

Beyond Technicalities: Spiritual Motivation as a Mediator Between Academic Supervision and Teacher Performance

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v10i3.14318>

Received: 23 January 2026

Revised: 26 May 2026

Accepted: 04 June 2026

Abstract:

This study aims to analyse the effect of academic supervision on teacher performance with spiritual work motivation as a mediating variable in Islamic schools. This study used a quantitative, survey-based approach. The study population included all teachers in Islamic schools, and the sampling technique was total sampling. The research instrument was a questionnaire that had been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis was conducted using path analysis to examine the direct and indirect effects between variables. The results showed that academic supervision had a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. Academic supervision also had a positive and significant effect on spiritual work motivation, which, in turn, positively and significantly influenced teacher performance. Important findings indicate that spiritual work motivation acts as a mediating variable, strengthening the influence of academic supervision on teacher performance. Academic supervision that is systematically implemented, humanistically oriented, and grounded in Islamic spiritual values can increase teachers' spiritual motivation, ultimately impacting teacher performance. This study provides theoretical and practical implications for Islamic school administrators in designing an academic supervision model that is not only oriented toward the technical aspects of learning but also emphasises strengthening spiritual motivation for teaching as an integral part of teacher professional development.

Keywords: *Academic Supervision, Teacher Performance, Spiritual Work Motivation*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh supervisi akademik terhadap kinerja guru dengan motivasi kerja spiritual sebagai variabel mediasi di madrasah diniyah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survei. Populasi penelitian mencakup seluruh guru di madrasah diniyah, dan teknik pengambilan sampel dilakukan dengan total sampling. Instrumen penelitian berupa kuesioner yang telah diuji validitas dan reliabilitasnya. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan analisis jalur (path analysis) untuk menguji pengaruh langsung maupun tidak langsung antarvariabel. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa supervisi akademik berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kinerja guru. Supervisi akademik juga berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap motivasi kerja spiritual, yang selanjutnya terbukti memengaruhi kinerja guru

secara positif dan signifikan. Temuan penting menunjukkan bahwa motivasi kerja spiritual berperan sebagai variabel mediasi yang memperkuat pengaruh supervisi akademik terhadap kinerja guru. Supervisi akademik yang dilaksanakan secara sistematis, humanis, dan berlandaskan nilai-nilai spiritual Islam mampu meningkatkan motivasi kerja spiritual guru, yang pada akhirnya berdampak pada peningkatan kinerja guru. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi teoretis dan praktis bagi pengelola madrasah dalam merancang model supervisi akademik yang tidak hanya berorientasi pada aspek teknis pembelajaran, tetapi juga menekankan penguatan motivasi kerja spiritual sebagai bagian integral dari pengembangan profesional guru.

Kunci: *Supervisi Akademik, Kinerja Guru, Motivasi Kerja Spiritual*

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Rafiqie, M., Haryanti, N., Ihwan, M., Habibi, I., & Sutarum. (2026). Beyond Technicalities: Spiritual Motivation as a Mediator Between Academic Supervision and Teacher Performance. *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 10(3), 906-918.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in shaping knowledgeable, morally grounded, and competitive human resources. Education is not solely focused on academic achievement but also on the development of students' character and spirituality (Cahyanto, 2023; Suyono, Fahyuni, & Haryanto, 2022). Therefore, the success of education in madrasahs is largely determined by teacher performance, which is the frontline of the learning process.

Teacher performance reflects teachers' ability to plan, implement, and continuously evaluate learning effectively (Sunaryo, 2020; Zhong et al., 2022). In the Indonesian context, particularly in Madrasah Diniyah Muadalah institutions, teacher performance is a crucial issue due to its strategic role in shaping students' character and religious competencies. Empirical findings indicate that the quality of teacher performance in madrasahs remains constrained by limited access to continuous professional development, suboptimal academic supervision, and weak instructional support systems. Field data also reveal variations in teachers' work motivation, including spirituality-based work motivation, which contributes to uneven learning quality. This condition indicates that improving teacher performance in madrasah diniyah requires not only technical approaches but also the strengthening of motivational and spiritual aspects as an integral part of the Islamic education system.

One important factor influencing teacher performance improvement is academic supervision. Academic supervision is a process of professional guidance carried out by the madrasah principal or supervisors to assist teachers in improving the quality of instruction (Mok & Staub, 2021; Muttaqin et al., 2023; Yue et al., 2024). Effective academic supervision is not authoritarian but rather collaborative, humanistic, and focused on developing teachers' competencies. Through well-planned and continuous academic supervision, teachers are expected to reflect on their instructional practices, address weaknesses, and develop their professional potential to the fullest.

Teachers' work motivation cannot be separated from the spiritual dimension (Almaaitaha et al., 2020). Spiritual work motivation refers to an individual's internal drive to work sincerely, responsibly, and meaningfully as a form of worship to Allah SWT. This construct can be operationally reflected

through several indicators, including sincerity in performing tasks (*ikhlas*), a strong sense of responsibility (*amanah*), commitment to work excellence (*ihsan*), discipline in fulfilling duties, and consistency in integrating religious values into professional activities. Teachers with high spiritual work motivation perceive their work not merely as an administrative obligation but as a trust (*amanah*) and a field of good deeds. Such motivation is believed to foster sustained commitment, discipline, and improved teacher performance. Previous studies have largely examined spiritual motivation in general organisational or corporate contexts, with limited focus on educational settings, particularly in Islamic-based institutions. Empirical research that specifically investigates the operational role of spiritual work motivation as a mediating variable in improving teacher performance in Madrasah Diniyah Muadalah remains scarce. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into how spiritual motivation operates within the unique cultural and religious context of madrasah education.

Workplace spirituality initially received limited attention. However, interest in examining spirituality in the workplace has grown over the past decade (Ananda et al., 2022; Andriprianto & Maridjo, 2022; Putra et al., 2022). The workplace spirituality movement has begun to gain prominence in several countries, as evidenced by the growing number of publications (both print and online journals and books) and conferences focused on workplace spirituality (Rana et al., 2020).

Over the years, organisational studies have undergone a fundamental shift from a mechanistic paradigm that values rational calculation and "science" toward a spiritual paradigm that emphasises awareness and understanding (Ridlo et al., 2021). The spiritual paradigm essentially recognises that people work not only with their hands but also with their hearts or souls (Rana et al., 2020). Alqassab & Leon (2024), as cited, state that the attributes required of managers and employees in the twenty-first century involve individuals bringing their whole selves to work, not merely their muscles and/or brains. This requirement emphasises that not only intelligence but also spirituality can be productively accommodated in the workplace.

According to Risgiyanti et al., (2020), sound workplace spirituality is supported by positive work attitudes rooted in strong individual spirituality, which, in turn, contributes to achieving a positive organisation. Elnafrawy (2022) explains that most employees seek meaning in their work, and some individuals attempt to bring spiritual values into the workplace so that employees can experience meaningful work (Ahmed et al., 2022). Workplace spirituality is not tied to the specific religion each employee adheres to but rather serves to enhance performance (Ekowati, 2022). Spirituality is a climate that fosters positive values in practice, rather than something imposed or based on artificial values (Putra et al., 2022). Spirituality presupposes that individuals are free to embrace or reject it (Rana et al., 2020). Nasrullah et al. (2022) classify workplace spirituality into three dimensions: the individual, group, and organisational levels.

Workplace spirituality is better understood as the recognition that individuals working within organisations possess an inner life that is nurtured by

the meaningfulness of their work. As human beings, employees have both minds and souls and continually seek to find meaning and purpose in their work. In addition, workers desire to connect with others and be part of a community (Saralita & Ardiyanti, 2020). Elnafrawy (2022) emphasises that the pressures of global competition have led organisational leaders to recognise the need for members' creativity to be fully expressed in their work, which is more likely to occur when the work is perceived as meaningful. Spirituality thus emerges as a new source of hope for improvements in morality, ethics, values, creativity, productivity, and work attitudes. Numerous studies have examined workplace spirituality in relation to organisational commitment (Vo et al., 2024). According to Ahmed et al. (2022), the first line of research empirically examines the association between workplace spirituality and organisational commitment. Organisational commitment has been regarded as an important workplace factor due to its impact on outcomes such as turnover rates, absenteeism levels, and effectiveness (Huang & Zhu, 2025; Navarro-Ibanez & Cardenas, 2026; Yin & Liu, 2025).

Academic supervision can enhance teacher performance, and likewise, work motivation contributes significantly to performance improvement. Previous studies have examined academic supervision and motivation separately, but few studies have integrated spiritual work motivation as a mediating variable, particularly in Islamic-based educational institutions.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study is important to examine the effect of academic supervision on teacher performance mediated by spiritual work motivation at Madrasah Diniyah Muadalah Tsanawiyah Nurul Qarnain Sukowono, Jember. This research is expected to make theoretical contributions to the development of Islamic education management and to offer practical guidance to madrasah administrators in designing effective academic supervision models grounded in Islamic spiritual values. Specifically, this study aims to analyse the effect of academic supervision on teacher performance through spiritual work motivation in madrasahs.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study aims to provide empirical evidence and develop theory on academic supervision, teacher performance, and spiritual work motivation. Considering the research problems and objectives to be achieved, this study employs an explanatory research approach using PLS-SEM. The questionnaire was developed based on the research variables, namely academic supervision, teacher performance, and spiritual work motivation.

The study population consisted of 100 teachers at Madrasah Diniyah Muadalah Tsanawiyah Nurul Qarnain Sukowono, Jember. Given the small population, all members were included as research respondents, yielding a total of 100 participants. This approach was used to obtain comprehensive, accurate data without reducing representation. The sampling technique used in this study is known as total sampling, or census sampling, in which the entire population is taken as the sample. This technique is considered appropriate when the population is small, enabling the researcher to capture the population's overall

characteristics more effectively and minimise sampling bias. Data analysis employed the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method in SmartPLS. PLS is a component-based or variance-based structural equation modelling (SEM) technique.

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares (PLS), which included evaluation of the outer and inner models. The outer model was assessed for construct validity and reliability using convergent validity (loadings > 0.70), discriminant validity (AVE > 0.50), and composite reliability (Ghozali, 2016). The inner model was evaluated to examine relationships among variables using R-square, Q-square, and t-tests of path coefficients. The model is considered good if it meets the criteria of validity, reliability, and statistical significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section presents the findings of the study, focusing on the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and the quality of the research data. The results provide evidence regarding the validity and reliability of the constructs used, which serve as the basis for further analysis of the structural relationships among variables.

Results of Data Quality Testing (Outer Model)

There are three criteria in the use of data analysis techniques with SmartPLS to assess the outer model, namely Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity of the measurement model with reflective indicators is assessed based on the correlation between item scores or component scores estimated using PLS software. An individual reflective measure is considered high if it correlates above 0.70 with the construct being measured. In this study, a loading factor threshold of 0.70 is applied. Based on the table below, all outer loading values are greater than 0.60; therefore, all research items meet the required criteria. The outer loading results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Outer Loadings

Indicator	Research Model
	Academic Supervision
X11	0.769
X12	0.784
X13	0.754
X14	0.725
X15	0.717
X16	0.740
X17	0.693
X18	0.630

Teachers Performance	
Y1	0.628
Y2	0.586
Y3	0.696
Y4	0.805
Y5	0.734
Y6	0.746
Spiritual Work Motivation	
X21	0.675
X22	0.723
X23	0.675
X24	0.704
X25	0.770
X26	0.784
X27	0.686
X28	0.671
X29	0.677
X210	0.675

Data Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

Based on the results of data processing using SmartPLS, as presented in Table 4.1, the outer model values, or correlations between constructs and their indicators, meet the criteria for convergent validity, as indicated by the estimated outer loadings from the PLS. From this output, it can be concluded that all items are valid, as all factor loading values exceed 0.60.

Evaluating Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Validity and reliability can also be assessed using each construct's reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. A construct is considered to have high reliability if its value is 0.70 or higher and its AVE exceeds 0.50. Table 2 presents the Composite Reliability and AVE values for all variables as follows:

Table 2. Outer Model, AVE, and Composite Reliability

Variable	AVE	Composite Reliability	Description
Teacher Performance (Y)	0.594	0.853	Reliable
Academic Supervision (X)	0.530	0.900	Reliable
Spiritual Work Motivation (Z)	0.502	0.900	Reliable

Data Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

Based on Table 2, all constructs meet the reliability criteria. This is indicated by composite reliability values above 0.70 and AVE values above 0.50, in accordance with the established criteria.

Results of Model Fit Testing (Inner Model)

Testing of the inner model, or structural model, is conducted to examine the relationships among constructs, the significance values, and the R-square of the research model. The structural model is evaluated using R-square values for the dependent constructs, t-tests, and the significance of the structural path coefficient parameters. In assessing a PLS model, the process begins by examining the R-square values for each dependent latent variable. Table 3 presents the R-square estimation results obtained using SmartPLS.

Table 3. R-Square Score

Variable	R-Square
Teacher Performance (Y)	0.590
spiritual Work Motivation (Z)	0.756

Data Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

Table 3 shows that the R-square for the spiritual work motivation variable is 0.756, indicating that the model's constructs explain 75.6% of the variability in this construct, with the remaining variance accounted for by variables outside the model. The higher the R-square value, the better the independent variables explain the dependent variable, indicating a better structural equation model. Meanwhile, the R-square value for the teacher performance variable is 0.590, indicating that the model's constructs explain 59% of the variability in teacher performance, while variables outside the model explain the remaining 41%. Similarly, a higher R-square value indicates a stronger explanatory power of the independent variables and a better structural equation model.

Hypothesis Testing

The significance of the estimated parameters provides highly useful information regarding the relationships among the research variables. The basis for hypothesis testing is the values obtained from the output of the results for inner weights. Table 4 presents the estimation output for testing the structural model. In SmartPLS, statistical testing of each hypothesised relationship is conducted via simulation. In this case, the bootstrap method is applied to the sample. Bootstrapping is also intended to minimise problems related to data non-normality in the study. The results of the bootstrapping test from the SmartPLS analysis are shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Bootstrapping Result

The level of significance in hypothesis testing is measured using the path coefficient parameter. This test examines the estimated path coefficients and t-statistic values with significance at $\alpha = 5\%$. If the t-statistic value is higher than the t-table value of 1.984 for a one-tailed hypothesis, the hypothesis is accepted. The following are the path coefficient values in testing the main hypotheses of this study:

Table 4. Path Coefficient Score

Correlation	Original Sample	Sampel Mean (M)	Standar Deviat ion	T- Statistik	P Values	Result
Academic Supervision (X) -> Teacher Performance (Y)	0.373	0.377	0.117	3.194	0.001	Received
Academic Supervision (X) -> Spiritual Work Motivation (Z)	0.869	0.873	0.020	43.374	0.000	Received
Spiritual Work Motivation (Z) -> Teacher Performance (Y)	0.421	0.425	0.120	3.519	0.000	Received

Data Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

Based on Table 4, the path coefficient analysis indicates that all relationships in the research model are significant. Academic Supervision (X) has a positive and significant effect on Teacher Performance (Y) with a path coefficient of 0.373, a t-statistic of 3.194, and a p-value of 0.001; thus, the hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that the better the academic supervision, the higher the teacher's performance. In addition, Academic Supervision (X) also has a very strong and significant positive effect on Spiritual Work Motivation (Z), with a coefficient of 0.869, a t-statistic of 43.374, and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that academic supervision plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' spiritual work motivation. Furthermore, Spiritual Work Motivation (Z) has a positive and significant effect on Teacher Performance (Y) with a coefficient of 0.421, a t-statistic of 3.519, and a p-value of 0.000. Thus, it can be concluded that academic supervision not only has a direct effect on teacher performance but also an indirect effect through the enhancement of spiritual work motivation, and all hypotheses in this study are accepted.

Mediation Test Result

The influence analysis examines the strength of relationships among variables, including direct, indirect, and total effects. The direct effect refers to the coefficients of all paths represented by single-headed arrows.

Table 5. Indirect Effects

No.	Correlation	Original Sample	Sampel Mean (M)	Standar Deviat ion	T- Statistik	P Values
1	Academic Supervision (X) -> Teacher Performance (Y) -> Spiritual Work Motivation (Z)	0.366	0.371	0.105	3.487	0.001

Data Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

Based on Table 5 above, there is an indirect effect of Academic Supervision (X) on Teacher Performance (Y) through Spiritual Work Motivation (Z). This is evidenced by an Original Sample value of 0.366, a t-statistic of 3.487, and a p-value of $0.001 < 0.05$, indicating that the effect is significant. Thus, Spiritual Work Motivation acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between academic supervision and teacher performance. In other words, the better the academic supervision, the higher the teachers' motivation to engage in spiritual work, which, in turn, leads to improved teacher performance.

Discussion

The study's results indicate that academic supervision has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. This finding aligns with educational supervision theory, which states that academic supervision is a process of professional guidance aimed at improving the quality of instruction through mentoring, constructive feedback, and the continuous development of teachers' competencies (Lai et al., 2025; Shi et al., 2025; Zhou et al., 2026). Systematic and humanistic supervision encourages teachers to reflect on their instructional practices, enhance pedagogical skills, and improve the quality of their professional performance. These results also reinforce previous research findings indicating that effective academic supervision significantly contributes to improving teacher performance (Sun et al., 2026; Zhu & Zhang, 2026; Zhu, 2026). According to Nasrullah et al. (2022), sound workplace spirituality is supported by positive work attitudes, in the form of strong individual spirituality, which, in turn, contributes to a positive organisational environment. Workplace spirituality is not related to the specific religion of each employee but rather serves as a means to enhance their performance (Ferdinan et al., 2020).

The study's results indicate that academic supervision has a positive and significant effect on spiritual work motivation. This finding can be explained through the perspective of spiritual work motivation theory, which emphasises that individuals demonstrate higher work motivation when their work is perceived as a form of worship, service, and moral responsibility to God (Chaula, 2024; Nawaz et al., 2024; Rahman & Niamul, 2022). Academic supervision grounded in Islamic spiritual values, such as exemplary behaviour, sincerity, trustworthiness, and respect for teachers' dignity, can foster teachers' inner awareness that teaching is not merely an administrative obligation but a spiritual calling. This finding aligns with studies by Mayalianti et al. (2024) and Muhammad et al. (2023), which emphasise that strengthening the spiritual dimension in the educational work environment increases motivation and work engagement among educators.

The study also demonstrates that spiritual work motivation has a positive, significant effect on teacher performance. This indicates that teachers with high spiritual work motivation tend to work with greater responsibility, commitment, and integrity, thereby enhancing the quality of their performance. These findings reinforce intrinsic motivation theory, which asserts that internal drives based on values and life meaning exert a strong influence on individual behaviour and performance (Koc, 2024). In the context of Islamic education, spiritual work

motivation serves as a moral foundation that encourages teachers to work professionally, consistently, and with a focus on the well-being of their students (Alda et al., 2025; Dijita et al., 2026; Masnan et al., 2025).

The most important finding of this study is the mediating role of spiritual work motivation in strengthening the effect of academic supervision on teacher performance. In other words, academic supervision not only has a direct impact on teacher performance but also operates indirectly by enhancing spiritual work motivation. This finding suggests that the effectiveness of academic supervision will be optimal when implemented through an approach that integrates both pedagogical and technical aspects and reinforces spiritual values. These results align with (Althubyani, 2026), who emphasises the importance of moral and spiritual leadership in educational supervision practices, as well as the study by (Chaula, 2024; Koc, 2024; Sun et al., 2026; Zhu & Zhang, 2026), which shows that motivational factors play a crucial role in strengthening the impact of educational policies or interventions on teacher performance.

The results of this study affirm that systematic, humanistic academic supervision grounded in Islamic spiritual values is an effective strategy for improving teacher performance by enhancing spiritual work motivation. These findings provide a theoretical contribution by expanding the study of academic supervision, which has traditionally focused more on the technical aspects of teaching, and offer practical implications for madrasah administrators in designing a holistic academic supervision model oriented toward the comprehensive professional development of teachers.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that academic supervision has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, both directly and indirectly through spiritual work motivation as a mediating variable. A key insight from this research is that strengthening spiritual motivation for work is a critical mechanism for enhancing the effectiveness of academic supervision. Technical supervision practices do not solely determine teacher performance improvement; they are also deeply influenced by the internalisation of spiritual values that frame work as a form of worship and responsibility. This study contributes to the literature by proposing an integrative model linking academic supervision, spiritual work motivation, and teacher performance within the context of Madrasah Diniyah Muadalah, a context underexplored in previous research.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The sample was limited to a single madrasah and included a relatively small number of respondents, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. The study also focused on a limited set of variables, without incorporating other potential determinants of teacher performance. Future research is recommended to involve a broader sample across different institutions, include additional variables such as leadership, organisational culture, and pedagogical competence, and to apply mixed-methods approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teacher performance in Islamic educational settings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Rector of Universitas Ibrahimy and Universitas Islam Balitar (UNISBA Blitar) for their institutional support and encouragement throughout the completion of this research. Appreciation is also extended to the leadership, teachers, and staff of Madrasah Diniyah Muadalah Tsanawiyah Nurul Qarnain Sukowono for their cooperation, participation, and valuable contributions during the data collection process. Their support has been essential in the successful completion of this study.

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