

Analysis of the Influence of Religiosity, Ethical Leadership, and Opportunity to Achieve on Loyalty in the Airline Industry

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of religiosity, ethical leadership, and achievement opportunities on employee loyalty in the airline industry in Indonesia. Employee loyalty is a crucial element in maintaining an organization's competitive advantage, particularly in the service industry, which heavily relies on the quality of human resources. This research adopts a quantitative approach by distributing questionnaires to 200 employees from various divisions across three national airlines. The religiosity variable was measured through the dimensions of belief, worship, and morality; ethical leadership was assessed through justice, integrity, and role-modeling; while achievement opportunity was evaluated based on perceptions of self-development opportunities and recognition. The data analysis technique used was Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results indicate that religiosity and ethical leadership have a positive and significant effect on employee loyalty. Meanwhile, achievement opportunity also has a significant effect, although its influence becomes stronger when mediated by job satisfaction. These findings suggest that organizations that support employees' religious values, implement ethical leadership, and provide room for career achievement are more likely to foster high levels of employee loyalty.

Keywords: religiosity, ethical leadership, opportunity, employee loyalty, airlines.

INTRODUCTION

The airline industry is one of the most dynamic, competitive, and challenging service sectors. Technological developments, regulatory changes, and both global and domestic economic conditions make this industry highly susceptible to fluctuations. In addition, customer expectations regarding safety, punctuality, comfort, and excellent service require every airline to innovate and maintain high service standards continuously (Kardini et al., 2024). Employee loyalty becomes one of the most invaluable assets in maintaining the sustainability and reputation of airline companies. Loyal employees not only show commitment to remain with the organization but are also willing to contribute their best, uphold work ethics, and serve as positive representatives of the company in the eyes of customers (Setiawan et al., 2021). In a high-pressure work environment such as the airline industry, employee loyalty helps create internal stability, reduce turnover, and improve team effectiveness (Sudirjo et al., 2023).

High loyalty plays an essential role in reducing turnover rates, lowering recruitment costs, and creating team stability (Erwanto et al., 2024). Furthermore, loyalty has a direct

impact on productivity and service quality, which ultimately affects customer satisfaction and the overall corporate image. One factor believed to influence employee loyalty strongly is religiosity. In the context of Indonesian work culture, which is rich in spiritual and social values, religiosity becomes a vital aspect that shapes work behavior (Majid et al., 2022). Religious values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and sincerity can strengthen work ethics and increase employees' sense of ownership toward their work. Employees with a high level of religiosity tend to uphold work ethics and feel called to contribute positively, not only for personal benefit but also for the greater good of the organization (Tawil et al., 2023).

Religiosity encompasses various dimensions, including belief, worship practices, and social behavior that reflect spiritual values in daily life. These dimensions are not only personal but also influence how individuals interact in the workplace. In the organizational context, religiosity can serve as a moral compass that guides employees' attitudes and actions toward their work, colleagues, and company rules (Rony et al., 2019). Employees with high religiosity generally demonstrate strong moral commitment, uphold integrity, and maintain harmonious work relationships. They tend to avoid unethical behavior, work with a strong sense of responsibility, and value honesty and fairness. These values not only enhance individual quality as professionals but also contribute to building a healthy organizational culture oriented toward positive values (Wibowo et al., 2023).

Leaders who practice ethical values such as fairness, integrity, and empathy can create a work environment that is respected and trusted by employees. This kind of leadership forms the foundation of strong relationships between superiors and subordinates, where employees feel respected, protected, and supported in every aspect of their work (Rony et al., 2020). The psychological safety created by ethical leadership plays a role in fostering long-term loyalty. Ethical leadership is not merely about moral examples but also about the consistency of upholding organizational values, even in difficult situations (Tannady & Dewi, 2024). Leaders who dare to stand by moral principles demonstrate a commitment not only to outcomes but also to fair and transparent processes. This creates a healthy work climate where employees feel valued and have a meaningful role. When leaders are trusted as fair and ethical figures, employees are more motivated to engage, commit, and remain loyal to the organization (Violin, 2022).

Another important factor in shaping employee loyalty is achievement opportunity, namely, the extent to which individuals feel they have the chance to grow professionally, gain recognition for their contributions, and be given space to demonstrate their full capabilities. These opportunities may include access to training, promotions, involvement in strategic projects, and a fair and transparent reward system (Mawardi et al., 2024). When employees perceive that the organization provides clear pathways for achievement, they tend to show greater commitment and a sense of belonging to the company. Employees who see career development prospects and opportunities to grow with the organization are more motivated to stay and perform optimally (Wibowo et al., 2023). Conversely, when opportunities are limited or not valued, there is a greater risk of demotivation and turnover. Therefore, achievement opportunity acts as an intrinsic reinforcement of loyalty, as employees feel their efforts and contributions are appreciated and that they have a clear future within the organization (Friscula & ME, 2024).

Although various previous studies have explored factors affecting employee loyalty, most have focused on aspects such as compensation, job satisfaction, and organizational environment. Meanwhile, the roles of religiosity, ethical leadership, and achievement opportunity remain relatively underexplored in an integrated manner, particularly in the context of the airline industry, which is characterized by high work pressure and complex service demands (Ursulu, 2016). Earlier studies tend to examine these variables separately or

within other sectors such as banking, education, or manufacturing, thereby failing to provide a comprehensive understanding of how spiritual values, ethical leadership, and career achievement contribute to employee loyalty in the airline sector (Tannady & Sitorus, 2017; Susanto et al., 2023; Kardini et al., 2024). Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by simultaneously examining the influence of the three variables in shaping airline employee loyalty. This aspect is ultimately essential for maintaining service stability and the company's competitive advantage. This study aims to empirically test the influence of religiosity, ethical leadership, and achievement opportunity on employee loyalty in the airline industry in Indonesia, and to contribute to the development of human resource management based on values and performance.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method as the primary data collection technique. The research population consisted of employees from three national airlines in Indonesia. A purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents who had worked for at least two years, held operational or administrative positions, and were willing to complete the questionnaire voluntarily. The sample in this study comprised 200 employees from various divisions across the three national airlines. The research instrument was developed based on previous literature and had been tested for validity and reliability. Data were analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method with the SmartPLS software. The analysis was conducted in two stages: the outer model was tested to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs, and the inner model was tested to examine the relationships between variables. T-statistics and p-values were used to evaluate the significance of the effects between variables in the structural model.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The respondents' demographics in this study indicate that the majority of participants were within the age range of 26–35 years, representing a productive age group with high levels of energy and work motivation. This age group typically falls within the early to mid-career stage, thus possessing strong potential for growth and development within the organization. These characteristics are relevant in assessing employee loyalty, as individuals in this career phase often consider factors such as career advancement, job stability, and leadership values when determining long-term commitment to a company. Additionally, most respondents had more than three years of work experience, suggesting that they were sufficiently familiar with the organizational culture and leadership patterns in the workplace. The majority of them held positions as operational staff, who are directly involved in the airline's service activities and serve as the frontline in maintaining service quality. The fact that most respondents had an educational background at the diploma level further indicates that they possessed a sufficient formal education to critically understand and evaluate their work environment, including aspects of religiosity, ethical leadership, and achievement opportunities offered by the organization.

The results of the outer model testing show that all indicators in this study had loading factor values above 0.7. This demonstrates that each indicator had a strong contribution to measuring its respective latent construct. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each construct exceeded the threshold of 0.5, indicating that the construct could explain more than 50% of the variance in the indicators. These findings suggest that the instruments used in this study have good convergent validity and are therefore appropriate for further analysis. In addition to validity, construct reliability was also assessed through composite reliability values. The results show that all constructs had composite reliability

values above 0.8, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the indicators within each construct. These values reinforce confidence that the research instrument is capable of producing reliable and consistent data, thereby ensuring the accuracy of measurements in explaining relationships among variables in the tested structural model.

The inner model analysis revealed that religiosity had a positive and significant effect on employee loyalty. This finding reinforces the understanding that spiritual values embraced by individuals, such as honesty, responsibility, and sincerity in work, contribute to the development of a strong emotional bond with the organization. It indicates that religiosity functions not only as a personal factor but also as a moral foundation that drives employee commitment and loyalty. In the context of Indonesia's work culture, which is deeply embedded in religious values, organizational support for religious expression can enhance employee loyalty, as employees feel that their personal beliefs align with the values upheld by the company.

Ethical leadership also proved to have a significant impact on employee loyalty. Leaders who demonstrate fairness, integrity, and accountability in their daily actions are able to create a work environment grounded in trust and mutual respect. A consistent stance in upholding organizational values positions such leaders as role models who are admired by their subordinates. Ethical leadership fosters psychological safety among employees, enabling them to feel comfortable, appreciated, and emotionally engaged in both their tasks and the organization. When employees perceive that their leaders act fairly and transparently, they tend to develop a strong emotional attachment and loyalty to the company, as they feel they are part of an organization grounded in integrity.

Achievement opportunity demonstrated a positive influence on employee loyalty, although its magnitude was relatively lower compared to other variables. This indicates that opportunities for growth, recognition, and the ability to demonstrate personal capabilities remain important factors in fostering employee commitment to the organization, even if they are not the most dominant. Interestingly, the effect of achievement opportunity on loyalty becomes stronger when mediated by job satisfaction. In other words, the perception of achievement opportunities has a greater impact when accompanied by a high level of job satisfaction. This finding opens the door for further research using a mediation approach to explore more deeply how other psychological variables, such as intrinsic motivation or trust in management, may further strengthen the relationship between achievement opportunity and employee loyalty.

This finding supports previous research suggesting that individuals tend to exhibit higher loyalty when they feel they are making meaningful contributions to the organization and are given space to grow. Feeling appreciated for one's abilities and personal achievements fosters a strong emotional attachment to the workplace and increases commitment to stay and contribute optimally. As a practical implication, organizations should design employee development strategies based on performance, such as continuous training programs and transparent internal promotion pathways. By providing fair opportunities for each employee to enhance their capacity and achieve recognition, companies not only improve productivity but also strengthen employee loyalty sustainably.

These results also affirm that employee loyalty is not solely influenced by economic factors such as salary or benefits, but also by psychological aspects and personal values. When employees feel valued as unique individuals, not merely as labor resources, they are more likely to develop long-term commitment to the organization. Recognition of identity, contribution, and personal values creates a strong emotional bond, which forms the fundamental basis of genuine loyalty. In the context of Indonesian workplace culture, which is deeply rooted in spiritual values, the role of religiosity becomes particularly relevant. A

management approach that respects and facilitates employees' religious expression, such as policies on prayer time, access to prayer rooms, or a tolerant work environment, can give deeper meaning to their work. This not only enhances job satisfaction but also strengthens loyalty, as employees feel their values are respected and aligned with the organization's principles.

Consistent ethical leadership serves as a core anchor in building and maintaining trust between superiors and subordinates. When leaders act with integrity, transparency, and a strong sense of responsibility, employees feel psychologically secure and motivated to deliver their best performance. This trust not only enhances interpersonal relationships in the workplace but also becomes a solid foundation for the formation of employee loyalty toward the organization. In a high-pressure work environment such as the airline industry, where there is high risk and demands for quick, precise service, the role of leadership becomes increasingly critical. Leaders who are able to remain composed, provide fair direction, and uphold ethics in decision-making can maintain team morale even in challenging situations. Loyalty does not grow solely from outcomes but also from how leaders treat their teams throughout every stage of the work process.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that religiosity, ethical leadership, and achievement opportunity have a significant influence on employee loyalty in the airline industry. Each variable contributes through different pathways, yet collectively forms a strong foundation for employee commitment to the organization. These findings emphasize the importance of a management approach that not only focuses on structural and economic aspects but also takes into account personal values and workplace culture. Among the three variables examined, religiosity and ethical leadership showed a more dominant influence on loyalty. This highlights that moral values and leadership role modeling play a crucial role in fostering trust and emotional attachment between employees and the organization. Leaders who uphold ethics and companies that respect employees' spiritual values are more likely to succeed in building long-term loyalty. Meanwhile, achievement opportunity remains a relevant factor, especially when supported by a fair reward system and adequate job satisfaction. The practical implication of this research is the importance of establishing leadership systems and organizational cultures that support spirituality, ethics, and employee development. To reinforce long-term loyalty, management should design HR strategies grounded in values and fairness.

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