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## **Humanizing AI-Driven Human Resource Management through Islamic Work Ethics in the E-Commerce Industry**

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### **Abstract**

The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has driven significant changes in human resource management practices within the e-commerce industry. Through algorithmic management systems, companies utilize AI to monitor, evaluate, and control employee performance in real time to enhance operational efficiency. However, the implementation of such systems has also raised various concerns regarding fairness, employee autonomy, and workplace well-being. This study aims to explore how Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) shape the responses of Muslim employees toward AI-driven management systems in the e-commerce industry in Kudus Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design. A total of 15 participants were selected through purposive sampling, consisting of five logistics couriers, five warehouse operational staff members, and five customer service representatives. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and document analysis and were subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed three major themes. First, the value of amanah (trustworthiness) encourages employees to remain honest and responsible despite being subjected to intensive digital surveillance. Second, the principle of 'adl (justice) serves as the foundation for criticism of automated evaluation systems, which are perceived as not fully reflecting fairness because they overlook the contextual realities of work. Third, the values of ihsan (excellence) and ta'awun (mutual assistance) help employees cope with algorithm-based performance pressures by maintaining work quality and strengthening solidarity among workers. This study concludes that Islamic Work Ethics function as a moral foundation capable of humanizing the implementation of AI in the workplace. The integration of AI technologies with ethical values is essential for creating human resource management systems that are not only efficient but also fair, inclusive, and sustainable.

**Keyword:** Islamic Work Ethics, Human Resource Management, Artificial Intelligence, E-Commerce.

### **Introduction**

The rapid growth of the digital economy has driven a fundamental transformation in human resource management (HRM) practices. As one of the largest e-commerce markets in Southeast Asia, Indonesia has witnessed an increasing reliance on Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies to manage complex and fast-paced business operations. AI is utilized to optimize various activities, ranging from monitoring courier routes through GPS systems and determining productivity targets for warehouse workers to conducting automated performance evaluations of customer service personnel. The adoption of these technologies enables



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companies to enhance efficiency, accuracy, and decision-making speed within highly competitive business environments. Nevertheless, despite these advantages, new challenges have emerged concerning employment relations, employee well-being, and ethical issues associated with algorithm-driven workforce management (Ghaly, 2024).

This phenomenon is commonly referred to as algorithmic management, a workforce management practice that relies on algorithms to automatically monitor, evaluate, and control employee activities. Such systems allow organizations to track worker productivity in real time; however, they may simultaneously reduce individual autonomy and increase work-related pressure due to continuous digital surveillance. Previous studies have demonstrated that algorithmic management frequently raises concerns regarding organizational justice, decision-making transparency, and the balance between productivity demands and employees' human needs. These challenges are particularly significant in contexts where the workforce is strongly influenced by religious values in daily life. As the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia represents a setting in which Islamic values not only shape social behavior but also influence how individuals perceive work, responsibility, and their relationships with organizations. The concept of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) regards work as a form of worship that should be carried out professionally, honestly, responsibly, and with a commitment to collective welfare. Values such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), *'adl* (justice), *ihsan* (excellence), and diligence constitute the fundamental principles for fostering productive and morally grounded work behavior (Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008).

The literature indicates that Islamic Work Ethics are positively associated with organizational commitment, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, and employee performance (Udin et al., 2022; Yusof et al., 2023). Furthermore, a systematic review examining numerous Scopus-indexed studies found that the implementation of Islamic Work Ethics contributes significantly to leadership development, employee behavior, and overall organizational effectiveness (Atiya et al., 2024). However, the emergence of AI and algorithmic management introduces new challenges to the application of these values. The algorithmic orientation toward efficiency, productivity, and data-driven performance measurement may conflict with principles of justice, employee well-being, and respect for human dignity, which constitute the core of Islamic Work Ethics. In this regard, a deeper understanding is needed of how Muslim employees interpret and apply Islamic values when operating within increasingly digitalized work environments. Ghaly (2024) argues that the expansion of AI in the workplace necessitates the reformulation of ethical frameworks capable of preserving moral values without hindering technological innovation.

Research on Islamic Work Ethics has largely focused on the contexts of Islamic banking, education, and religious organizations. Studies specifically examining the experiences of Muslim employees working within AI-driven environments, particularly in Indonesia's e-commerce sector, remain limited. This gap is noteworthy given that the e-commerce industry is among the sectors most heavily dependent on algorithmic management practices for workforce administration. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by exploring the empirical experiences of Muslim employees in Indonesian e-commerce companies as they navigate AI-controlled work demands and examining how Islamic Work Ethics shape their responses to algorithm-based management systems.

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### **Digital Human Resource Management in Indonesia's E-Commerce Industry**



Digital transformation has reshaped the paradigm of human resource management (HRM) from conventional approaches toward data-driven and algorithm-based management systems. In the e-commerce industry, Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are not only employed to support business operations but have also become key instruments for managing the workforce through practices commonly referred to as algorithmic management. This system enables organizations to monitor, evaluate, and make decisions regarding employee performance automatically based on data collected in real time (Meijerink & Bondarouk, 2023).

Digital workforce management can generally be categorized into two major groups of employees: white-collar workers and blue-collar workers. White-collar employees include customer service representatives, administrative staff, and human resource personnel whose work activities are predominantly conducted through digital platforms. The performance of these employees is typically assessed using algorithm-based indicators, such as response speed, case resolution rates, customer satisfaction levels, and sentiment analysis of workplace communications. AI technologies enable organizations to continuously evaluate productivity and provide automated feedback based on predetermined performance targets (Vrontis et al., 2022). In contrast, blue-collar workers, such as delivery couriers and fulfillment center staff, are subjected to more intensive monitoring of their physical activities. GPS systems, time-tracking technologies, and operational applications are used to monitor employee locations, task completion times, the number of processed packages, and compliance with schedules established by algorithmic systems. This management model offers advantages in terms of operational efficiency; however, it may also generate increased work pressure, reduced employee autonomy, and heightened perceptions of unfairness when organizational decisions rely exclusively on automated systems (Kellogg et al., 2020). Previous studies suggest that algorithmic management creates employment relationships that differ substantially from those found in traditional management systems. Algorithms function not merely as decision-support tools but also as supervisors, evaluators, and regulators of employee behavior. While such arrangements can enhance organizational productivity, they simultaneously raise concerns regarding transparency, accountability, and employees' psychological well-being (Möhlmann et al., 2021). There is a growing need for approaches capable of balancing technological efficiency with human-centered values to ensure the sustainable implementation of digital human resource management.

### **Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) as a Moral Foundation for Employees**

Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped the paradigm of human resource management (HRM), shifting it from conventional approaches toward data-driven and algorithm-based management systems. Within the e-commerce industry, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has evolved beyond a mere operational support tool to become a central mechanism for workforce management through practices commonly referred to as algorithmic management. Such systems enable organizations to monitor, evaluate, and make employment-related decisions automatically based on real-time data, thereby enhancing efficiency and responsiveness in workforce administration (Meijerink & Bondarouk, 2023).

Digital workforce management generally encompasses two primary categories of employees: white-collar and blue-collar workers. White-collar employees, including customer service representatives, administrative personnel, and human resource staff, perform most of their duties through digital platforms. Their performance is typically assessed using algorithm-

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driven metrics, such as response time, case resolution rates, customer satisfaction scores, and sentiment analysis of workplace communications. AI technologies facilitate continuous performance monitoring and provide automated feedback based on predefined productivity targets, enabling organizations to optimize employee performance more effectively (Vrontis et al., 2022).



Blue-collar workers such as delivery couriers and fulfillment center employees, are subjected to more intensive forms of monitoring that focus on physical work activities. GPS tracking systems, time-monitoring applications, and operational platforms are employed to supervise employee locations, task completion times, package processing volumes, and compliance with algorithmically determined schedules. Although this management model offers substantial gains in operational efficiency, it may also increase work-related pressure, reduce employee autonomy, and generate perceptions of organizational unfairness, particularly when managerial decisions rely heavily on automated systems (Kellogg et al., 2020).

Existing studies indicate that algorithmic management creates employment relationships that differ significantly from those found in traditional management settings. Algorithms function not only as decision-support mechanisms but also as supervisors, evaluators, and regulators of employee behavior. While these systems can enhance organizational productivity and operational control, they simultaneously raise important concerns regarding transparency, accountability, and employees' psychological well-being (Möhlmann et al., 2021). Consequently, there is an increasing need for management approaches that balance technological efficiency with human-centered values to ensure the sustainable and ethical implementation of digital human resource management.

## Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of Muslim employees working under Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven management systems in the e-commerce sector. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables the exploration of participants' meanings, perceptions, and subjective experiences regarding complex social phenomena within their real-life contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). The case study design was considered appropriate for comprehensively examining the interaction between algorithmic management practices and the implementation of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) within e-commerce workplaces in Kudus Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique that involves choosing informants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2015). The study involved 15 Muslim employees working in e-commerce companies and their supporting logistics ecosystem in Kudus Regency. The participants consisted of five logistics couriers, five warehouse or fulfillment center operational staff members, and five customer service representatives. All participants had at least one year of work experience and had been exposed to AI-enabled work systems or algorithm-based management practices.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted both face-to-face and online. This method enabled the researcher to obtain rich and detailed information regarding participants' experiences, perceptions, and adaptation strategies in responding to AI-driven work demands (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). In addition to interviews, document analysis was conducted on employment policies, standard operating procedures, and workplace guidelines related to the use of digital technologies within e-commerce organizations. The use

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of multiple data sources was intended to enhance the credibility and validity of the findings through data triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interview data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using Thematic Analysis as developed by Braun and Clarke (2022). The analytical process consisted of six stages: data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition and naming, and report production. This analytical approach was chosen because of its effectiveness in identifying patterns of meaning emerging from participants' experiences regarding tensions, negotiations, and accommodations between AI-driven management systems and the principles of Islamic Work Ethics, including amanah (trustworthiness), 'adl (justice), and ihsan (excellence). To ensure trustworthiness, the study employed member checking and source triangulation techniques to verify that the researcher's interpretations accurately reflected the participants' experiences and perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Amanah as Moral Self-Regulation in AI-Driven Work Environments**

The interview findings revealed that the implementation of AI-driven management systems within the e-commerce sector has created distinctive workplace experiences for employees. Logistics couriers and warehouse operational staff reported that their work activities were continuously monitored through digital applications, GPS tracking systems, and real-time performance indicators. Several participants indicated that these systems often conveyed the impression that organizations placed greater trust in algorithm-generated data than in human judgment. This perception emerged when performance scores were automatically reduced or warning notifications were issued whenever employees deviated from predetermined routes, despite operational circumstances or personal needs that could not be adequately recognized by the algorithm. These findings are consistent with previous studies on algorithmic management, which suggest that intensive digital surveillance may lead to feelings of diminished autonomy and weakened trust between employees and organizations (Kellogg et al., 2020; Möhlmann et al., 2021).

However, Muslim participants did not perceive this situation solely as an external pressure to be passively endured. Instead, they reinterpreted the Islamic value of amanah (trustworthiness) as a moral foundation for carrying out their work responsibilities. For most participants, honesty and accountability at work were not primarily driven by the presence of GPS tracking, surveillance cameras, or automated evaluation systems. Rather, these behaviors were rooted in the belief that every action would ultimately be accountable before Allah SWT. This spiritual awareness reflects the concept of muraqabah, namely the consciousness of being constantly observed by God, which encourages individuals to maintain integrity in all aspects of their work and daily activities (Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008). One courier explained that although the application continuously monitored his location and movements, his primary motivation for working honestly was not to avoid penalties imposed by the system but to ensure that his income was earned through lawful and ethically accountable means. Similar perspectives were expressed by warehouse employees, who viewed productivity targets and digital monitoring as integral components of their professional responsibilities while continuing to regard amanah as the principal guideline shaping their workplace behavior. Compliance with organizational regulations was therefore understood not merely as an administrative obligation but also as a moral and spiritual responsibility.

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These findings suggest that Islamic Work Ethics function as an internal mechanism that enables employees to maintain commitment and integrity within increasingly digitalized workplaces. Whereas AI-driven systems rely primarily on external control through surveillance and performance measurement, the value of amanah provides a form of self-regulation grounded in religious consciousness. In this context, employees do not work responsibly solely because they are monitored by technology; rather, they perceive their work as a trust entrusted to them, which must be fulfilled honestly in order to earn a lawful (halalan tayyiban) livelihood for themselves and their families. This finding reinforces the argument that Islamic Work Ethics can serve as a source of moral resilience in addressing the pressures associated with contemporary algorithmic management practices (Atiya et al., 2024; Ghaly, 2024).

### **Challenging Algorithmic Fairness: The Principle of ‘Adl in Automated Performance Evaluation Systems**

The findings revealed that AI-based performance evaluation systems were not always perceived positively by employees, particularly customer service representatives. Participants reported that the performance assessment systems implemented by their organizations relied heavily on quantitative indicators, such as customer satisfaction scores, response speed, case resolution rates, and customer ratings following service interactions. Although these systems were designed to enhance objectivity and efficiency, several participants argued that algorithms were often unable to fully capture the complexity of situations encountered in their daily work. As a result, employees could receive unfavorable performance evaluations despite making substantial efforts to provide effective solutions for customers who expressed complaints in emotional or aggressive ways. This finding highlights the limitations of AI in recognizing the social and emotional contexts that frequently constitute an essential component of customer service work (Meijerink & Bondarouk, 2023).

Several participants further indicated that AI-driven evaluation systems tended to prioritize outcomes as the primary measure of performance while paying insufficient attention to the processes undertaken by employees. Customer complaints that remained unresolved due to factors beyond the employee’s control could still result in lower individual performance scores. Such circumstances generated feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction, as employees perceived that they were being evaluated according to parameters that did not adequately reflect their efforts or the quality of service they had delivered. These findings are consistent with previous studies suggesting that algorithmic management systems may generate perceptions of organizational injustice when decisions are produced through opaque processes with limited opportunities for human intervention or correction (Kellogg et al., 2020; Vrontis et al., 2022).

Participants interpreted these experiences through the lens of ‘adl (justice), a central principle of Islamic Work Ethics. For them, justice does not merely imply equal treatment among employees but also requires consideration of individual circumstances, contextual factors, and proportional contributions. When AI systems generate evaluations solely on the basis of numerical data without adequately accounting for workplace realities, employees may perceive such decisions as a form of zulm (injustice). From an Islamic perspective, justice requires a balance between outcomes and processes, as well as between formal rules and the contextual conditions that shape human actions (Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008). Interestingly, participants did not reject the use of AI in performance evaluation. On the contrary, they acknowledged that technology can contribute to more consistent assessment standards and reduce personal biases from supervisors. However, they emphasized the importance of human involvement in the final

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decision-making process. Most participants expressed a desire for evaluation mechanisms that would allow employees to provide clarification or challenge algorithm-generated assessments. This expectation reflects the value of shura (consultation), a principle of dialogue and deliberation that characterizes decision-making within Islamic traditions. For employees, the availability of appeal procedures or opportunities for discussion with management would create space to explain factors that cannot be adequately captured by AI systems, thereby fostering more equitable and humane decisions (Ghaly, 2024).

These findings suggest that the principle of ‘adl serves as a moral framework through which employees assess the legitimacy of AI-driven management systems. Justice is not understood solely as algorithmic objectivity; rather, it encompasses respect for human dignity, contextual sensitivity, and opportunities for individuals to express their perspectives within the evaluation process. Consequently, the integration of artificial intelligence with human oversight (human-in-the-loop) becomes essential to ensure that performance evaluation systems are not only efficient but also aligned with the ethical values of fairness upheld by Muslim employees. This finding supports the argument that the successful implementation of AI in human resource management depends not only on technological sophistication but also on its capacity to accommodate ethical principles and organizational justice within contemporary workplaces (Atiya et al., 2024; Meijerink & Bondarouk, 2023).

### **Sustaining the Spirit of Ihsan in a Burnout-Prone Work Culture**

The findings revealed that one of the most significant challenges faced by operational employees in the e-commerce industry is the increasing productivity demands imposed through algorithm-driven management systems. Warehouse and fulfillment center staff in Kudus Regency reported that package processing and sorting targets were periodically increased based on system calculations designed to maximize operational efficiency. In practice, algorithms determined the number of packages that had to be completed within a specified period by analyzing historical productivity data, order volumes, and organizational operational capacity. Although this approach was perceived as effective in enhancing organizational performance, participants felt that continuously escalating targets often failed to account for human physical and psychological limitations.

Most participants described a fast-paced work environment characterized by high accuracy requirements and limited tolerance for delays. During major promotional campaigns, such as national discount events and online shopping festivals, workloads increased substantially, requiring employees to process thousands of packages within a single work shift. Such conditions frequently resulted in physical exhaustion, including muscle pain, sleep disturbances, and reduced physical endurance. Furthermore, the constant pressure to meet daily performance targets contributed to emotional exhaustion and prolonged stress. These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that algorithmic management systems may increase the risk of burnout by continuously encouraging employees to maintain high productivity levels without sufficient opportunities for recovery (Wood et al., 2019; Caines et al., 2023). Within this context, the value of ihsan emerged as an important moral resource. Participants interpreted ihsan not merely as striving for excellence in work performance but also as demonstrating sincerity, professionalism, and spiritual awareness in carrying out occupational responsibilities. Several participants explained that they remained committed to maintaining work quality despite intense performance pressures because they viewed diligent work as a form of worship. One participant noted that work was not undertaken solely to satisfy organizational demands but also to fulfill

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responsibilities as a provider for the family. Consequently, achieving work targets was perceived as part of a meaningful effort (ikhtiar) that carried religious significance when performed honestly and responsibly.

Interestingly, participants did not interpret *ihsan* as an obligation to work indefinitely at the expense of their health and well-being. Instead, they understood it as the ability to deliver their best performance within their capacities while maintaining a balance between work, health, and personal life. This perspective is consistent with Islamic teachings that emphasize moderation and discourage excessive behavior (*ghuluw*). To manage workplace pressures, participants reported employing various coping strategies, including strengthening their work intentions, maintaining religious practices, and cultivating positive relationships with colleagues. These findings suggest that spiritual values function as coping mechanisms that help employees navigate increasingly demanding organizational environments (Beekun, 2012).

Another notable finding was the emergence of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance) among employees. Although algorithmic systems tend to encourage individual competition through productivity rankings and personal performance targets, participants demonstrated a strong tendency to foster collective solidarity. When colleagues struggled to meet daily targets, other employees frequently volunteered to assist with their workload to ensure that team objectives could still be achieved. Such practices occurred voluntarily and were not formally mandated by the organization. For participants, workplace success was measured not only by individual achievements but also by the willingness to support colleagues facing difficulties.

The value of *ta'awun* identified in this study reflects a form of moral resistance to the logic of individualism often embedded within algorithmic work systems. In many digital organizations, algorithms are designed to optimize individual productivity through detailed performance measurement, potentially encouraging employees to prioritize personal achievements over collective interests. However, the Muslim employees in this study demonstrated that religious values can foster a different social orientation. They regarded helping colleagues as an act of virtue and a practical manifestation of Islamic teachings concerning brotherhood (*ukhuwah*) and cooperation in promoting goodness. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that Islamic Work Ethics contribute to prosocial behavior, organizational solidarity, and commitment to collective well-being (Rokhman, 2010; Yousef, 2001).

Several participants further described their work activities as a form of economic *jihād*, referring to a sincere effort to earn a lawful livelihood while improving the welfare of their families. This interpretation provided psychological strength that enabled them to endure high levels of work-related pressure. When algorithmic targets were perceived as sources of stress, spiritual orientations toward work functioned as sources of meaning that strengthened employees' psychological resilience. In this sense, *ihsan* not only encouraged high-quality work performance but also enabled employees to discover a deeper purpose behind their economic activities. Overall, the findings suggest that *ihsan* serves as a moral foundation that enables employees to sustain work quality within organizational environments that may otherwise contribute to burnout. Furthermore, the practice of *ta'awun* demonstrates that Islamic Work Ethics extend beyond individual achievement to encompass the strengthening of social solidarity. Amid the dominance of AI-driven systems that frequently emphasize efficiency and competition, Islamic values create space for more humane and collective forms of workplace behavior, thereby helping employees maintain a balance between productivity, well-being, and moral responsibility.

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## Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the practice of algorithmic management within the Indonesian e-commerce industry have created new dynamics in human resource management. Algorithm-based systems are proven to enhance operational efficiency through real-time performance monitoring, target setting, and more measurable productivity evaluations. The findings of this research identify three main themes. First, the value of amanah (trustworthiness) serves as a moral foundation that helps workers maintain honesty and responsibility amidst stringent surveillance via GPS, work applications, and digital monitoring systems. Workers do not merely perform out of fear of algorithmic sanctions, but due to a spiritual consciousness that work is a trust to be accounted for before the Creator. Second, the principle of 'adl (justice) drives workers to critique AI-based evaluation systems, which are deemed incapable of understanding the context and complexity of human labor. Informants express the need for more humane evaluation mechanisms through managerial involvement and spaces for deliberation (musyawarah), ensuring that decisions are not only technically objective but also morally just. Third, the values of ihsan (excellence) and ta'awun (mutual cooperation) serve as sources of moral resilience in facing a work culture that potentially induces burnout. Workers continuously strive to deliver their best performance while simultaneously building solidarity by assisting colleagues facing difficulties amidst high productivity demands.

This study confirms that the Islamic Work Ethic does not act as a barrier to digital transformation; rather, it serves as a moral framework capable of humanizing the use of technology in the workplace. The values of amanah, 'adl, ihsan, and ta'awun provide an ethical orientation that assists workers in balancing productivity demands with social and spiritual responsibilities. A human-in-the-loop approach, algorithmic transparency, and participatory evaluation mechanisms can serve as vital steps toward creating a work environment that is not only efficient and competitive, but also fair, sustainable, and aligned with the values held by Muslim workers in Indonesia.

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