics of tasks, and employees' expectations (Eva et al., 2019). In a highly controlled industry, such as banking, overemphasizing authenticity without a focus on performance might lead to a negative outcome. In addition, authenticity may not be effective in collectivist societies.

Despite the limitations of authentic leadership, most of the research findings have shown a positive relationship between authentic leadership and performance, especially in ethical and service-oriented industries.

H₁: Authentic leadership has a positive impact on employee performance.

Value Congruence and Employee Performance

Value congruence is defined as "a person and an organization having a common value." This is important in influencing employee attitudes and performance outcomes (Molina, 2023). Research supports the argument that value congruence is positively related to employees' job satisfaction,

engagement, and commitment, which are significant in improving performance outcomes (Iddrisu, 2024; Macinati et al., 2020; Herdianto et al., 2024). Value congruence also positively relates with discretionary behavior, which is important in enhancing performance outcomes (Elsharnouby et al., 2024).

However, value congruence does not exist as a straightforward relationship. Other research suggests that value congruence is actually a contextual or moderating factor for performance outcomes (Awan & Fatima, 2018; Bhargava & Pradhan, 2017).

In Islamic banking, value congruence relates with ethical alignment with Sharia principles, which is important in enhancing performance outcomes.

H₂: Value congruence has a positive impact on employee performance

Individual Creativity and Employee Performance

Individual creativity is a function of the employee's ability to develop new and useful ideas that may eventually lead to innovation and performance improvement. From a theoretical framework, individual creativity is a key driver that enables individuals to create value through the dynamic componential theory, which focuses on the importance of intrinsic motivation, domain-relevant skills, and a favorable work environment for enhancing performance outcomes (Amabile & Pratt, 2016).

Empirical research has supported the positive relationship that exists between individual creativity and employee performance. This is because creativity allows individuals to build adaptive capabilities that may eventually lead to improved innovation outcomes, thereby enhancing individual performance outcomes (Afsar et al., 2019; Zhao et al., 2021; Öngel et al., 2023). In addition, empirical research has revealed that creativity mediates the relationship between psychological and cognitive capabilities and performance outcomes (Marwa & Ichsan, 2024), implying that creativity is a key driver that may eventually lead to improved performance outcomes.

Nevertheless, there is evidence of non-linearity between creativity and performance. Some research indicates that while creativity may not be able to improve employee performance on its own, there is a need to provide contextual support. To exemplify this point, there is evidence

of a need for leadership and knowledge sharing to improve performance (Hughes et al., 2018; Afsar et al., 2019). Moreover, research by Ximenes et al. (2019) indicates that while creativity is able to improve employee performance, there is a need to provide additional contextual factors to improve performance.

In addition to this point, there is evidence of inefficiencies resulting from excessive and unaligned creativity. This is particularly true in structured and regulated work environments. This point indicates that there is a need to align creativity with organizational objectives to improve employee performance.

In conclusion, while there is evidence of the importance of creativity in improving employee performance, there is a need to ensure contextual factors to improve performance.

H₃: Individual creativity has a positive impact on employee performance

Moderating Role of Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership has a crucial part to play in facilitating the relationship between organizational and individual factors and performance outcomes. This is according to Social Exchange Theory, whereby authentic leaders foster a work environment where trust, openness, and ethical conduct are encouraged. This, in turn, motivates employees to balance this by increasing their performance (Banks et al., 2016; Duarte et al., 2021). This shows that authentic leadership can maximize the internalization of values by the organization and the motivation of employees to do the same.

In the case of value congruence, authentic leadership can be seen as a facilitator to maximize the relationship between individual and organizational values and performance outcomes. This is because authentic leaders, through their authenticity, can maximize the shared sense of values, which can maximize the impact of value congruence on employees (Iqbal et al., 2020).

Likewise, authentic leadership is assumed to enhance the link between individual creativity and performance. This is due to the fact that authentic leaders encourage psychological safety and openness among their subordinates. This would encourage them to be creative and come up with new ideas. This is in line with previous research that revealed leadership to be an important factor in leveraging employee creativity to performance (Hughes et al., 2018; Öngel et al., 2023).

The moderating effect of authentic leadership may not be uniform in different contexts. This is particularly true in highly structured and regulated industries, such as Islamic banking. It is possible that in these industries, there are institutional barriers to employee behavior. This means that the moderating effect of authentic leadership may be overridden by institutional barriers. Additionally, if employees have high intrinsic motivation and/or high value alignment, then authentic leadership may not have a significant effect (Wong & Laschinger, 2013).

In addition, whereas authentic leadership in general has a positive impact on creativity, overemphasizing the importance of ethical control may, in an unintended manner, limit the scope for experimentation, which would negatively influence the relationship between creativity and performance.

This suggests that the moderating effect of authentic leadership depends on the achievement of a balance between ethical leadership and flexibility.

The relationship between value congruence and performance benefits from authentic leadership while the connection between creativity and performance needs contextual factors to determine its relationship with authentic leadership.

H₄: Authentic leadership enhances the relationship between value congruence and employee performance.

H₅: Authentic leadership enhances the relationship between individual creativity and employee performance.

Research Methods

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory design that aims at exploring the moderating role of authentic leadership on the relationship between value congruence, individual creativity, and employee performance. The quantitative approach was used because it enables systematic hypothesis testing, and the explanatory design is sufficient for the exploration of the causal relationships among the research variables.

Population and Sample

The population of the present study was all employees at PT Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) in the Greater Surabaya area who worked in the back

office. The effective population size was difficult to attain because internal employee figures at every branch did not get published. Thus, the sample size was determined using the Lemeshow formula (Levy & Lemeshow, 2013), which is most commonly used when the population is not known. At a population proportion of 0.5 and a 95 percent confidence level ($Z = 1.96$) with a 10 percent margin of error, the required sample size was 96 respondents. In this study, 98 usable questionnaires were obtained, thereby meeting the minimum sample size requirements and can be considered representative for analysis.

Measurement of Variables

This research tool was borrowed from scales validated in previous research papers published in prestigious overseas journals. Authentic leadership was measured using a tool developed by Walumbwa et al (2008), which consists of four factors: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective. Value congruence was measured using a scale developed by Edwards and Cable (2009) to measure the extent to which individuals share similar values with the organization values. Individual creativity was measured on a scale developed by Zhou and George (2001), which emphasizes employees' ability to develop and implement new ideas in their work. Employee performance was measured with an individual work performance scale developed by Koopmans et al (2011), tapping task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance aspects. All questions were answered using a five-point Likert scale with an answering range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Instrument translation was carried out through the back-translation method to ensure that the words used were correct and a preliminary pilot on 20 respondents to ensure content, and instrument clarity validation.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were gathered via an online questionnaire using Google Forms. The questionnaire was back-translated and pilot-tested on 20 respondents for validity and clarity checks. The questionnaire was then distributed with assistance from the human resource department of Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) in the Greater Surabaya area, especially to back-office employees who met the research criteria. Voluntary response of the respondents was guaranteed, and the purpose of the

study and confidentiality of the information were explained. A total of 120 questionnaires distributed, 102 were collected, and after screening the data, valid questionnaires totaling 98 were employed in the subsequent analysis.

Data Analysis Technique

Analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0 software. The method is considered appropriate in that it can handle complex research models with mediating factors and relatively smaller to medium-sized samples (Hair et al., 2019).

Results and Discussion

Measurement Indicator (Outer Model)

In PLS-SEM analysis, the assessment of the measurement model (outer model) is conducted to confirm that the latent constructs utilized possess adequate validity and reliability. The created model needs to satisfy two key criteria: it must be valid and reliable to generate accurate outcomes. The elements detailed below are the primary ones in evaluating the measurement model:

Construct Reliability and Validity

The load needs to be greater than 0.7. Nevertheless, a loading of 0.4-0.7 can be sustained if the construct's AVE is greater than 0.5 (Hair Jr et al., 2017). A value exceeding 0.5 AVE indicates that over 50% of the variance in the indicator is accounted for by the construct.

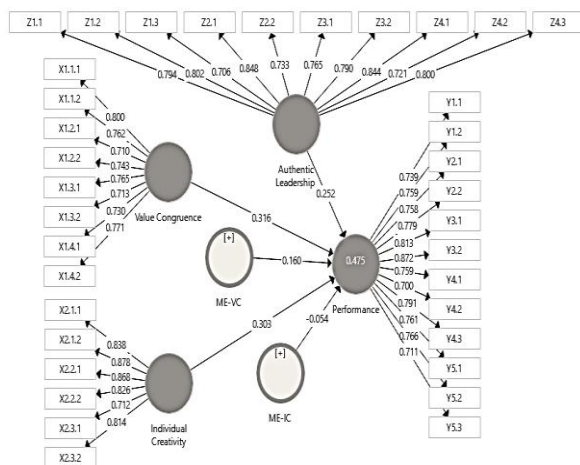


Figure 2. PLS Diagram
Source: Output SEM PLS

As shown in Figure 2, each item or indicator has an outer loading value exceeding 0.6. The defined benchmark for external loading values, which exceeds 0.6 for a group of 85 respondents and goes beyond 0.55 for a group of 100 respondents, as specified by Hair et al. in Santos (2017), continues to be applicable as long as the construct's validity and reliability are met. Consequently, it may be asserted that all indicators demonstrate valid indicator validity.

Table 1
Construct Reliability and Validity

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Authentic Leadership	0.929	0.937	0.940	0.611
Individual Creativity	0.905	0.916	0.927	0.680
ME-IC	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
ME-VC	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Performance	0.937	0.939	0.945	0.591
Value Congruence	0.889	0.897	0.911	0.562

The information presented in the table indicates that every construct achieves a Cronbach's alpha score exceeding 0.7, which confirms the reliability of each construct. For instance, the hidden variable reflecting value congruence has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.889, which surpasses the acceptable threshold of 0.7, indicating the reliability of the value congruence variable. This reliability is similarly observed across all other variables, each exceeding the 0.7 benchmark.

The given table shows that every latent variable possesses an AVE value greater than 0.5. For example, the AVE for the latent variable representing value congruence is noted at 0.562, surpassing the 0.5 threshold, thereby confirming the convergent validity of the value congruence construct. This validity applies to all other variables that likewise show AVE values greater than 0.5.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity aims to assess whether the reflex index truly represents an adequate level of structure. This evaluation is mainly based on the belief that the index should demonstrate a

strong connection to the relevant framework (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). Within the context of Smart PLS, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) is viewed as more sensitive than the cross-loading value and the Fornell-Larcker criteria when assessing discriminant validity. This method is based on a multitrait-multimethod matrix for evaluation. To establish discriminant validity, the HTMT value should be notably below 0.9 (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 2
Heterotrait-Monotrait

Variables	AL	IC	ME-IC	ME-VC	P	VC
AL						
IC	0.514					
ME-IC	0.124	0.133				
ME-VC	0.089	0.133	0.466			
P	0.556	0.588	0.107	0.082		
VC	0.395	0.488	0.210	0.260	0.538	

The HTMT table presented above indicates that all components exhibit discriminant validity, as evidenced by HTMT values being less than 0.9.

Structural Model (Inner Model)

Evaluating R-Square (R²)

Criteria for interpreting the R² value: An R² value greater than 0.75 indicates the model exhibits strong strength; an R² value between 0.50 and 0.75 suggests moderate strength, whereas an R² value lower than 0.25 reflects weak model strength (Chin, 1998).

Table 3
Model Evaluation Summary

Variable	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Q ²	f ² (AL)	f ² (IC)	f ² (VC)
Performance	0.475	0.446	0.267	0.084	0.118	0.136

The structural model evaluation indicates that the model explains 47.5% of the variance in employee performance (R² = 0.475), with an adjusted value of 0.446, indicating moderate explanatory power. The predictive relevance (Q² = 0.267) suggests that the model has adequate predictive capability. Furthermore, effect size analysis (f²) shows that value congruence has the strongest effect, followed by individual creativity and authentic leadership, indicating their relative importance in explaining performance.

Significance Test

Table 4
Structural Model Results

Relationship	β	T - value	P - value	VIF
H ₁ : Authentic Leadership → Performance	0.252	3.136	0.002	1.444
H ₂ : Value Congruence → Performance	0.316	3.546	0.000	1.403
H ₃ : Individual Creativity → Performance	0.303	3.084	0.002	1.481
H ₄ : ME-VC → Performance	0.160	2.050	0.041	1.414
H ₅ : ME-IC → Performance	-0.054	0.683	0.495	1.308

Results of Hypothesis Testing

The results of the hypothesis testing indicated that the hypotheses H₁, H₂, and H₃ are accepted because authentic leadership has a positive impact on employee performance as indicated by the value of the coefficient (β = 0.252) and the statistical significance of the results obtained in authentic leadership, value congruence, and individual creativity on employee performance.

Moreover, the results also revealed that hypothesis H₄ was accepted since the moderating effect of authentic leadership was statistically significant (β = 0.160, p = 0.041), revealing that authentic leadership significantly influenced the relationship between value congruence and employee performance.

However, the results revealed that hypothesis H₅ was rejected since the moderating effect of authentic leadership was not statistically significant (β = -0.054, p = 0.495) in the relationship between individual creativity and employee performance.

Goodness of Fit (GoF) Assessment

GoF Evaluation This represents the last phase in assessing the GoF of the overall model fit. GoF can be calculated as the multiplication of the AVE value and R². The outcome from this GoF will provide an overall perspective on the quality of the model that illustrates the relationship of the current variables broadly. The criteria for interpreting GoF values are as follows: values under 0.1 are deemed small, values at 0.25 are seen as moderate, and values reaching 0.36 are interpreted as large (Tenenhaus et al., 2005).

Calculation:

$$GoF = \sqrt{(AVE \times R^2)} = \sqrt{(0.741 \times 0.475)} = 0.593$$

By calculating GoF, the estimated GoF value of this model has reached 0.593, already beyond the threshold of the large category considered 0.36 according to Tenenhaus et al. (2005). The quality of the general model for the description of relations among variables is very good. Therefore, this value already enables consideration of the high fit of a model that also reaches a highly relevant level of explanation for the studied phenomenon

Discussion

The results of the study prove that authentic leadership, value congruence, and individual creativity have a significant impact on employee performance in PT Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) Surabaya. This study supports the significance of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) that focuses on the development of reciprocity and mutual trust in building a relationship within the organization. In this case, authentic leadership acts as a facilitator in the development of mutual trust and reciprocity, which results in increased employee performance, creativity, and engagement.

This study supports the research that has already been done on the importance of authentic leadership in the development of a safe work environment that leads to increased mutual trust between the leader and the employee (Maximo et al., 2019; Wong & Laschinger, 2013). This study also adds value to the research that has already been done on authentic leadership, which is not only related to performance but also moderates the relationship between value congruence and performance. This study also focuses on the importance of authentic leadership in Islamic banking organizations where the organization operates under the principles of Sharia law.

In addition, value congruence is seen as another significant motivator of performance among employees. The congruence between individual values and organizational values is seen to increase commitment among employees, thereby motivating them to internalize organizational values. This result also confirms the earlier research on the importance of value congruence in boosting performance among employees, while also highlighting its importance in the context of Islamic banking, where ethical consistency is essential.

Moreover, individual creativity is seen as positively contributing to performance, although the effect is relatively conditional. This indicates

that individual creativity would be positively related to performance if it is aligned with the organizational goals and the environment is conducive to creativity. In the case of Islamic banking, individual creativity has to be exercised within the Sharia law, thereby giving rise to the concept of “creativity within Sharia boundaries,” where creativity is exercised in line with the Islamic values of justice, transparency, and accountability.

From a practical perspective, this means a number of things for Islamic banking institutions in Indonesia. First, the strong impact of value congruence suggests that Islamic banks need to improve their value-based human resource practices. This entails developing value-based recruitment, Islamic work ethics in training, and performance evaluation systems that are consistent with organizational values based on Islamic principles.

Second, the strong impact of authentic leadership suggests that Islamic banks need to make leadership development a strategic imperative. Islamic banks need to develop leaders who exhibit strong value leadership, which is critical in building trust and ensuring that organizational values are effectively implemented. This is supported by published studies which state that leadership and organizational culture are important factors in improving employee performance in organizations in Indonesia (Pangarso et al., 2021; Andreani & Petrik, 2016). 2016).

Third, though creativity positively contributes to performance, this contribution is organizationally facilitated. Therefore, Islamic banks should facilitate creativity in an organized and compliant manner. This could be achieved by establishing guidelines for innovation, knowledge sharing, and functional teamwork in compliance with Sharia principles.

Lastly, though authentic leadership does not enhance the relationship between creativity and performance, this study suggests that authentic leadership, in itself, does not facilitate leveraging employee creativity for organizational performance improvement. This calls for the development of an institutional framework for leveraging employee creativity in addition to authentic leadership.

Therefore, this study reveals that Islamic banks in Indonesia should adopt an integrated approach that includes value congruence, authentic leadership, and organized creativity management in order for the organizations to improve employee performance in a compliant and ethical manner, thereby ensuring sustainable effectiveness in these organizations.

Conclusions and Implications

This study showed that authentic leadership, value congruence, and individual creativity are factors that greatly contribute to the improvement of employee performance in Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) Surabaya. Among the variables, authentic leadership has a two-way effect, not only as a direct factor that influences employee performance but also as a moderator that increases the relationship between value congruence and employee performance. This study also adds value to the relevance of Social Exchange Theory, which has implications for how trust, reciprocity, and ethical leadership contribute to employee behavior in Islamic financial systems.

This research contributes to theory development through the amalgamation of Social Exchange Theory and Islamic values, thereby creating a new theory, “creativity within Sharia boundaries.” This theory proposes that creativity could be developed within a set of ethical boundaries, thereby enhancing the body of knowledge on authentic leadership and individual creativity in value-based organizations, particularly Islamic financial systems.

From the practical point of view, this research has some implications for Islamic banks in Indonesia. From the practical perspective, the implications of this research are as follows: first, the value congruence of the organization should be improved by developing value-based recruitment, training, and performance evaluation systems; second, the leadership development programs of the organization should be improved by focusing on authentic leadership qualities; third, the creativity of the organization should be managed by developing Sharia-compliant innovation systems.

However, this research has some limitations, as follows: the research participants are the employees of BSI, and the research was conducted in the Surabaya area; the research was conducted at one point in time, which limits the capacity to explore the dynamic relationship between the variables.

It is therefore recommended that future research be conducted to increase its scope by considering multiple Islamic banks and using longitudinal research designs to examine additional variables such as organizational culture and digital capabilities to understand their potential role in facilitating the relationship between ethics and innovation.

Overall, this study offers a comprehensive framework for managing ethical compliance and innovation through authentic leadership and value alignment for improving performance in Islamic banking.

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