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Reimagining Islamic Human Resource Management: Integrating Islamic Work Ethics, Human Capital Development, and Organizational Sustainability

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Abstract

Islamic Human Resource Management (IHRM) has increasingly attracted scholarly attention as organizations seek practices that integrate ethical values, employee development, organizational capability, and long-term sustainability. However, existing research remains fragmented, with Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), human capital development, organizational capability, and organizational sustainability generally examined as separate streams rather than interconnected components of an integrated IHRM architecture. This study systematically synthesizes literature on IHRM and IWE to identify mechanisms through which Islamic ethical orientation contributes to human capital, capability, and sustainability. Following the PRISMA 2020 reporting framework, a systematic literature review with an integrative qualitative synthesis was conducted across Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald, SpringerLink, and Google Scholar. The review documented 360 identified records, from which 25 core peer-reviewed articles published between 2020 and 2026 were selected and thematically analyzed. Findings indicate that IWE functions not merely as a normative principle but as an ethical-behavioral mechanism associated with motivation, commitment, psychological resources, moral identity, organizational identification, knowledge sharing, and ethical behavior. The synthesis identifies a multistage relationship where IHRM provides the context, IWE shapes psychological and behavioral resources, and knowledge-sharing processes facilitate human capital mobilization. Organizational capability converts these resources into collective organizational value, while organizational sustainability constitutes the long-term outcome. Consequently, the study develops an integrative theoretical framework connecting previously fragmented ethical, human capital, capability, and sustainability perspectives. While serving as a theoretical architecture rather than an empirically validated causal model, it provides a foundation for future longitudinal, multilevel, comparative, and mixed-method research.

Keywords: Human Capital; Islamic Human Resource Management; Islamic Work Ethics; Organizational Capability; Organizational Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Organizations increasingly face economic uncertainty, technological disruption, changing workforce expectations, ethical challenges, and growing pressure to achieve social and environmental responsibility alongside economic performance. Sustainable organizational performance is therefore increasingly understood beyond short-term financial outcomes to include social well-being, responsible resource utilization, resilience, and long-term organizational viability (Elkington, 1997). Human resources are central to this transformation because employees do not merely function as organizational inputs but also interpret, implement, and reproduce organizational strategies and values (Macke & Genari, 2019). Sustainable

Human Resource Management consequently places greater emphasis on employee development, organizational performance, social responsibility, and long-term organizational sustainability (Macke & Genari, 2019).

This development raises an important question concerning how organizations should develop and utilize human capabilities. Human Capital Theory conceptualizes knowledge, skills, competencies, and experience as productive resources that can be developed through investment in education, training, learning, and experience (Becker, 1975). However, productive value alone does not fully explain how human capabilities should be developed and utilized in ways that address human dignity, ethical responsibility, justice, well-being, and long-term social consequences. The challenge is therefore not simply to increase the productive value of human capital but also to ensure that its development and utilization contribute to ethically responsible and sustainable organizational outcomes.

Islamic management provides an ethical perspective for addressing this challenge by viewing human beings as morally responsible actors whose professional activities are connected with accountability, justice, responsibility, and collective welfare (Habib Rana & Shaukat Malik, 2016). Within this perspective, Islamic Human Resource Management (IHRM) offers an opportunity to connect employee development with ethical work behavior and organizational sustainability. Islamic principles can inform recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation, performance appraisal, employee relations, and leadership within HRM practices (Habib Rana & Shaukat Malik, 2016). Nevertheless, IHRM scholarship has developed across partially separated themes, including Islamic values, Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), leadership, employee behavior, organizational commitment, competency, and performance. Maulida and Rusydiana identify broad thematic clusters in IHRM research, indicating the need for stronger integration among these research areas (Maulida & Rusydiana, 2023).

The fragmentation is particularly evident in the literature on IWE. Aflah et al. examined IWE in relation to Islamic motivation, affective commitment, job satisfaction, and employee performance (Aflah et al., 2021). Udin et al. investigated IWE, affective commitment, and employee performance in family businesses (Udin et al., 2022). Al Smadi et al. examined the mediating role of IWE between job satisfaction and job performance (Al Smadi et al., 2023). Badar et al. extended this line of inquiry to organizational performance by examining employee relations climate as a mediating mechanism (Badar et al., 2024). These studies indicate that IWE has increasingly been examined as an empirical construct rather than solely as a normative ethical principle.

The empirical scope of IWE has also expanded toward psychological, relational, and knowledge-related processes. Qasim et al. found that psychological capital mediated the relationship between IWE and task performance (Qasim et al., 2022). Topcan et al. examined moral identity and felt obligation as serial mediators between IWE and employee ethical behavior (Topcan et al., 2025). Rubbab et al. investigated felt obligation for constructive change as a mechanism linking IWE with employee voice behavior (Rubbab et al., 2024). Suryani et al. connected IWE with knowledge-sharing behavior through job embeddedness and organizational identification (Suryani et al., 2021). Chaudhary et al. examined knowledge sharing through paternalistic leadership, organizational commitment, and IWE (Chaudhary et al., 2023). These findings suggest that the organizational relevance of IWE may operate through psychological, relational, and knowledge-sharing processes rather than through a single direct relationship with performance.

The literature has also begun to connect IWE with organizational sustainability. Asha'ari et al. examined the role of IWE in the relationship between sustainable design and social sustainability performance (Asha'ari et al., 2023). Ghoniyah et al. examined sustainability awareness and business work ethics in relation to business sustainability performance in Islamic institutions (Ghoniyah et al., 2024). Satrianto et al.

investigated IWE and organizational citizenship behavior in relation to green HR practices and environmental performance among Indonesian food SMEs (Satrianto et al., 2023). These studies indicate that Islamic ethical orientation may have implications beyond individual employee outcomes, although the evidence remains distributed across different sustainability dimensions.

A parallel research stream establishes the relevance of human capital to organizational sustainability. Dankyi et al. examined human capital acquisition for organizational sustainability (Dankyi et al., 2020). Batool et al. investigated human capital factors and organizational sustainability in the Malaysian hotel industry (Batool et al., 2022). Istikhoroh et al. examined human capital management as a knowledge-based strategic asset for organizational sustainability in Indonesian public companies (Istikhoroh et al., 2025). Al Frijat and Elamer examined human capital efficiency in relation to corporate sustainability and organizational performance in emerging economies (Al Frijat & Elamer, 2025). This literature strengthens the connection between human capital and sustainability but generally does not integrate IWE or IHRM into the same explanatory pathway.

The theoretical foundation of this study combines Human Capital Theory, the Resource-Based View (RBV), and Islamic Work Ethics. Human Capital Theory explains how knowledge, skills, competencies, and experience can be developed through investment in human development (Becker, 1975). RBV explains why organizational resources and capabilities can become strategically valuable when they are difficult for competitors to reproduce (Barney, 1991). IWE provides the ethical-behavioral dimension by explaining how Islamic principles can shape employee attitudes, behavior, relationships, and the utilization of human capabilities. Recent evidence indicates that IWE research has expanded substantially, although its conceptual boundaries, measurement, and empirical applications remain fragmented (Zafar et al., 2026).

These theoretical perspectives perform different but complementary functions. Human Capital Theory explains how human capabilities are developed, RBV explains how those capabilities can become strategically valuable organizational resources, and IWE explains how Islamic ethical principles shape the behavior and utilization of those capabilities. The resulting architecture is therefore conceptualized as an integrated framework in which Islamic Human Resource Management provides the broader human resource context, Islamic Work Ethics shapes ethical and behavioral resources, Human Capital Development facilitates capability formation, Organizational Capability enables the collective deployment of human resources, and Organizational Sustainability represents the longer-term organizational outcome. This sequence should not be interpreted as an empirically established causal chain; rather, it represents the analytical architecture through which this review examines evidence distributed across different research streams.

The central theoretical problem is not the absence of theories capable of explaining particular dimensions of the phenomenon. Human Capital Theory explains capability development but gives limited attention to the ethical principles governing the development and use of those capabilities (Becker, 1975). RBV explains the strategic value of organizational resources but is relatively neutral regarding their moral purpose and social consequences (Barney, 1991). IWE addresses the ethical dimension of work behavior but has largely been examined through specific employee, relational, and organizational outcomes (Zafar et al., 2026). The literature consequently lacks an integrated explanation of how these perspectives can operate together within an IHRM architecture oriented toward sustainable organizational development.

The 25-core corpus illustrates this fragmentation. Research on IWE has generated evidence concerning employee motivation, commitment, satisfaction, performance, psychological resources, ethical behavior, voice behavior, knowledge sharing, and organizational outcomes. Research on human capital has separately established relationships with organizational sustainability, while IWE-related sustainability studies have examined specific social, business, and environmental outcomes. The evidence is therefore substantial but distributed across different levels of analysis and research traditions.

This fragmentation is also visible in studies examining the literature itself. Maulida and Rusydiana identify distinct thematic clusters in IHRM research (Maulida & Rusydiana, 2023), while Zafar et al. demonstrate continuing fragmentation in the conceptualization, measurement, and empirical application of IWE (Zafar et al., 2026). The central research gap therefore lies in the limited integration of IHRM, IWE, human capital development, organizational capability, and organizational sustainability within a single explanatory architecture. While existing studies provide evidence for individual relationships across these domains, they offer limited explanation of how these relationships may be connected as an organizational process. More specifically, the existing literature provides insufficient clarification of how ethical orientation may shape employee resources, how those resources may be developed and mobilized as human capital, and how human capital may be converted into organizational capability that supports sustainability.

This study addresses that gap by developing an integrative synthesis of the 25-core corpus. Its first contribution is to position IWE within the broader IHRM-related literature rather than treating it exclusively as an isolated predictor of employee outcomes. Its second contribution is to identify psychological, moral, relational, and knowledge-sharing processes as potential mechanisms through which ethical orientation may support human capital development and mobilization. Its third contribution is to distinguish human capital from organizational capability by positioning organizational capability as a conversion layer through which individual knowledge and competencies can become collective organizational value. Its fourth contribution is to connect this capability-conversion process with organizational sustainability as a longer-term organizational outcome.

The resulting framework is conceptualized as an integrated process in which the IHRM context shapes Islamic Work Ethics, which influences employee psychological and behavioral resources, while knowledge-sharing and relational-organizational processes facilitate human capital development and mobilization, thereby contributing to organizational capability and, ultimately, organizational sustainability. This framework represents a synthesis-generated theoretical architecture rather than an empirically validated causal model. Its contribution lies in connecting previously fragmented evidence and providing a theoretically informed basis for future empirical investigation.

Accordingly, this study addresses three questions. The first asks: How has Islamic Work Ethics been conceptualized and empirically examined within the broader IHRM-related literature? The second asks: What mechanisms connect Islamic Human Resource Management and Islamic Work Ethics with human capital development, organizational capability, and organizational sustainability? The third asks: What theoretical, empirical, contextual, and methodological gaps remain in the IHRM–IWE–human capital–organizational sustainability literature, and what integrative framework can guide future research?

The study aims to systematically synthesize the conceptualization and empirical examination of IWE within the broader IHRM-related literature. It also seeks to identify the mechanisms connecting IHRM and IWE with human capital development, organizational capability, and organizational sustainability. Finally, it aims to develop an integrative framework that synthesizes fragmented evidence and provides directions for future empirical research.

The study offers theoretical, practical, and methodological benefits. Theoretically, it integrates Human Capital Theory, RBV, and IWE while maintaining their distinct explanatory functions. Practically, it provides an evidence-informed basis for considering ethical orientation, employee development, knowledge sharing, organizational capability, and sustainability as interconnected dimensions of IHRM. Methodologically, it organizes a fragmented literature into an explicit evidence architecture and distinguishes relationships supported by individual studies from propositions generated through cross-study synthesis. The framework consequently provides a foundation for future longitudinal, multilevel, comparative, and mixed-method research without claiming that the proposed pathway has already been empirically validated.

METHODS

Research Design and Review Approach

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) combined with an integrative qualitative synthesis to examine how Islamic Human Resource Management (IHRM), Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), human capital development, organizational capability, and organizational sustainability are connected across the existing literature. A systematic review is appropriate for research areas characterized by substantial and fragmented scholarly evidence because it provides a structured process for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing previous studies (Snyder, 2019). In management research, systematic review methodology also supports the development of evidence-informed knowledge through transparent procedures for searching, selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing research (Tranfield et al., 2003).

An integrative approach was adopted because the relevant evidence is distributed across several research streams rather than concentrated within a single established literature. The corpus includes research on IWE and employee outcomes, knowledge-sharing processes, sustainability, human capital, and broader IHRM and IWE research mapping. Integrative review methodology enables findings from different research traditions to be combined to generate broader conceptual understanding (Torraco, 2005). Because the included studies differ substantially in research design, constructs, contexts, samples, and analytical procedures, the study used qualitative rather than statistical synthesis. Meta-analysis was not pursued because the heterogeneity of the evidence base limited the meaningful statistical aggregation of effect estimates across studies. The analysis therefore focused on recurring concepts, relationships, mechanisms, and patterns across the literature.

Search Strategy and Information Sources

The search strategy was developed from five interconnected domains: IHRM, IWE, human capital, organizational capability, and organizational sustainability. Search terms included variations of Islamic Human Resource Management, Islamic HRM, Islamic Work Ethics, Islamic ethics, human capital, human capital development, human capital management, organizational capability, knowledge sharing, organizational identification, organizational sustainability, business sustainability, corporate sustainability, social sustainability, and environmental performance. These terms were combined using Boolean operators and adapted to the search syntax of individual databases.

The search intentionally extended beyond the exact term "Islamic Human Resource Management" because relevant studies may use more specific concepts such as IWE, knowledge sharing, human capital, employee capability, or sustainability. A broader conceptual search strategy is appropriate when terminology varies across research communities and when reliance on a single expression may result in incomplete retrieval (Xiao & Watson, 2019).

The literature search covered Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald, SpringerLink, and Google Scholar. Multiple information sources were used to broaden disciplinary and journal coverage, while Google Scholar served as a complementary discovery source. Bibliographic information and DOI details of retained publications were subsequently checked to support the traceability of the final corpus.

Eligibility Criteria and Study Selection

Studies were eligible when they addressed IHRM, IWE, human capital, organizational capability, organizational sustainability, or meaningful relationships involving these domains. Eligible publications consisted of scholarly journal articles that provided empirical, systematic, bibliometric, conceptual, or other academically relevant evidence and contained sufficient bibliographic information for verification and analytical extraction. Studies were excluded when they were unrelated to the principal conceptual domains, addressed Islamic finance or other Islamic business topics without a meaningful connection to the review, constituted non-scholarly materials, represented duplicate records, or lacked sufficient information for reliable analysis. Explicit eligibility criteria were used to establish consistent boundaries for study selection (Xiao & Watson, 2019).

An article was not required to address all components of the proposed conceptual architecture simultaneously. This criterion was necessary because the review sought to integrate evidence distributed across different research streams. A study examining IWE and knowledge sharing, for example, could contribute evidence concerning an organizational-capability mechanism, while research examining human capital and sustainability could inform the relationship between human capital and organizational sustainability.

The study-selection process was reported using the PRISMA 2020 framework, which provides guidance for transparent reporting of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion (Page et al., 2021). The review process documented 360 identified records. After 74 duplicate records were removed, 286 records remained for screening. Title and abstract screening excluded 211 records, leaving 75 reports sought for retrieval. Ten reports could not be retrieved, resulting in 65 reports assessed for eligibility. Full-text assessment excluded 40 reports, leaving 25 articles in the Final Core Corpus.

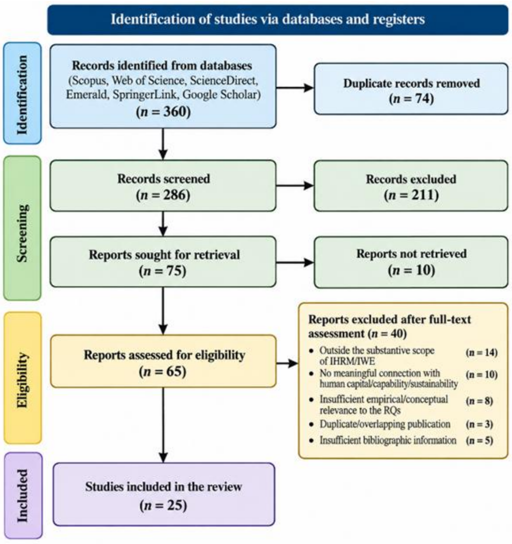

Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram

Because complete historical database-export files and search logs were not available for retrospective audit, the numerical counts for the earlier PRISMA stages are treated as reconstructed working counts rather than independently reproducible database-export statistics. The final 25-article corpus, however, constitutes the defined substantive evidence base analyzed in this review. Figure 1 therefore presents the reconstructed study-selection pathway, while the substantive analysis is grounded in the verified Final Core Corpus.

Final Core Corpus and Analytical Classification

The 25 core articles were treated as a distributed evidence base rather than as 25 studies independently validating the complete conceptual architecture. The corpus was classified into five analytical streams comprising IWE and employee or organizational outcomes, IWE and knowledge-related mechanisms, IWE and sustainability-related outcomes, human capital and organizational sustainability, and broader research mapping of IHRM and IWE. This classification was performed after study selection and served as an analytical coding structure rather than an additional eligibility criterion.

The classification enabled cross-stream comparison of evidence operating at different analytical levels. Employee-level findings were examined alongside knowledge-sharing and relational mechanisms, while organizational-level evidence concerning human capital and sustainability was considered in relation to the broader capability architecture. This approach allowed the review to identify connections that are rarely examined within a single empirical study.

Data Extraction and Coding

A structured extraction procedure was applied to all 25 core articles. The extracted information included bibliographic characteristics, research context, research objectives, principal constructs, research design, sample or data source, analytical method, mediating or moderating mechanisms, major findings, theoretical perspective, sustainability relevance, and analytical relevance to the emerging framework. Systematic data extraction provides a basis for consistent comparison and helps ensure that synthesis is grounded in predefined analytical categories (Snyder, 2019).

The coding proceeded from descriptive to analytical coding. Descriptive coding captured study characteristics, methodological design, constructs, context, and principal findings. Analytical coding examined relationships among constructs, mechanisms, organizational levels, and relevance to the broader IHRM–IWE–human capital–organizational sustainability architecture. Particular attention was given to mediating, moderating, psychological, relational, behavioral, knowledge-related, organizational, and strategic mechanisms because the purpose of the review was to explain how relationships operate rather than merely catalogue variables.

Quality Assessment and Analytical Rigor

Because the corpus contains heterogeneous forms of scholarly evidence, quality assessment was conducted using a design-sensitive approach rather than a single risk-of-bias instrument applied indiscriminately. Systematic reviews should adapt appraisal procedures to the characteristics of the evidence under examination (Gough et al., 2017). The assessment considered clarity of research objectives, appropriateness of research design, transparency of sampling or data sources, construct definition and operationalization, analytical clarity, transparency of findings, coherence between evidence and conclusions, and bibliographic traceability.

The assessment was not converted into a single numerical quality score. Instead, methodological characteristics were considered when interpreting the strength and nature of individual contributions. This approach was adopted because the corpus includes empirical, systematic, bibliometric, and conceptual studies whose methodological characteristics cannot be meaningfully reduced to one uniform scoring scheme (Xiao & Watson, 2019).

Thematic and Integrative Synthesis

The extracted evidence was analyzed through thematic synthesis and integrative literature analysis. Thematic synthesis was used to identify recurring concepts, relationships, and mechanisms across studies (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Integrative synthesis was then used to compare findings within and across the five evidence streams and to identify convergence, fragmentation, and absence within the literature.

Convergence referred to relationships or mechanisms repeatedly supported across studies. Fragmentation referred to related constructs being examined separately without sufficient conceptual integration. Absence referred to important relationships, mechanisms, contexts, or theoretical connections that remained insufficiently examined. Publication frequency was not treated as equivalent to evidentiary strength; analytical importance was determined by the contribution of findings to the proposed conceptual architecture.

Evidence Integration and Framework Development

A central analytical distinction was made between direct empirical evidence and synthesis-based inference. A relationship was considered direct evidence when an individual study explicitly examined and reported that relationship. A relationship was considered synthesis-based inference when it emerged from combining findings across studies addressing related or adjacent constructs.

This distinction is essential because the proposed sequence from IHRM through IWE, human capital development, organizational capability, and organizational sustainability has not been empirically tested as a complete causal chain within the 25 core articles. The review instead examines whether evidence distributed across different studies can be logically integrated into a broader conceptual architecture. Integrative literature review methodology permits such conceptual integration when the purpose is to generate broader understanding from dispersed evidence (Torraco, 2005).

Framework development therefore followed a bottom-up synthesis process. Individual findings were first coded and grouped into thematic streams. Recurring mechanisms were then identified and compared across streams. Relationships among the streams were subsequently examined and organized into an integrative architecture. The resulting framework is consequently presented as a synthesis-generated conceptual model rather than an empirically validated causal model.

Transparency and Reproducibility

Methodological transparency was supported by specifying the conceptual scope, search domains, information sources, eligibility criteria, study-selection procedures, extraction categories, and analytical process. The PRISMA 2020 framework was used to structure reporting of the selection process (Page et al., 2021). Bibliographic information and DOI details were also checked for publications retained in the Final Core Corpus.

The review maintained a distinction between methodological and substantive sources. Methodological literature was used to justify the review design and analytical procedures, whereas the 25 core articles constituted the substantive evidence base for the findings. The same distinction was maintained between findings demonstrated by individual studies and interpretations generated through cross-study synthesis.

Methodological Scope and Limitations

The review has several methodological boundaries. The use of multiple databases improves coverage but cannot guarantee exhaustive retrieval because database indexing, terminology, accessibility, and journal coverage vary across sources. The study also focuses on a defined 25-article Final Core Corpus and therefore does not claim to represent every publication concerning IHRM, IWE, human capital, or organizational sustainability. The heterogeneity of the corpus further limits statistical aggregation, making qualitative and integrative synthesis more appropriate for the objectives of the study.

Finally, because the proposed architecture combines evidence from studies examining different portions of the broader relationship, its complete causal structure remains subject to future empirical testing. The methodological contribution of the review therefore lies in systematically organizing fragmented evidence, identifying mechanisms and missing connections, and developing an integrative framework that can guide subsequent empirical research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Evidence Base

The Final Core Corpus comprises 25 articles published between 2020 and 2026 addressing Islamic Human Resource Management (IHRM), Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), human capital, knowledge-related processes, organizational capability, and organizational sustainability. The evidence is heterogeneous in terms of research contexts, constructs, analytical levels, research designs, and outcomes, indicating that the field has developed through several partially connected research streams rather than through a single integrated research trajectory. The temporal distribution also indicates the recent expansion of scholarly attention, with 22 of the 25 articles, or 88 percent, published between 2022 and 2026.

The evidence can be organized into five analytical streams. The largest stream comprises 12 studies examining IWE in relation to employee and organizational outcomes, including performance, commitment, psychological resources, ethical behavior, voice behavior, organizational identification, and organizational culture. The second stream contains four studies examining IWE in relation to knowledge-sharing behavior and related organizational processes. The third comprises three studies connecting IWE or related ethical orientations with social, business, and environmental sustainability. The fourth includes four studies examining human capital acquisition, management, or efficiency in relation to organizational sustainability. The fifth consists of two literature-mapping studies addressing the intellectual development and fragmentation of IHRM and IWE research. The detailed characteristics and findings of the 25 core articles are presented in Table 1.

Taken together, the evidence provides substantial support for individual relationships within the broader research architecture, but it does not establish the complete relationship among IHRM, IWE, human capital development, organizational capability, and organizational sustainability. The employee- and organizational-outcome studies demonstrate the relevance of IWE to behavioral and psychological processes, while the knowledge-sharing studies identify potential mechanisms through which individual resources may become more accessible within organizational processes. The human capital studies establish the relevance of human resources to organizational sustainability, while the sustainability-focused IWE studies provide complementary evidence concerning ethical orientation and sustainability-related outcomes. The corpus is therefore interpreted as distributed evidence that can be integrated through cross-study synthesis rather than as evidence of an already validated causal model.

Table 1. Comprehensive Evidence Matrix of the 25 Core Articles

No.	Author(s) & Year	Context	Main Focus	Method / Design	Key Findings	Mechanism Identified	Analytical Relevance to Framework
1	Aflah et al. (2021)	Muslim employe	IWE, Islamic motivation,	Quantitative	IWE is associated with employee	Ethical work orientation	Informs the employee-

		es / organizational setting	affective commitment, job satisfaction, and employee performance	empirical study	performance, with Islamic motivation, affective commitment, and job satisfaction contributing to the relationship.	→ motivation/commitment/job satisfaction → performance	resource dimension by linking IWE with motivation, commitment, satisfaction, and performance.
2	Suryani et al. (2021)	Muslim employees	IWE and knowledge-sharing behavior	Quantitative empirical study	IWE encourages knowledge-sharing behavior, while job embeddedness and organizational identification help explain the relationship.	IWE → organizational identification /job embeddedness → knowledge sharing	Informs the knowledge-sharing mechanism through organizational identification and job embeddedness.
3	Udin et al. (2022)	Family business	IWE, affective commitment, and employee performance	Quantitative empirical study	IWE and affective commitment are positively associated with employee performance in family-business contexts.	Ethical orientation → affective commitment → performance	Provides evidence on IWE and affective commitment as employee-level mechanisms associated with performance.
4	AL Smadi et al. (2023)	Arab work environment	IWE as mediator between job satisfaction and job performance	Quantitative empirical study	IWE mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance.	Job satisfaction → IWE → performance	Supports the role of IWE as a behavioral mechanism linking job satisfaction with performance.
5	Badar et al. (2024)	Qatar	IWE, employee relations climate, and organizational performance	Quantitative empirical study	Employee relations climate mediates the relationship between IWE and organizational performance.	IWE → positive employee-relations climate → organizational performance	Informs the relational-organizational mechanism through employee relations climate and organizational performance.
6	Akhmadi et al. (2023)	Muslim employees / organizational context	IWE, prosocial voice behavior, and organizational identification	Quantitative empirical study	IWE contributes to prosocial voice behavior, with organizational identification playing a multi-role mediating function.	IWE → organizational identification → prosocial voice	Provides evidence on organizational identification as a mechanism linking IWE with prosocial

							employee behavior.
7	Chupradit et al. (2022)	Muslim staff	IWE and organizational culture	Quantitative empirical study	IWE has implications for organizational culture among Muslim staff.	Ethical values → shared norms/culture → organizational behavior	Informs the organizational-context dimension by linking IWE with organizational culture.
8	Chaudhary et al. (2023)	Organizational employees	Paternalistic leadership, knowledge sharing, organizational commitment, and IWE	Quantitative empirical study	Leadership influences knowledge sharing through organizational commitment, with IWE forming an important ethical dimension in the relationship.	Leadership → commitment/ IWE → knowledge sharing	Supports knowledge sharing as a potential organizational conversion mechanism involving leadership, commitment, and IWE.
9	Javaid, Jaaron, & Abdullah (2022)	Organizational employees	Personality, knowledge sharing, and IWE	Quantitative empirical study	IWE moderates the relationship between personality traits and knowledge-sharing behavior.	Individual characteristics × IWE → knowledge sharing	Informs the conditional role of IWE in translating individual characteristics into knowledge-sharing behavior.
10	Javid et al. (2024)	Employees in organizational settings	IWE, aversive leadership, emotional and psychological health	Quantitative empirical study	IWE shapes employees' responses to aversive leadership and is relevant to emotional and psychological outcomes.	Ethical resources → resource preservation/ resilience → psychological outcomes	Informs the psychological-resource dimension by linking IWE with employee emotional and psychological outcomes.
11	Topcan et al. (2025)	Workplace employees	IWE and employee ethical behavior	Quantitative empirical study	IWE contributes to ethical behavior through the serial mediation of moral identity and felt obligation.	IWE → moral identity → felt obligation → ethical behavior	Provides evidence on moral identity and felt obligation as mechanisms linking IWE with ethical behavior.

12	Rubbab et al. (2024)	Employees	IWE and employee voice behavior	Quantitative empirical study	IWE influences constructive employee voice through felt obligation for constructive change, with sanctification of work shaping the relationship.	IWE ⟶ felt obligation ⟶ constructive voice	Informs the employee-agency dimension through felt obligation and constructive voice behavior.
13	Qasim et al. (2022)	Employees	IWE, psychological capital, ethical leadership, and task performance	Quantitative empirical study	Psychological capital mediates the relationship between IWE and task performance, while ethical leadership moderates the relationship.	IWE ⟶ psychological capital ⟶ task performance	Provides evidence on psychological capital as an employee-resource mechanism associated with task performance.
14	Usmani (2024)	Islamic banking industry, Pakistan	Organizational politics, knowledge sharing, and IWE	Quantitative empirical study	IWE moderates the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and knowledge-sharing behavior.	IWE buffers/conditions organizational politics ⟶ knowledge sharing	Supports the conditional role of IWE in knowledge sharing under organizational politics.
15	Zia et al. (2022)	Workplace employees	IWE, leader-member exchange, workplace deviance, adaptive performance	Quantitative empirical study	IWE interacts with leader-member exchange in influencing workplace deviance and adaptive performance.	IWE × LMX ⟶ lower deviance/adaptive performance	Informs the relational and adaptive-behavior dimensions through IWE and leader-member exchange.
16	Asha'ari, Daud, & Suki (2023)	Chemical manufacturing firms	Sustainable design, social sustainability performance, and IWE	Quantitative empirical study	IWE moderates the relationship between sustainable design and social sustainability performance.	Sustainable practices × IWE ⟶ social sustainability	Provides evidence linking IWE with social sustainability through sustainable design.
17	Ghoniyah, Amilahaq, & Hartono (2024)	Islamic institutions	Sustainability awareness, business work ethics, and business sustainability performance	Quantitative empirical study	Sustainability awareness and ethical work orientation contribute to business sustainability performance in Islamic institutional contexts.	Sustainability awareness + ethical orientation ⟶ sustainability performance	Informs the sustainability dimension by linking ethical work orientation and sustainability

							awareness with business sustainability.
18	Batool, Mohammad, & Awang (2022)	Malaysian hotel industry	Human capital factors, organizational sustainability, and trust	Quantitative empirical study	Human capital factors contribute to organizational sustainability, with trust mediating the relationship.	Human capital ⟶ trust ⟶ organizational sustainability	Directly informs the human-capital-to-sustainability relationship, with trust as a mediating condition.
19	Dankyi et al. (2020)	Organizational sustainability context	Human capital acquisition and organizational sustainability	Forecasting / quantitative modelling	Human capital acquisition is important for organizational sustainability and can be modelled to support organizational planning.	Human capital acquisition ⟶ organizational continuity/sustainability	Provides evidence that human-capital acquisition is relevant to organizational continuity and sustainability.
20	Istikhoroh et al. (2025)	Public companies in Indonesia	Human capital management as a knowledge-based strategic asset	Empirical quantitative study	Human capital management functions as a strategic knowledge-based asset supporting organizational sustainability.	HCM ⟶ knowledge asset ⟶ sustainability	Informs the strategic human-capital dimension by positioning HCM as a knowledge-based organizational asset.
21	Al Frijat & Elamer (2025)	Emerging economies	Human capital efficiency, corporate sustainability, and organizational performance	Quantitative empirical study	Human capital efficiency is linked to corporate sustainability and organizational performance.	Human capital efficiency ⟶ sustainability /performance	Provides evidence linking human-capital efficiency with corporate sustainability and organizational performance.
22	Maulida & Rusydiana (2023)	Islamic HRM literature	Thematic mapping and research clusters in IHRM	Bibliometric / thematic analysis	IHRM literature contains identifiable research clusters and demonstrates a fragmented but developing intellectual structure.	IHRM knowledge structure ⟶ identification of research clusters/gaps	Provides meta-level evidence on IHRM research clusters, fragmentation, and emerging research directions.
23	Suryani et al. (2023)	Organizational	IWE, humble leadership,	Quantitative	IWE and humble leadership contribute	IWE + humble	Informs the behavioral and

		employees	thriving at work, and OCB	empirical study	to thriving at work and organizational citizenship behavior.	leadership → thriving/OCB	relational dimensions through IWE, humble leadership, thriving, and OCB.
24	Zafar, Ali, & Abu-Hussin (2026)	Global IWE workplace literature	Systematic review of Islamic work ethics	Systematic literature review	The literature demonstrates diverse conceptualizations and outcomes of IWE while revealing fragmentation and opportunities for further theoretical integration.	IWE literature → conceptual clarification → research agenda	Provides systematic evidence of conceptual and empirical fragmentation in IWE research and supports the need for integration.
25	Satrianto et al. (2023)	Indonesian food SMEs	IWE, OCB, green HR practices, and environmental performance	Quantitative empirical study	IWE and OCB contribute to green HR practices and environmental performance in Indonesian SMEs.	IWE → OCB/green HR practices → environmental performance	Informs the sustainability-conversion dimension through IWE, OCB, green HR practices, and environmental performance.

Source: Author's synthesis based on the 25 core articles included in the systematic literature review.

Conceptualization and Empirical Examination of Islamic Work Ethics within IHRM

The evidence indicates that Islamic Work Ethics is increasingly conceptualized as an ethical-behavioral orientation associated with employee attitudes, behavior, psychological resources, relationships, and organizational outcomes. Rather than being treated exclusively as a normative religious principle, IWE has been operationalized as an empirical construct through which Islamic ethical values are examined in workplace behavior. This development positions IWE as an important behavioral dimension within the broader IHRM-related literature.

The employee-performance literature provides substantial evidence of this development. IWE is associated with employee performance through Islamic motivation, affective commitment, and job satisfaction (Aflah et al., 2021). IWE and affective commitment are similarly associated with employee performance in family-business contexts (Udin et al., 2022). IWE also mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance, suggesting that IWE may operate as an intervening behavioral mechanism rather than merely as a direct predictor of performance (Al Smadi et al., 2023).

The literature also indicates that IWE operates through relational and organizational mechanisms. Employee relations climate mediates the relationship between IWE and organizational performance (Badar et al., 2024). Organizational identification functions as an important mechanism in the relationship between IWE and prosocial voice behavior (Akhmadi et al., 2023). IWE is also associated with organizational culture among Muslim staff, suggesting that Islamic ethical orientation may extend beyond individual attitudes into organizational norms and behavioral contexts (Chupradit et al., 2022).

A further dimension concerns psychological and moral resources. IWE is examined in relation to employees' emotional and psychological health under aversive leadership, highlighting the relevance of ethical orientation to employee psychological conditions (Javid et al., 2024). Psychological capital mediates the relationship between IWE and task performance, while ethical leadership moderates this relationship (Qasim et al., 2022). Moral identity and felt obligation sequentially mediate the relationship between IWE and employee ethical behavior (Topcan et al., 2025). Felt obligation for constructive change also functions as a mechanism associated with employee voice behavior (Rubbab et al., 2024). These findings suggest that the organizational relevance of IWE may depend partly on the psychological and moral resources through which ethical values are translated into workplace behavior.

The knowledge-sharing literature extends this interpretation toward organizational processes. IWE is associated with knowledge-sharing behavior through job embeddedness and organizational identification (Suryani et al., 2021). Knowledge sharing is also examined in relation to paternalistic leadership, organizational commitment, and IWE, indicating that ethical orientation operates within broader leadership and relational conditions (Chaudhary et al., 2023). IWE moderates the relationship between personality traits and knowledge-sharing behavior (Javaid et al., 2022). IWE also moderates the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and knowledge-sharing behavior in the Islamic banking industry (Usmani, 2024). Collectively, these studies suggest that IWE may influence the conditions under which individual knowledge is exchanged and becomes available within organizational processes.

The scope of IWE has also expanded toward sustainability-related outcomes. IWE moderates the relationship between sustainable design and social sustainability performance (Asha'ari et al., 2023). Sustainability awareness and ethical work orientation are associated with business sustainability performance in Islamic institutions (Ghoniyah et al., 2024). IWE and organizational citizenship behavior are also associated with green HR practices and environmental performance among Indonesian food SMEs (Satrianto et al., 2023). These findings demonstrate that IWE has relevance beyond employee-level outcomes, although the studies examine different organizational contexts and sustainability dimensions.

At the field level, thematic mapping identifies multiple clusters within IHRM research, indicating a developing but fragmented intellectual structure (Maulida & Rusydiana, 2023). A recent systematic review similarly identifies diversity and fragmentation in the conceptualization, measurement, and empirical application of IWE (Zafar et al., 2026). These studies are important because they place the empirical findings within a broader research landscape and indicate that IWE has not yet developed into a uniformly integrated construct within IHRM research.

Overall, the synthesis positions IWE as an ethical-behavioral dimension within IHRM that is associated with motivation, psychological resources, moral responsibility, organizational identification, knowledge sharing, constructive behavior, and sustainability-related outcomes. However, the literature does not establish a direct empirical pathway connecting these mechanisms to human capital development, organizational capability, and organizational sustainability as a complete sequence. The contribution of the present review is therefore to integrate these relationships analytically while maintaining a clear distinction between relationships demonstrated by individual studies and connections generated through cross-study synthesis.

Mechanisms Linking IHRM and IWE with Human Capital, Organizational Capability, and Organizational Sustainability

The evidence suggests that the relationship between IWE and broader organizational outcomes operates through several employee-level, relational, knowledge-based, and organizational mechanisms rather than through a single direct pathway. IWE is associated with employee performance through Islamic motivation, affective commitment, and job satisfaction (Aflah et al., 2021). IWE is also associated with affective commitment and employee performance in family-business contexts (Udin et al., 2022). Psychological capital mediates the relationship between IWE and task performance, while ethical leadership moderates this relationship (Qasim et al., 2022). Further showed that IWE and humble leadership contribute to thriving at work and organizational citizenship behavior, highlighting the relevance of ethical and relational conditions to positive employee functioning (Suryani et al., 2023). Moral identity and felt obligation further function as sequential mechanisms linking IWE with employee ethical behavior (Topcan et al., 2025). These findings indicate that IWE may contribute to the development of employee-level psychological and behavioral resources that are relevant to organizational functioning.

Relational and organizational mechanisms provide an additional connection between individual ethical orientation and organizational processes. Organizational identification functions as a mechanism linking IWE with prosocial voice behavior (Akhmadi et al., 2023). Employee relations climate also mediates the relationship between IWE and organizational performance (Badar et al., 2024). The interaction between IWE and leader-member exchange is associated with workplace deviance and adaptive performance, highlighting the relevance of relational conditions to employee behavioral outcomes (Zia et al., 2022). IWE is further associated with organizational culture among Muslim staff, indicating that ethical orientation may extend from individual attitudes into organizational contexts (Chupradit et al., 2022). These findings suggest that the organizational relevance of IWE may emerge partly through relational and contextual processes rather than through individual ethical orientation alone.

Knowledge sharing represents another mechanism with potential relevance to organizational capability. IWE is associated with knowledge-sharing behavior through job embeddedness and organizational identification (Suryani et al., 2021). IWE also moderates the relationship between personality traits and knowledge-sharing behavior, indicating that ethical orientation may influence the conditions under which individual characteristics are translated into knowledge exchange (Javaid et al., 2022). Paternalistic leadership, organizational commitment, and IWE are examined together in relation to knowledge-sharing behavior, indicating that knowledge exchange is embedded within broader leadership and organizational conditions (Chaudhary et al., 2023). IWE also moderates the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and knowledge-sharing behavior in the Islamic banking industry (Usmani, 2024). Collectively, these findings indicate that knowledge sharing may function as a potential mechanism through which individual knowledge and ethical resources become available for collective organizational use.

The human-capital literature provides more direct evidence concerning the relationship between human resources and organizational sustainability. Human capital factors are associated with organizational sustainability in the Malaysian hotel industry, with trust mediating this relationship (Batool et al., 2022). Human-capital acquisition is also examined as a factor relevant to organizational sustainability and continuity (Dankyi et al., 2020). Human capital management is positioned as a knowledge-based strategic asset in building organizational sustainability (Istikhoroh et al., 2025). Human-capital efficiency is likewise associated with corporate sustainability and organizational performance in emerging economies (Al Frijat & Elamer, 2025). These studies provide comparatively direct evidence for the relevance of human capital to organizational sustainability, although they do not establish IWE as the antecedent of human-capital development.

The sustainability literature involving IWE provides a complementary perspective. IWE moderates the relationship between sustainable design and social sustainability performance in chemical manufacturing firms (Asha'ari et al., 2023). Sustainability awareness and business work ethics are associated with business sustainability performance in Islamic institutions (Ghoniyah et al., 2024). IWE and organizational citizenship behavior are also examined in relation to green HR practices and environmental performance among Indonesian food SMEs (Satrianto et al., 2023). These findings indicate that IWE has relevance to sustainability-related organizational practices and outcomes across different organizational contexts.

The cross-study synthesis therefore identifies organizational capability as a potential conversion layer between employee resources, knowledge processes, and organizational sustainability. Employee motivation, commitment, psychological capital, moral resources, organizational identification, and knowledge-sharing behavior represent resources and processes that may contribute to the development and mobilization of human capital. The human-capital literature provides further evidence that such organizationally relevant resources are associated with sustainability outcomes (Batool et al., 2022). However, organizational capability itself is not consistently operationalized or directly tested across the 25 core articles.

The resulting architecture can therefore be conceptualized as a sequential process in which the IHRM context shapes Islamic Work Ethics, which influences employee psychological and behavioral resources, while knowledge-sharing and relational-organizational processes facilitate human capital development and mobilization, contributing to organizational capability and ultimately to organizational sustainability. The evidence directly supports several individual relationships within this process, whereas the complete pathway is derived from cross-study synthesis. None of the 25 core articles independently tests the complete causal chain; therefore, the framework should be interpreted as a synthesis-generated architecture rather than a validated causal model.

Research Gaps and Novelty

The synthesis of the 25 core articles reveals several gaps in the existing literature. Although the studies provide substantial evidence concerning Islamic Work Ethics, employee behavior, knowledge sharing, human capital, and sustainability, these streams remain only partially connected. The literature therefore provides a fragmented evidence base rather than an integrated explanation of how Islamic Human Resource Management can contribute to organizational sustainability through ethical and human-capital mechanisms.

The first gap concerns theoretical and conceptual fragmentation. Maulida and Rusydiana identified multiple thematic clusters within Islamic Human Resource Management research, indicating that the field has developed through several partially connected research directions rather than a single integrated structure (Maulida & Rusydiana, 2023). Zafar et al. similarly identified continuing diversity and fragmentation in the conceptualization, measurement, and empirical application of Islamic Work Ethics (Zafar et al., 2026). These findings indicate the need for a framework that connects the different roles attributed to IWE without reducing it to a single independent variable.

The second gap concerns the mechanisms through which ethical and employee-level resources may contribute to organizational capability. Aflah et al. identified Islamic motivation, affective commitment, and job satisfaction as mechanisms associated with the relationship between IWE and employee performance (Aflah et al., 2021). Qasim et al. identified psychological capital as a mediator between IWE and task performance, while ethical leadership moderated the relationship (Qasim et al., 2022). Akhmadi et al. showed that organizational identification helps explain the relationship between IWE and prosocial voice behavior (Akhmadi et al., 2023). Topcan et al. demonstrated that moral identity and felt obligation sequentially mediate the relationship between IWE and employee ethical behavior (Topcan et al., 2025). These studies demonstrate the importance of intermediate mechanisms, but they examine them separately and do not establish organizational capability as the collective conversion layer through which such resources are mobilized.

The knowledge-sharing literature provides an additional but still fragmented mechanism. Suryani et al. found that job embeddedness and organizational identification were relevant to the relationship between IWE and knowledge-sharing behavior (Suryani et al., 2021). Chaudhary et al. examined knowledge sharing in relation to paternalistic leadership, organizational commitment, and IWE, demonstrating the importance of broader leadership and relational conditions (Chaudhary et al., 2023). Javaid et al. found that IWE moderated the relationship between personality traits and knowledge-sharing behavior (Javaid et al., 2022). Usmani further demonstrated a moderating role for IWE in the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and knowledge sharing in Islamic banking (Usmani, 2024). These studies establish the relevance of knowledge-sharing mechanisms but do not directly demonstrate that knowledge sharing constitutes organizational capability.

The third gap concerns the limited integration between human capital and sustainability research. Batool et al. found that human capital factors were associated with organizational sustainability in the Malaysian hotel industry, with trust mediating the relationship (Batool et al., 2022). Dankyi et al. demonstrated the relevance of human-capital acquisition to organizational sustainability through a forecasting approach (Dankyi et al., 2020). Istikhoroh et al. positioned human capital management as a knowledge-based strategic asset in building organizational sustainability (Istikhoroh et al., 2025). Al Frijat and Elamer further linked human-capital efficiency with corporate sustainability and organizational performance in emerging economies (Al Frijat & Elamer, 2025). In parallel, Asha'ari et al. found that IWE moderated the relationship between sustainable design and social sustainability performance (Asha'ari et al., 2023). Ghoniyah et al. connected sustainability awareness and business work ethics with business sustainability performance in Islamic institutions (Ghoniyah et al., 2024). Satrianto et al. examined IWE and organizational citizenship behavior in relation to green HR practices and environmental performance among Indonesian food SMEs (Satrianto et al., 2023). These findings provide evidence for separate human-capital–sustainability and IWE–sustainability relationships, but the two streams have not been sufficiently integrated.

The fourth gap concerns cross-level integration. The reviewed studies operate across individual, relational, and organizational levels. Employee-level studies examine motivation, commitment, psychological capital, moral identity, felt obligation, and behavioral outcomes, while other studies examine knowledge sharing, organizational relationships, human capital, and sustainability. This diversity provides a broad evidence base, but it also leaves insufficient explanation of how employee-level ethical and psychological resources may be developed, mobilized, and converted into organizational-level capability and sustainability outcomes. The absence of a consistent cross-level architecture therefore remains an important limitation of the existing literature.

The fifth gap concerns methodological and empirical development. Most studies in the corpus investigate specific relationships between IWE and particular employee or organizational outcomes. This provides important evidence concerning individual mechanisms but offers limited evidence concerning how these mechanisms develop and interact over time across organizational levels. The existing corpus also does not contain a study that empirically tests the complete sequence connecting IHRM, IWE, human capital development, organizational capability, and organizational sustainability. Consequently, the relationships connecting these domains remain partly distributed across separate empirical studies.

The novelty of this review does not lie in introducing a new construct or claiming that the complete causal relationship has already been demonstrated. Rather, the novelty lies in integrating previously fragmented evidence into a theoretically informed architecture connecting IHRM, IWE, human capital development, organizational capability, and organizational sustainability. In this architecture, IHRM provides the broader human-resource context, IWE represents the ethical-behavioral dimension, human capital development represents the capability-building process, organizational capability represents the potential organizational conversion layer, and organizational sustainability represents the longer-term organizational outcome.

The synthesis also distinguishes human capital from organizational capability. Human capital concerns the knowledge, skills, psychological resources, and other employee-level resources that can be developed and mobilized through organizational processes. Organizational capability concerns the organization's capacity to collectively deploy and coordinate those resources in pursuit of organizational objectives. This distinction prevents employee-level resources from being treated as direct equivalents of organizational capability.

The review further repositions IWE from a predominantly variable-specific predictor toward an ethical-behavioral mechanism within IHRM. The reviewed evidence shows that IWE is associated with employee motivation, commitment, psychological resources, moral responsibility, organizational identification, knowledge sharing, constructive behavior, and sustainability-related practices. The synthesis therefore suggests that the organizational significance of IWE may extend beyond its direct association with individual outcomes to its potential role in shaping the conditions through which human resources and knowledge are developed and mobilized.

The principal novelty of the study is consequently the integration of fragmented evidence across analytical levels and research streams. The proposed architecture connects IHRM as the broader human-resource context, IWE as the ethical-behavioral dimension, human capital development as the capability-building process, organizational capability as the potential conversion layer, and organizational sustainability as the longer-term organizational outcome. This architecture is derived through cross-study synthesis and should therefore be interpreted as a theory-informed, synthesis-generated framework rather than an empirically validated causal model. The resulting framework is presented in Figure 2.

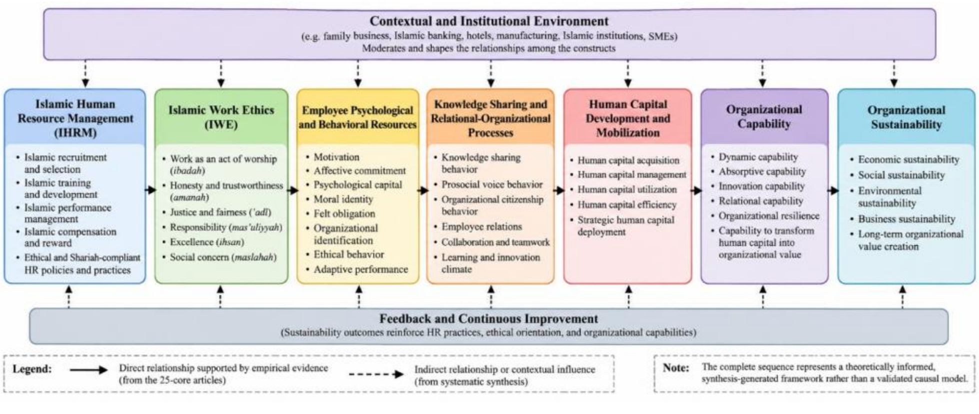

Figure 2. Integrative IHRM–IWE–Human Capital–Organizational Capability–Organizational Sustainability Framework

Source: Author's synthesis based on the 25 core articles included in the systematic literature review.

Theoretical Implications

The principal theoretical contribution of this study is the integration of Human Capital Theory, the Resource-Based View, and Islamic Work Ethics while preserving their distinct explanatory functions.

Becker's Human Capital Theory explains how knowledge, skills, competencies, and other employee resources can be developed through investment in human development (Becker, 1975). Barney's Resource-Based View explains how organizational resources and capabilities can acquire strategic value when they are effectively coordinated and deployed (Barney, 1991). Islamic Work Ethics provides the ethical-behavioral dimension by explaining how Islamic ethical orientation may shape the way employees use, share, and mobilize their human resources.

From a Human Capital Theory perspective, the synthesis extends attention beyond the possession of knowledge and skills toward the conditions that enable employees to activate, share, and apply those resources. Human capital development is therefore considered not only in terms of competency acquisition but also in relation to behavioral and relational conditions that support the utilization of employee resources. The mechanisms identified in the synthesis provide a basis for understanding how human resources may be developed and mobilized, although the reviewed studies do not directly establish that IWE itself produces human capital development.

From the perspective of the Resource-Based View, the framework emphasizes that human capital does not automatically become organizational capability. Individual knowledge, skills, and other employee resources must be coordinated, integrated, and collectively deployed before they can contribute to organizational capabilities and longer-term organizational value. Within this architecture, IWE is positioned as a potential behavioral condition influencing how human resources are utilized and mobilized. This positioning extends the interpretation of IWE beyond an individual-level predictor toward its potential relevance in the conversion of human resources into organizational capability.

The theoretical role of Islamic Work Ethics is therefore distinct from both Human Capital Theory and the Resource-Based View. IWE does not replace either perspective or function as an equivalent organizational theory. Instead, it provides an ethical-behavioral lens for understanding how human resources may be expressed, utilized, and mobilized within an Islamic human resource context. IHRM consequently provides the broader context within which these theoretical perspectives can be integrated.

The resulting theoretical architecture connects IHRM as the broader human-resource context, IWE as the ethical-behavioral dimension, human capital development as the capability-building process, organizational capability as the potential conversion layer, and organizational sustainability as the longer-term organizational outcome. These roles are complementary rather than interchangeable. Because the complete sequence is synthesis-generated rather than empirically validated, the theoretical contribution of the framework lies in organizing fragmented evidence into a coherent explanatory architecture that can guide subsequent empirical testing.

Practical Implications

The findings suggest that Islamic Human Resource Management can be approached as a strategic system rather than merely as an administrative function or formal expression of Islamic values. Organizations can embed ethical principles within recruitment, employee development, performance management, employee relations, leadership, and engagement so that IWE becomes reflected in everyday organizational practices. Employee development can also extend beyond technical competencies to include psychological, ethical, relational, collaborative, and knowledge-sharing capabilities.

The synthesis further indicates the importance of organizational mechanisms that convert individual human resources into collective capability. Organizations can strengthen mentoring, peer learning, knowledge exchange, collaborative problem solving, cross-functional interaction, and organizational learning while developing leadership environments characterized by trust, fairness, humility, respect, and accountability. Sustainability can consequently be incorporated into HR strategy through the alignment of human-capital development, ethical behavior, knowledge management, green HR practices, organizational learning, and broader economic, social, and environmental objectives.

Organizational evaluation should likewise extend beyond productivity and financial performance to include employee capability development, ethical behavior, knowledge sharing, adaptive capacity, participation, organizational learning, and sustainability outcomes. At the same time, the framework should be adapted to sectoral, institutional, cultural, and organizational conditions rather than implemented as a rigid universal model. These implications should be understood as evidence-informed directions derived from the synthesis rather than as empirically validated causal prescriptions.

Future Research Agenda

The integrative framework developed in this review provides a foundation for future research that moves beyond isolated relationships among Islamic Human Resource Management (IHRM), Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), human capital, organizational capability, and organizational sustainability. Future studies should empirically examine whether and under what conditions the proposed relationships operate as an interconnected process. Particular attention should be given to the relationships among IHRM and IWE, employee psychological and behavioral resources, human capital development and mobilization, organizational capability, and sustainability outcomes.

Longitudinal and multilevel research would be particularly valuable for examining temporal and cross-level relationships within the proposed framework. Comparative studies across countries, sectors, organizational types, and institutional environments could further clarify contextual conditions and boundary effects. Future research should also strengthen the conceptualization and measurement of human capital development and organizational capability so that these constructs remain analytically distinct from employee performance, knowledge sharing, and general HR outcomes.

Methodologically, quantitative, qualitative, mixed-method, experimental, and quasi-experimental approaches can provide complementary evidence for examining the proposed mechanisms. Emerging organizational contexts, including artificial intelligence, digital HRM, hybrid work, and technology-enabled knowledge management, also provide opportunities to examine how Islamic ethical principles relate to human capital development and organizational sustainability under changing work conditions. The central agenda is therefore to transform the present synthesis-generated framework into a progressively testable research program, while maintaining the distinction between relationships demonstrated by the existing literature and propositions generated through the present synthesis.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review synthesizes evidence from 25 core articles to clarify how Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) can be positioned within the broader development of Islamic Human Resource Management (IHRM). The findings indicate that IWE has developed from a predominantly normative concept into an empirically examined ethical-behavioral dimension associated with employee, relational, knowledge-sharing, and organizational outcomes. The synthesis further identifies a potential integrative architecture in which IHRM provides the broader human resource context, IWE represents the ethical-behavioral dimension, human capital development and mobilization constitute the capability-building process, organizational capability represents a potential conversion layer, and organizational sustainability represents the longer-term outcome. The review also identifies persistent theoretical, empirical, contextual, and methodological gaps, particularly the limited integration of these constructs and the absence of empirical testing of the complete pathway within a single model. The principal contribution of the review is therefore an integrative IHRM–IWE–Human Capital–Organizational Capability–Organizational Sustainability framework that connects previously fragmented evidence while clearly distinguishing empirically supported relationships from synthesis-generated propositions. The framework should not be interpreted as a validated causal model; rather, it provides a theoretically informed architecture and a basis for future empirical research examining the proposed relationships across different organizational contexts.

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