Al-Tijary
Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis Islam

2025, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 103-122

P-ISSN: 2460-9404; E-ISSN: 2460-9412
DOI: https://doi.org/10.21093/at.v10i2.9832

A Bibliometric Analysis of Islamic Work Ethics: Research Trends and Future Directions

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Abstract

Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) has been the focus of growing research, including its influence on organizational performance, leadership, and the development of work culture based on Islamic values. This study maps the trends, main themes, and research contributions on Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) globally through bibliometric analysis of scientific publications in 2015–2024 using Publish or Perish and VOSviewer. The results show three main phases of IWE development: (1) conceptual exploration in the Islamic finance and education sector, (2) application in Islamic value-based organizational management, and (3) its impact on performance, job satisfaction, and organizational justice. Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan are the largest contributors, focusing on education, MSMEs, and Islamic banking. The study also uncovered research gaps, such as the global application of IWE, cross-cultural relations, and its influence on multicultural generations. This research offers strategic directions for the development of IWE in the Islamic education sector and modern organizations.

Keywords: *bibliometric analysis, islamic education, islamic work ethics, organizational performance, research trends.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) is a value system rooted in Islamic principles, which emphasizes honesty, responsibility, justice, and hard work as a guide in carrying out daily activities, including in the workplace, as well as instilling spiritual values into professional behavior (Al-Shamali et al., 2021). In the context of organizations, the implementation of IWE not only impacts individuals, but is also able to form an ethical work culture, improve organizational performance, and promote long-term sustainability (Aldulaimi, 2016a). This makes

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IWE relevant in the midst of the complexity of the modern world of work, which is faced with the challenges of globalization, digital transformation, and ethical issues.

Islamic Work Ethics can affect individual performance, because it is an attitude that arises from the will and self-awareness based on a work-oriented cultural value system. Islamic work ethic is based on the cultural values that shape Islamic Work Ethics in each individual, so that it is able to significantly influence their performance (Aini, 2020). In addition to being related to individual performance, Islamic work ethics also significantly shape organizational culture and shared values among Muslim employees, as shown in research on the Impact of Islamic Work Ethics on Organizational Culture among Muslim Staff (Chupradit et al., 2022).

One of the important aspects of Islamic Work Ethics is religiosity. Religiosity based on religious values has a positive impact in the workplace. A Muslim who is aware of the responsibility of the hereafter will tend to avoid unethical behavior, because he understands that every action will be judged. Work done with ethics and integrity reflects *piety* or awareness of God (Mahan & Bhatti, 2019). Therefore, religiosity plays an important role in guiding individual behavior and decisions, both in daily life and in the world of work.

Along with the increasing attention to the importance of spiritual values in organizations, academic studies on IWE have also continued to grow. Several bibliometric studies have been conducted prior to this one. For instance, Alam *et al.* (Alam et al., 2024) in their study titled "Developments and Themes in Islamic Work Ethic Studies: A Bibliometric Analysis" explored general themes and trends in IWE. Christiyanto *et al.* (Christiyanto et al., 2022a) focused on Islamic Work Ethics specifically within Indonesia's Islamic Microfinance Institutions, while Johara *et al.* (Johara et al., 2023) provided a broader bibliometric review of IWE literature in the Journal of Economic Cooperation and Development3. These studies contributed significantly to understanding the structure and thematic direction of IWE literature.

Previous research has shown that IWE has a significant influence on various aspects of the organization, such as employee performance and job satisfaction (Saban et al., 2020), and ethical leadership (Raja et al., 2019). In the Islamic education sector, IWE plays an important role in shaping teacher behavior and creating an ethical, innovative, and productive learning environment (Balakrishnan, 2017)(ElKaleh, 2019). (Naeem & Rashid, 2022) research concluded that Islamic Work Ethics has a significant influence on employee performance. (Mehnaz et al., 2020) also found that Islamic Work Ethics improves teacher performance in educational institutions, while (Saban et al., 2020) shows the positive influence of Islamic Work Ethics on employee performance, both directly and through job satisfaction. (Zahra, 2016) added that the application of Islamic values, such as honesty and integrity, correlates with improved individual performance among administrative staff in Malaysia. (Idrus et al., 2023) stated that Islamic Work Ethics, along with value-based leadership such as honesty and responsibility, increase organizational commitment and employee performance. (Setiawan et al., 2019) shows that Islamic Work Ethics has an effect on job satisfaction and performance at Bank Rakyat Indonesia Syariah. (Din et al., 2019) supports these findings by showing a positive correlation between Islamic Work Ethic, intrinsic motivation, and job performance in university faculties in Pakistan.

However, the empirical studies above are largely confined to specific sectors and countries and predominantly examine performance-related outcomes, so they explain what IWE influences but not how the field has evolved. Meanwhile, previous bibliometric studies are either limited to a single sector and country or offer only a general mapping of publication performance

and themes. The novelty of this study lies in four contributions: (1) identifying the thematic phases of IWE research, from conceptual exploration to practical application and the analysis of organizational impact; (2) linking the contributions of leading countries to their sectoral focus, including the perspective of Muslim-minority contexts; (3) mapping the methodological approaches used in IWE research; and (4) revealing underexplored areas, particularly Islamic education, cross-cultural application, digitalization, and sustainability, as the basis for a future research agenda.

Given the expanding volume of literature, a bibliometric method was chosen for this study to provide a systematic, quantitative, and visual representation of the evolution of IWE research. Bibliometric analysis allows for the identification of trends, influential authors, thematic clusters, and research gaps in a way that traditional literature reviews may not. It enables researchers to assess the development and structure of the field based on empirical publication data, offering clearer insights into how the scholarly conversation on IWE has progressed and where it may be headed. Accordingly, this research aims to map the development of IWE literature, including its contribution to the Islamic education sector, as well as provide insight into the future direction of research. By understanding research patterns and trends, this study is expected to support the development of IWE as a relevant framework in a variety of modern organizational contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Islamic Work Ethics

Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) is a value system grounded in Islamic principles that emphasize honesty, responsibility, justice, and diligence as guiding principles in professional life (Al-Shamali et al., 2021; Aldulaimi, 2016). IWE integrates faith-based morality into daily work practices, positioning labor as both a form of worship and a moral duty. Mahan and Bhatti (2019) argue that religiosity plays a vital role in IWE since individuals who are conscious of divine accountability are more likely to avoid unethical behavior and act with integrity.

Aldulaimi (2016) contrasts IWE with Western ethical paradigms such as the Protestant Work Ethic, explaining that IWE is intention-centered (*niyyah*-oriented) and spiritually motivated. Mohammad and Quoquab (2016) further assert that IWE's foundation in Islamic teachings distinguishes it by linking productivity with spirituality, where success is defined not only by material achievement but also by spiritual fulfillment.

IWE and Individual or Organizational Performance

A growing body of empirical studies has established that IWE significantly improves both individual and organizational performance. Naeem and Rashid (2022) found that IWE enhances employee performance and reduces counterproductive work behavior, mediated by job satisfaction. Similarly, Mehnaz et al. (2020) and Saban et al. (2020) confirmed that adherence to Islamic ethical values positively influences motivation, satisfaction, and performance among teachers and employees.

Athar et al. (2016) demonstrated that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between IWE and organizational commitment. Idrus et al. (2023) found that Islamic leadership and IWE jointly improve organizational loyalty and performance among government employees. Setiawan et al. (2019) reported similar results in the Islamic banking sector, showing that IWE correlates positively with both employee satisfaction and performance.

Further evidence from Din et al. (2019) and Hamzah et al. (2021) reveals that IWE strengthens intrinsic motivation and builds an Islamic organizational culture that supports productivity and ethical conduct. Collectively, these findings suggest that IWE enhances both personal morality and collective organizational outcomes.

IWE, Leadership, and Organizational Culture

Leadership plays a pivotal role in implementing and sustaining IWE within organizations. Raja et al. (2019) and Ebrahimi et al. (2019) observed that ethical and servant leadership foster positive workplace attitudes and satisfaction through the integration of IWE principles. Esenaliev and Ferguson (2022) further confirmed that IWE-based leadership promotes a collaborative and ethical organizational culture.

Permana et al. (2019) found that leadership styles emphasizing Islamic values—justice, discipline, and trustworthiness—directly influence employee performance. Zahra (2016) and Gheitani et al. (2018) emphasized honesty and integrity as central tenets of IWE that significantly improve moral conduct, satisfaction, and commitment among employees.

IWE in Education and Social Contexts

In education, IWE contributes to character formation and professional ethics among educators and students. Balakrishnan (2017) argued that moral education grounded in Islamic values is essential for sustaining harmony in multicultural societies. ElKaleh (2019) showed that leadership in educational institutions that integrates Islamic ethical values fosters ethical, innovative, and productive learning environments. Mehnaz et al. (2020) also found that teachers who adhere to Islamic work ethics perform better and display stronger moral commitment.

Anggadwita et al. (2021) explored the application of IWE in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) through the *humane entrepreneurship* approach, which emphasizes compassion, sustainability, and social responsibility in Islamic education and entrepreneurship.

Global and Sectoral Perspectives on IWE

Globally, IWE research has been concentrated in Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, and several Middle Eastern countries (Musa et al., 2020; Hassi et al., 2021; Almasradi, 2024). In Saudi Arabia, IWE is closely linked with employee identification and social responsibility (Ali et al., 2023), while Badar et al. (2024) demonstrated in Qatar that the employee relations climate mediates IWE's effect on organizational performance.

In Egypt, Helfaya et al. (2018) and Abdelzaher et al. (2019) revealed that Islamic ethical principles foster accountability and transparency in financial institutions. Özcan and Özdemir (2022) conducted a content analysis mapping the conceptual development of IWE globally, showing its evolution from normative ethics toward managerial and performance-oriented frameworks.

METHOD

This study uses a bibliometric approach to analyze trends, patterns, and contributions in literature related to Islamic Work Ethics (IWE). This approach aims to comprehensively map scientific publications, providing insight into key themes, collaboration networks, and potential future research directions. Data was collected from major scientific databases, namely Scopus and Web of Science, which include journals, conference proceedings, and IWE-related publications. The search process was carried out using keywords such as "Islamic Work Ethics", "IWE", and

"Islamic Ethics". The published time range analyzed is 2015–2024 to reflect the latest developments in IWE research. Relevant articles are filtered based on inclusion criteria, only English-language publications with complete bibliographic data are included, while articles that do not meet these criteria are excluded. From the search using the Publish or Perish tool, as many as 200 journals were found, and after being selected based on relevance, 180 journals were used for further analysis.

The collected data was analyzed using the VOSviewer software, as suggested by Van Eck & Waltman (Van Eck & Waltman, 2023), to generate visualizations of publication trends, inter-author relationships, and key themes. The study analyzed the number of annual publications, geographic contributions, dominant keywords, and the most productive journals and authors. Data visualization is carried out through network maps and density maps to understand research distribution patterns and inter-topic relationships. This analysis identifies three main phases of IWE research development, namely conceptual exploration, practical application, and organizational impact analysis (Aldulaimi, 2016a).

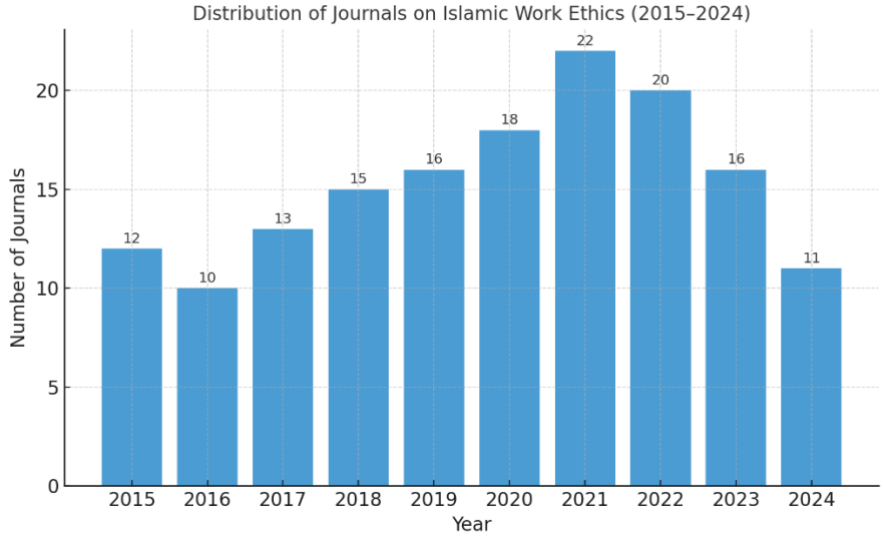
In addition, this research also reveals research gaps, such as the application of IWE in the global, cross-cultural, and Islamic education sectors (Mohammad & Quoquab, 2016). To ensure the validity of the results, an evaluation is carried out on articles with high citations to ensure the accuracy of the data and the relevance of the findings. The results of the analysis are compared with the existing literature to identify new contributions and future research directions. With this approach, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to mapping IWE literature and open opportunities for further development, especially in the context of Islamic education and modern organizations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Number of Publications and Trends in Islamic Work Ethics Topics

Figure 1. Distribution of Journals on Islamic Work Ethics (2015-2024)

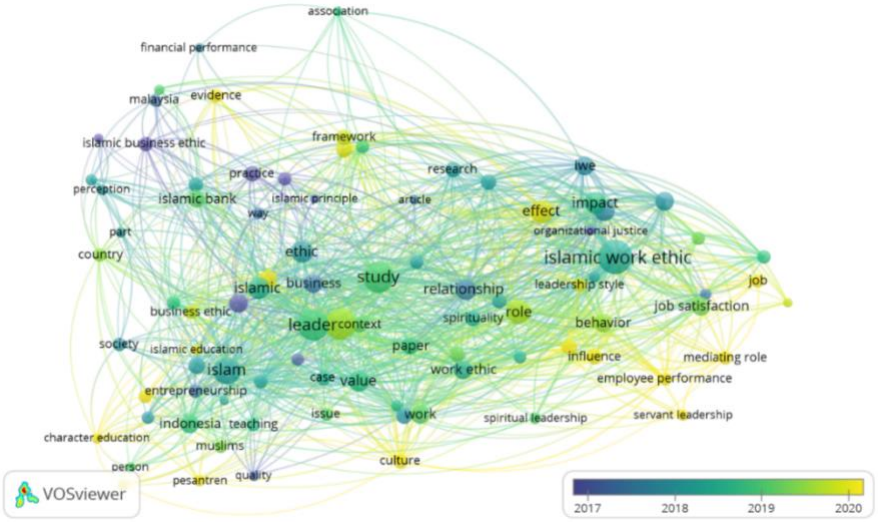


Source: Research data processed

Based on the search results using *Publish or Perish* in the range of 2015 to 2024, as many as 200 journals were found that discussed the topic of Islamic work ethics. After a screening

process based on certain criteria, the number of relevant journals narrowed to 153. These findings show that there is considerable attention to the study of Islamic work ethics in that time span. Figure 1, illustrates a significant increase in the number of journals on *Islamic Work Ethics* (IWE), especially in the period 2018 to 2021. This increase reflects global attention to ongoing work ethics issues as well as the relevance of the application of Islamic values in modern management. The focus of the IWE study during this period can be further analyzed through the visualization of *the overlay network* generated using VOSviewer, as shown below. This visualization provides an in-depth overview of the main themes and inter-concept relationships in IWE-related research.

Figure 2. Bibliometric Visualization of IWE Concept Networks (2017-2020)



Source: Processed using VOSviewer

Based on the visualization of *the overlay network* from VOSviewer, the development of research topics related to *Islamic Work Ethics* (IWE) can be divided into three phases or periods. In the 2017-2018 period, research tends to be theoretical, focusing on the explanation of IWE values and their application in traditional sectors such as Islamic finance and education. Current studies highlight more on the conceptual foundations and early applications of IWE in specific sectors. The dominant keywords include Islamic bank (Gilani, 2015), teaching, education (Balakrishnan, 2017), and framework (Fares & Noordin, 2016). Geographical contexts such as Indonesia and Malaysia often arise, especially in the context of Islamic education and the Islamic finance sector.

In the 2018–2019 period, research began to explore the impact of IWE in organizational management and business development based on Islamic values. Research Focus This period shows the transition to the practical application of IWE in organizations and businesses. Keywords that start to appear frequently: Leadership (Permana et al., 2019), entrepreneurship (Lisnawati & Ahman, 2019), relationship (Gheitani et al., 2018), culture (Zarnegarian & Azizi, 2019), and Islamic education (ElKaleh, 2019). Research begins to highlight the role of IWE in leadership and the context of organizational culture, as well as its relevance to Islamic business ethics.

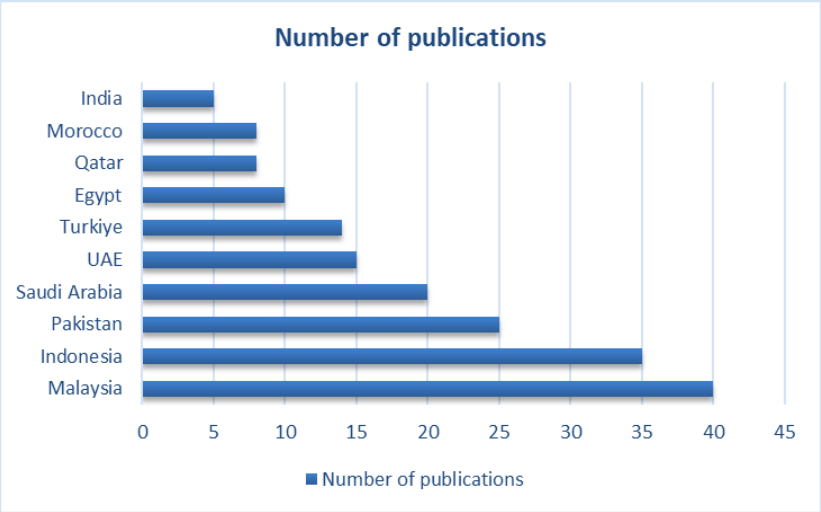
In the 2019–2020 period, the focus of research began to shift towards more specific organizational outcomes, such as employee performance and job satisfaction, with *Islamic Work*

Ethic (IWE) playing a key role in influencing these variables. The research focus of this period highlights the impact of IWE on employee performance**,** organizational fairness, and leadership style**.** Key keywords: *Job satisfaction* (Saban et al., 2020), *employee performance* (Hamzah et al., 2021), *mediating role* (Al-Douri et al., 2020), *organizational justice* (Raza et al., 2020), dan *servant leadership* (Ebrahimi et al., 2019). *Impact* and *effect* show attention to the real impact of IWE in the context of the organization. Research has also begun to examine the role of IWE mediation and moderation in various relationships between variables.

Countries Most Contributing to IWE Research

A country's contribution to research on Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) usually reflects academic interest, industry needs, and cultural relevance to the concept. Countries with a majority Muslim population or academic communities active in the field of Islamic ethics tend to make a significant contribution in the number of publications. In addition, institutional support, international partnerships, and access to research resources play a role in determining the volume of publications. The analysis of the distribution of country contributions can provide in-depth insights into the development of IWE topics globally as well as identify the countries that are key actors in this research. The following are the countries that contributed to the research on Islamic Work Ethics.

Figure 3. Distribution of IWE Publications by Country



Source: Processed from research data, 2024

Research on Islamic work ethics (IWE) shows a varied distribution based on country contributions and sectoral focus. Malaysia is the main contributor with around 40 articles, the majority of which discuss work ethics in the Islamic banking sector and higher education (Musa, Ismail, et al., 2020) Indonesia, with about 35 articles, highlights the implementation of IWE in Islamic boarding schools, MSMEs, and the government sector (Anggadwita et al., 2021a) Pakistan contributed about 25 articles examining the influence of IWE in organizations, especially in the education and public service sectors (Athar et al., 2016).

Between 2017 and 2024, Saudi Arabia has produced about 20 scholarly works on Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), focusing on its application within Islamic banking and business sectors. Studies such as Almasradi (Almasradi, 2024) and Ali et al., (Ali, AL-Aali, et al., 2023) reveal that IWE principles strongly influence employee behavior, organizational identification, and social

responsibility—particularly highlighting the rising participation of women in the workforce. In the UAE, around 15 studies emphasize how IWE integration into management practices strengthens employee motivation, commitment, and workplace harmony in both public and private institutions. Similarly, research in Turkey—around 15 articles—examines the interplay between IWE, entrepreneurship, and family business ethics, as shown by Özcan & Özdemir (Özcan & Özdemir, 2022),who discuss the evolution of IWE toward understanding ethical leadership and organizational culture in Islamic enterprises.

Egypt has contributed around ten studies focusing on how Islamic values and ethics enhance institutional performance and governance. Scholars like Helfaya et al., (Helfaya et al., 2018) and Abdelzaher et al., (Abdelzaher et al., 2019) demonstrate that Islamic ethical principles shape accountability, transparency, and employee conduct, particularly within financial institutions and CSR frameworks. The findings show that in Egypt, IWE has developed from an individual moral principle into a structural element of ethical governance that enhances both performance and spiritual accountability.

Qatar and Morocco, each with about eight publications, highlight the integration of Islamic moral values into human resource and leadership systems (Badar et al., 2024)(Hassi et al., 2021). Their research shows that aligning HR practices with Islamic ethics boosts motivation, leadership integrity, and organizational harmony. Meanwhile, India—with around five studies—provides a unique Muslim-minority perspective, where IWE principles enrich secular workplaces. Udin et al., (Udin et al., 2022) and Rubbab (Rubbab et al., 2024) found that IWE fosters affective commitment, productivity, and trust across diverse settings. Collectively, these studies show that IWE's practice and interpretation vary by socio-cultural and institutional context, forming a comparative foundation for understanding Islamic ethics across Muslim-majority and minority environments.

Journal with the Most Publications on Islamic Work Ethic (IWE)

From the results of the analysis of the documents, it was found that several journals often publish research related to Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) as shown at table. 1. igure 1, illustrates a significant increase in the number of journals on *Islamic Work Ethics* (IWE), especially in the period 2018 to 2021. This increase reflects global attention to ongoing work ethics issues as well as the relevance of the application of Islamic values in modern management. The focus of the IWE study during this period can be further analyzed through the visualization of *the overlay network* generated using VOSviewer, as shown below. This visualization provides an in-depth overview of the main themes and inter-concept relationships in IWE-related research.

Table 1

Journal with the Most Publications on Islamic Work Ethics

No	Journal	Number of Articles
1	Journal of Business Ethics	25
2	Journal of Islamic Marketing	15
3	Journal of Management Development	12
4	International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management	10
5	Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business	8
6	Middle East Journal of Business	5

Source: Processed from research data, 2024

The Journal of Business Ethics explores the link between Islamic work ethics (IWE) and organizational performance, job satisfaction, and fairness (Clercq et al., 2017). The *Journal of*

Islamic Marketing examines Islamic business ethics in relation to marketing and entrepreneurship (Hasan, 2020). Meanwhile, the Journal of Management Development highlights how IWE shapes leadership and organizational culture, with recent studies showing its role in fostering ethical leadership and positive workplace engagement (Esenaliev & Ferguson, 2022).

International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management, highlights IWE in the context of Islamic finance, such as Sharia banking (Saygılı et al., 2022). Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business, analysing the impact of IWE on performance and work motivation in the Asian financial sector (K. N. Aflah et al., 2021). Middle East Journal of Business, discusses aspects of Islamic spirituality and work ethics in organizations (Shaikh & Noordin, 2019).

Most Productive Researchers

Table 2
Top 10 authors who discuss Islamic Work Ethics (IWE)

No	Author	Number of Articles
1	Khuram Shahzad	15
2	Saeed Hameed Aldulaimi	12
3	Jihad Mohammad	11
4	Muhammad Abbas	9
5	Usman Raja	8
6	Muhammad Usman	8
7	Zahid Rahman	7
8	AM. Siti Khadijah	7
9	Mastura Ab. Wahab	6
10	Farzana Quoquab	6

Source: Processed from research data, 2024

Authors who are prolific in discussing *Islamic Work Ethics* (IWE) have contributed significantly to the development of literature in this field. They often offer new perspectives, develop theories, and bridge research across disciplines. Identifying the top ten authors on IWE topics can provide an overview of the key figures driving discussion and research, while also showing the direction in which the study is developing globally.

Most Widely Used Methods

The research methods used in *the study of Islamic Work Ethics (*IWE) reflect a scientific approach to understanding this concept in a variety of contexts. Researchers often rely on quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods to explore the relationship between IWE and aspects such as job performance, satisfaction, and organizational culture. Examining the most frequently used methods can provide insight into how IWE is studied and the validity of research results in this area.

Table 3
Research Methods Widely Used in IWE Studies

No	Method	Number of Studies
1	Quantitative	60
2	Qualitative	20
3	Mixed Methods	10
4	Conceptual or literary	15
5	Experimental or Longitudinal	5
6	Others	43

Source: Processed from research data, 2024

The most widely used research method in studies on Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) remains quantitative, emphasizing the use of survey data and advanced statistical techniques such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) or multiple regression. For instance, Aflah et.al., (K. N. Aflah et al., 2021) employed SEM using AMOS to examine the influence of IWE—mediated by affective commitment and job satisfaction—on employee performance. Similarly, Amaliasita & Astuti (Amaliasita & Astuti, 2023a) utilized Partial Least Squares (PLS), a variant of SEM, to analyze both direct and mediated relationships between IWE, job satisfaction, and performance. Quantitative designs continue to dominate because they allow researchers to establish measurable relationships between ethical constructs, psychological variables, and work outcomes in a statistically rigorous manner.

Although less dominant, qualitative approaches have also been employed to gain deeper insights into the philosophical and behavioral dimensions of IWE. Through interviews, case studies, and textual analyses, these studies explore how Islamic ethical principles are interpreted and operationalized in real organizational contexts. For example, Özcan and Özdemir (Özcan & Özdemir, 2022) used a content-analysis approach to trace the conceptual development of IWE and to understand how organizations in various cultural contexts internalize Islamic ethical values within managerial practices.

Mixed-methods research, which combines quantitative surveys with qualitative techniques such as interviews or observations, has been increasingly adopted to provide a more holistic understanding of IWE in practice. Such designs enable triangulation—cross-validating quantitative findings with qualitative insights—to capture both statistical relationships and contextual nuances. For instance, (Usman et al., 2015a) integrated survey results with semi-structured interviews to better understand how IWE influences employee behavior and workplace attitudes, revealing that ethical leadership rooted in Islamic principles can enhance employees' motivation and integrity.

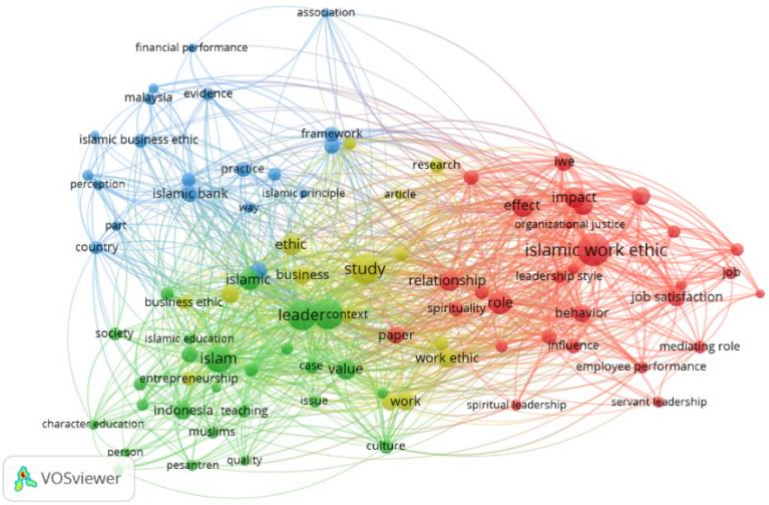
In addition to empirical approaches, conceptual and theoretical studies remain essential in enriching the intellectual foundation of IWE. Al-Samdi et al., (Al-Samdi et al., 2021) proposed a comprehensive theoretical construct of IWE by synthesizing insights from Islamic teachings and contemporary management theories. Similarly, Özcan and Özdemir (Özcan & Özdemir, 2022) mapped the evolution of IWE research themes over time through a systematic content analysis. Furthermore, Khalid et al., (Khalid et al., 2018) developed a conceptual framework illustrating how IWE influences organizational behavior, while (Aldulaimi, 2016a) examined the foundational assumptions of IWE, comparing its principles with Western ethical paradigms such as Protestant and Humanistic work ethics.

Finally, experimental and longitudinal studies have begun to emerge as important contributions for establishing causal relationships and examining the long-term effects of IWE. For instance, (Raja et al., 2019) conducted a longitudinal study assessing the combined influence of ethical leadership and IWE on employees' well-being and job outcomes over time. Similarly, (Qasim et al., 2021) employed a longitudinal design to observe the sustained impact of IWE on work productivity, providing valuable evidence that IWE not only influences immediate behavior but also contributes to enduring organizational performance.

Collectively, these diverse methodological approaches reflect the growing maturity of IWE scholarship—from descriptive and conceptual explorations toward empirical, longitudinal, and integrative frameworks that link Islamic ethics with measurable organizational outcomes.

Research Gaps and Future Direction of IWE Research

Figure 4. Visualization of Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) Research Network



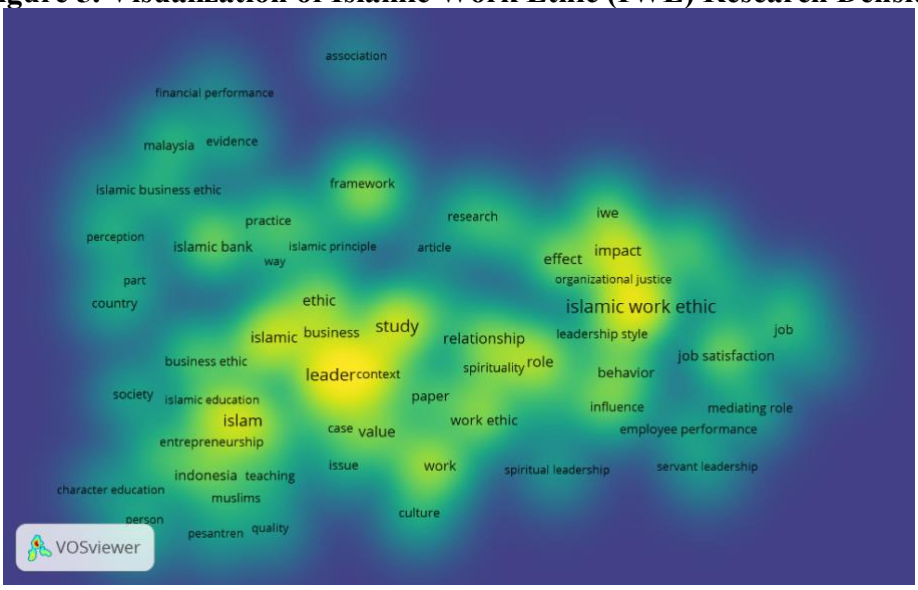
Source**:** Results of Bibliometric Analysis using VOSviewer

Research on *Islamic Work Ethics* (IWE) continues to grow, but there are still gaps that require further attention. Some areas, such as the application of IWE in a global context, cross-cultural relationships, and its impact on organizational transformation, have not been fully explored. Identifying these research gaps is important to direct future studies, broaden understanding, and increase the relevance of IWE in a dynamic world of work. This analysis also helps researchers to explore new approaches and strengthen academic contributions in this field. Here is a network visualization using VOSviewer that illustrates the relationship between keywords in the literature. Figure 4 is generated from an analysis of all studies that discuss Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), showing the linkage of concepts and the focus in related studies.

Based on network visualization analysis from VOSviewer, research on *Islamic Work Ethic* (IWE) is divided into four main clusters. The Red Cluster focuses on the impact of IWE on individual and organizational performance, with an emphasis on the role of mediation and organizational justice. The Blue Cluster highlights the implementation of IWE in the Islamic finance sector, especially in improving the performance of Islamic banks. The Green Cluster explores the role of IWE in Islamic education, entrepreneurship development, and character building in society. Meanwhile, the Yellow Cluster discussed leadership based on Islamic values and its influence on relationships and interactions in organizations.

Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) is a key buzzword in the study, with many connections to other terms such as job satisfaction and employee performance, which show great concern for the influence of IWE on these aspects. In addition, the leadership style has a close relationship with IWE, reflecting the importance of the role of leaders in implementing Islamic work ethics values. In a specific context, IWE is applied in the financial sector, such as in the performance of Islamic banks (Islamic banks and financial performance), as well as in Islamic education through strengthening character education, learning in Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic-based values. The level of research density related to *Islamic Work Ethic (IWE)* can be explained in figure 5.

Figure 5. Visualization of Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) Research Density



Source: Results of Bibliometric Analysis using VOSviewer

Research on Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) can be grouped into three main areas based on their density level. First, high-density areas (bright yellow) cover topics such as job satisfaction, employee performance, leadership styles, and the impact of IWE in the organization. The great focus on the relationship between IWE and organizational outcomes shows the primary concern of the literature on IWE's contribution to workplace dynamics. Second, medium-density areas (green) involve the application of IWE in certain sectors, such as Islamic finance, as well as inter-sector relationships such as business ethics and leadership. Research in this area is growing, but it still leaves room for more in-depth exploration. Third, low-density areas (blue) include topics such as digitalization, character education, sustainability, Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic-based entrepreneurship. These topics are still underexplored, thus offering great opportunities for further research, especially in modern contexts.

Based on this visualization, there are several interesting research opportunities that can be explored further. First, the relationship between IWE and global business sustainability opens up opportunities to delve deeper into how Islamic ethical values can support sustainable business practices. Second, the relationship between IWE and character education in various areas of Islamic culture and institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools, requires further research to understand its contribution to the moral and ethical formation of the younger generation. Third, the application of IWE in the context of spiritual and transformational leadership, such as *spiritual leadership* and *servant leadership*, shows a growing trend but still needs more in-depth exploration. Research in this area has the potential to provide new insights into the application of IWE in a variety of local and global contexts, while supporting more ethical and meaningful organizational practices.

Table 4
Dominant Topics and Potential Research Gaps

No	Research Topic	Number of Studies	Focus Research	Research Gap	Potential Contribution
1	Employee Performance	30	The impact of IWE on productivity, job satisfaction and motivation	1. IWE in technology-based work 2. Generational differences in response to IWE	The relevance of IWE in modern and multigenerational work
2	Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture	20	The relationship between IWE and leadership style and organizational culture	1. Islamic-based transformational leadership 2. Interaction of local cultures and IWE in the context of globalization	Relevant Islamic leadership models in global organizations
3	Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	15	Implementation of IWE in CSR and corporate social reporting	1. The effect of IWE-based CSR on customer loyalty 2. IWE and environmental sustainability in CSR	IWE value-based CSR strategy
4	Spiritual Motivation and Work Ethics	12	The role of Islamic spirituality in improving work ethics	1. Islamic spirituality and ethical decision-making 2. Spiritual motivation in multicultural organizations	Application of Islamic spiritual motivation in a multicultural work environment
5	Cultural Influences and Regional Contexts	8	Applying IWE across cultures and regions	1. Comparison of IWE implementation between Muslim majority and minority areas 2. IWE in global organizational culture	IWE's flexibility in a variety of cultural contexts
6	Islamic Business Ethics	10	IWE values-based business practices and sustainability	1. IWE in the development of Islamic startups 2. IWE and sustainable business models	A business model that integrates IWE and sustainability
7	Islamic Education and Work Ethics	12	Examining the implementation of IWE in Islamic education systems, including pesantren, madrasah, and higher education institutions.	1. Integration of IWE into teacher training and curriculum development. 2. Impact of IWE on student motivation, ethical behavior, and performance in Islamic education settings.	1. Development of educational frameworks that incorporate IWE for holistic learning. 2. Strengthening ethical leadership among educators in Islamic institutions. 3. Promoting a culture of work ethics rooted in

No	Research Topic	Number of Studies	Focus Research	Research Gap	Potential Contribution
					Islamic values within educational organizations.

Source: Processed from research data, 2024

The table above outlines key thematic areas within the Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) literature and highlights potential avenues for future research. Each topic represents a cluster of scholarly interest, with a varying number of studies and evolving research foci. For instance, studies on employee performance dominate the field, primarily examining the role of IWE in enhancing motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction. However, most of these studies focus on conventional workplace settings, leaving gaps in technology-driven or hybrid work environments, particularly involving younger or multigenerational employees.

The second cluster, concerning ethical leadership and organizational culture, underscores how Islamic values shape leadership behaviors and internal organizational dynamics. Yet, further exploration is needed to localize Islamic leadership models within global and multicultural corporate contexts.

Topics such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Islamic business ethics, and spiritual motivation reflect the broader application of IWE beyond individual performance. These areas present opportunities to investigate how IWE can contribute to sustainability initiatives, social reporting, and entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, research on Islamic education and work ethics remains limited despite its potential to influence long-term behavioral outcomes. IWE's role in shaping character education, curriculum design, and educator professionalism in Islamic institutions is an especially rich area for development. By identifying these gaps, the study provides a roadmap for future empirical and conceptual work that could significantly enrich the IWE discourse, especially through interdisciplinary approaches integrating education, leadership, digital transformation, and ethics.

DISCUSSION

The three phases identified in this study indicate that IWE research has shifted from a normative and conceptual orientation toward a managerial and outcome-oriented one. In the early phase, studies focused on articulating IWE values and their application in traditional sectors such as Islamic finance and education; in the transition phase, attention moved to leadership, entrepreneurship, and organizational culture; and in the latest phase, IWE has been positioned mainly as a predictor of job satisfaction, employee performance, and organizational justice. This pattern is consistent with Özcan and Özdemir (Özcan & Özdemir, 2022), who traced the evolution of IWE from normative ethics toward managerial and performance-oriented frameworks, while this study adds a periodization that shows when the shift occurred and which themes accompanied each phase. The shift also explains why performance-related themes form the densest area in the keyword map. However, this outcome orientation carries a risk: IWE is increasingly valued for its contribution to productivity, while its intention-centered and spiritual foundation, which distinguishes it from Western work ethics (Aldulaimi, 2016; Mohammad & Quoquab, 2016), receives comparatively less empirical attention.

The country analysis shows that IWE research develops in line with the dominant institutional ecosystem of each country. Malaysia emphasizes Islamic banking and higher

education, Indonesia highlights Islamic boarding schools, MSMEs, and the public sector, Pakistan focuses on education and public services, while Saudi Arabia and Egypt link IWE to banking, governance, and corporate social responsibility (Ali, Al-Aali, et al., 2023; Anggadwita et al., 2021; Musa, Sukor, et al., 2020). Unlike Christiyanto et al. (Christiyanto et al., 2022) ,whose bibliometric review was limited to Indonesian Islamic microfinance institutions, this mapping shows that the meaning and application of IWE vary across national and sectoral contexts. The presence of Indian studies further shows that IWE also operates in Muslim-minority and secular workplaces, where it fosters commitment and trust (Rubbab et al., 2024; Udin et al., 2022). Nevertheless, studies on cultural and regional contexts remain the smallest group in the literature, indicating that cross-cultural comparison of IWE is still underdeveloped.

Methodologically, the dominance of quantitative designs using SEM and PLS(N. Aflah & Mursid, 2021; Amaliasita & Astuti, 2023) is consistent with the outcome-oriented phase, in which IWE is measured as an independent variable and tested against work outcomes. While this approach strengthens the statistical evidence of IWE's effects, its reliance on cross-sectional surveys limits causal inference and offers little explanation of how IWE values are internalized and practiced. The emergence of longitudinal studies (Qasim et al., 2022; Raja et al., 2019), qualitative content analysis (Özdemir & Özcan, 2022), and mixed methods designs (Usman et al., 2015) signals growing methodological maturity, but these approaches are still limited and should be expanded to capture the processual and contextual dimensions of IWE.

The cluster and density analysis also reveals underexplored areas. Islamic education forms a distinct cluster, yet it remains a low-density area, and existing studies mostly examine teacher performance(Mehnaz et al., 2020) rather than curriculum design, character education, or ethical leadership in educational institutions (Anggadwita et al., 2021; ElKaleh, 2019). This gap is significant because educational institutions such as pesantren, madrasah, and Islamic universities are where IWE values are formed before individuals enter the workforce. Similarly, digitalization, sustainability, and Islamic-based entrepreneurship remain marginal, even though they reflect the contemporary challenges of globalization and digital transformation. Future research should therefore examine IWE in technology-based and hybrid work, its reception among multigenerational employees, its integration into teacher training and curricula, its role in sustainable business models, and comparisons between Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority contexts.

Theoretically, these findings provide a structured map of the IWE field that helps future studies position their contribution and move beyond repeated testing of IWE–performance relationships. Practically, the findings suggest that Islamic educational institutions should embed IWE in curricula and educator development, while organizations and policymakers can use IWE as a foundation for ethical leaders

CONCLUSION

This study maps the development of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) research from 2015 to 2024 and shows that the field has evolved through three phases: conceptual exploration, practical application in organizations, and analysis of organizational outcomes, reflecting a shift from a normative to an outcome-oriented focus. Research is concentrated in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan, each shaped by its dominant institutional sector, and is dominated by quantitative designs

and performance-related themes, while Islamic education, cross-cultural application, digitalization, and sustainability remain underexplored.

Theoretically, this study provides an integrated map linking the thematic phases, country–sector focus, and methodological patterns of IWE research, which helps future studies position their contribution and move beyond repeated testing of the IWE–performance relationship. Practically, the findings imply that Islamic educational institutions should integrate IWE into curricula, teacher training, and educator leadership, while organizations and policymakers can use IWE as a foundation for ethical leadership, human resource practices, and governance. This study is limited to English-language publications and does not assess the quality of individual studies. Future research should expand the dataset with regional databases, complement bibliometric findings with systematic reviews, and examine IWE in digital workplaces, multigenerational teams, Islamic educational institutions, and Muslim-minority contexts.

FUNDING STATEMENT
This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not for profit sectors.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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