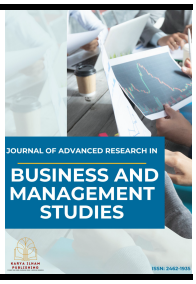
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Islamic Work Ethic and Related Workplace Ethics Research: A Bibliometric and Science-Mapping Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) has become an established construct in management research, yet the development, intellectual structure, and thematic evolution of this literature remain insufficiently mapped. This study aims to examine the evolution, publication and citation patterns, influential sources, conceptual structure, and emerging themes of IWE and related Islamic workplace ethics research. A bibliometric analysis and scientific mapping approach was applied to 206 relevant articles published between 1988 and 2026 and indexed in Scopus. Publication growth, citation patterns, journal productivity, highly cited documents, publication life cycles, and author-keyword networks were analysed using BiblioSpy®. The findings show that the literature has expanded from foundational work on the conceptualisation and measurement of IWE towards research on organisational commitment, job satisfaction, organisational justice, organisational citizenship behaviour, knowledge sharing, knowledge hiding, abusive supervision, and employee performance. Journal and citation patterns indicate that the literature has developed a visible knowledge base, although its publication outlets remain concentrated in business ethics, Islamic management, and related specialist journals. Keyword mapping further reveals a central IWE research stream alongside partially separate themes involving Islamic business ethics, religiosity, banking, workplace attitudes, and performance. The temporal analysis indicates a shift from foundational ethical concepts towards more applied organisational and behavioural outcomes. Overall, the study provides a field-level account of IWE scholarship and identifies the need for clearer conceptual boundaries, stronger theoretical integration, and broader organisational applications.

1. Introduction

Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) is an approach to understanding work that emphasises effort and responsibility while incorporating values such as honesty, cooperation, justice, and accountability. Ali's [1] development of an IWE scale was one of the earliest attempts to examine IWE empirically. Subsequent studies positioned IWE as a system of work values encompassing economic, moral, and

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social dimensions [2], [3]. Since then, IWE has been used to understand workplace attitudes and behaviours in the fields of human resource management, organisational behaviour, business ethics, and Islamic management.

This study seeks to analyse IWE within the broader context of Islamic workplace ethics. Its scope includes studies on IWE and related topics, such as Islamic business ethics, Islamic organisational ethics, Islamic professional ethics, Islamic work values, and Islamic ethical conduct. These concepts are not considered identical but are instead regarded as distinct yet related approaches to applying Islamic ethics in various work, business, and organisational contexts.

Yousef [4] examined organisational commitment as a mechanism linking IWE to attitudes towards organisational change, while Yousef [5] investigated the moderating role of IWE in the relationship between organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Khan et al. [6] extended this literature by examining organisational justice and job outcomes, while Murtaza et al. [7] linked IWE to organisational citizenship behaviour and knowledge sharing. Gheitani et al. [8] examined intrinsic motivation in the banking sector. More recent studies have extended IWE research to adverse workplace contexts, with Khalid et al. [9] examining abusive supervision and knowledge hiding and Islam et al. [10] examining abusive supervision and knowledge sharing.

However, the growing body of research has also led to conceptual problems. IWE has been described as an individual ethical orientation, a set of cultural work values, a contingency variable, and an organisational asset.

Kumar and Rose [11] linked IWE to innovation capability, while Qasim et al. [12] examined psychological capital, ethical leadership, and task performance. Alqhaiwi et al. [13] further examined the relationships between IWE, moral identity, and religiosity. Related research on Islamic business ethics has also contributed to the field by focusing on entrepreneurship and institutional practices [14]. Although these contributions extend the boundaries of IWE research, they also risk conflating IWE, religiosity, and Islamic business ethics with other moral values.

Despite this expansion, the broader intellectual organisation of IWE and related Islamic workplace ethics research remains unclear. Existing studies primarily examine specific relationships and outcomes but do not demonstrate the overall developmental trajectory of the field, its intellectual foundations, or how its major concepts are connected. This represents the main research gap addressed in this study.

Bibliometric analysis and science mapping are appropriate for addressing this gap because they enable the literature to be examined through complementary indicators of publication growth, citation influence, journal concentration, influential publications, keyword relationships, and thematic evolution [15], [16]. Importantly, these indicators are used in this study to map the structure and development of the literature rather than to infer the methodological quality or theoretical maturity of individual studies.

Accordingly, the objective of this study is to map the evolution, citation influence, and thematic structure of IWE and related Islamic workplace ethics research. The study examines publication growth, citation patterns, journal concentration, influential publications, keyword relationships, and emerging themes. Its significance lies in providing a field-level overview of the development and conceptual structure of the literature while identifying areas of conceptual overlap and future research opportunities.

Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1. How have publication output and citation influence in Islamic Work Ethic and related Islamic workplace ethics research developed over time?

RQ2. Which journals and publications have contributed most prominently to the development of this research domain?

RQ3. What conceptual clusters structure Islamic Work Ethic and related Islamic workplace ethics research?

RQ4. What temporal patterns are evident in the thematic emphases of Islamic Work Ethic and related Islamic workplace ethics research?

RQ5. What conceptual gaps and future research opportunities emerge from the publication, citation, and thematic patterns?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Islamic Work Ethic and its conceptual boundaries

Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) is an ethical approach to work based on Islamic principles of sincerity, diligence, accountability, and social and moral responsibility. In contrast to general work ethics, which typically emphasise discipline and productivity, IWE incorporates a broader social and moral scope within its framework. Ali's [1] scale was among the first attempts to examine IWE empirically, and subsequent studies established IWE as a work-value orientation within an organisational context [2], [3].

IWE is related to, but distinct from, religiosity, Islamic business ethics, and moral identity. Religiosity concerns individuals' beliefs and practices, whereas Islamic business ethics addresses broader commercial and institutional practices. IWE focuses on Islamic values expressed through individuals' efforts at work and their relationships within employment and workplace settings. In management studies, these concepts are often discussed together [13], [14]; however, they should not be equated.

2.2 Development of Organisational Applications

The initial phase of IWE research focused on conceptual development and measurement. In these early studies, Ali [1], [2] developed and validated measures of IWE, while Ali and Al-Owaihan [3] described IWE as a multidimensional framework based on effort, collective cooperation, social obligations, and social welfare. These frameworks enabled subsequent researchers to examine IWE-related attitudes and behaviours in organisational contexts.

Yousef [4], [5] linked IWE to organisational commitment, attitudes towards change, and job satisfaction. Subsequent research incorporated IWE into studies of organisational justice, organisational citizenship behaviour, and knowledge sharing. More recently, researchers have examined IWE in the context of abusive supervision, knowledge hiding, and knowledge sharing, demonstrating growing interest in adverse workplace conditions [9], [10].

IWE has also been linked to motivation and performance. Gheitani et al. [8] examined intrinsic motivation in the banking sector, Kumar and Rose [11] linked IWE to innovation capability, and Qasim et al. [12] investigated psychological capital, ethical leadership, and task performance. Related studies conducted within the broader context of Islamic business ethics have extended the literature to entrepreneurship and institutional practices [14].

Although these extensions demonstrate an increasing interest in integrating different workplace outcomes, they also raise questions about the theoretical development of IWE.

2.3 Need for Field-Level Mapping

IWE research has expanded considerably from its initial focus on measuring work attitudes to examining organisational justice, citizenship behaviour, and leadership. However, the lack of overall

coherence in its intellectual structure may not be attributable to the absence of a framework. IWE has been positioned as a value, a predictor and moderator of workplace attitudes, a cultural orientation, and an organisational resource, yet these perspectives have not been adequately integrated.

The conceptual proximity of IWE to religiosity, Islamic business ethics, and moral identity may also pose challenges to construct validity. Greater clarity is required regarding the mechanisms, levels, and boundaries of IWE. Individual studies cannot adequately demonstrate how different applications fit within the broader field, nor can they provide a coherent account of foundational citations, relationships, and the development of the literature surrounding this topic.

Bibliometric analysis and science mapping can be used to evaluate indicators of publication growth, citation influence, journal prevalence, keyword and conceptual proximity, and thematic evolution [15], [16]. This study analyses the field by considering its temporal evolution, conceptual development, thematic structure, diverse conceptualisations, and scholarly influence. These dimensions describe the scope and diversity of the field without assuming that bibliometric visibility necessarily indicates theoretical or methodological maturity.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Research Design

Bibliometric performance analysis and science mapping were employed to examine the development, influence, and conceptual structure of Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) and related Islamic workplace ethics research. Performance analysis assessed publication growth, citation metrics, journal productivity, and highly influential publications. Science mapping examined author keywords, their relationships, and associated thematic patterns over time [15], [16]. The analysis was also informed by more recent bibliometric studies integrating performance analysis, keyword mapping, and life-cycle analysis [17].

3.2 Database and Search Strategy

Scopus was selected as the sole data source for this study because it provides consistent bibliographic and citation data. It also offers extensive multidisciplinary journal coverage, providing the breadth and depth necessary for the analysis [18], [19]. Using a single data source also reduces record duplication and metadata inconsistencies [20].

The search was conducted on 12 June 2026 and retrieved publications published between 1988 and 2026. No restrictions were imposed on language, source type, or subject area during the initial retrieval. The search was restricted to article titles and employed the following query:

TITLE("Islamic Work Ethics" OR "Islamic Work Ethic" OR "Islamic work values" OR "Islamic ethical values" OR "Islamic business ethics" OR "Islamic organizational ethics" OR "Islamic workplace ethics" OR "Islamic Moral values" OR "Islamic Moral principles" OR "Islamic values at work" OR "Islamic ethics in the workplace" OR "Islamic management ethics" OR "Islamic professional ethics" OR "Islamic labour ethics" OR "Islamic employment ethics" OR "Islamic principles at work" OR "Islamic work culture" OR "Islamic ethical conduct")

The extended query captures publications explicitly addressing IWE, as well as related Islamic ethical constructs associated with work, employment, business, and organisational structures. This approach does not assume complete theoretical equivalence among these constructs; instead, screening and keyword analyses were used to examine their relationships. A title-based search was

performed to improve search precision, although this approach may have excluded relevant studies that mentioned IWE only in their abstracts or keywords [16].

3.3 Screening and Eligibility

The screening process was informed by PRISMA methods and reporting guidelines [21], as illustrated in Figure 1. The initial search yielded 236 records. The records were checked using their titles, DOIs, and Scopus identifiers.

Publications were retained if Islamic ethical values were their primary focus and the research addressed work, employment, business, management, behaviour, or broader organisational activities. Books, book chapters, conference papers, review articles, and other publications lacking a clear workplace focus or organisational scope were excluded. The records were screened by [state who conducted the screening] according to the predetermined eligibility criteria. Thirty-five records were removed, leaving a total of 206 articles for the bibliometric analysis.

Although three articles published in early 2026 were retained in the overall corpus, 2026 was excluded from the publication trend and life-cycle analyses because the data were collected on 12 June 2026, making it an incomplete publication year. For all other analyses, 1988 was selected as the lower bound, while 2025 was selected as the upper bound.

3.4 Data Cleaning and Analysis

Data cleaning and analysis were conducted using BiblioSpy®. Author keywords were standardised by merging abbreviations, spelling variations, hyphenation differences, and singular and plural forms. For example, the abbreviation IWE (Islamic Work Ethic) was merged with the terms "Islamic work ethics" and "Islamic work ethic". Conceptually distinct terms, such as moral identity, Islamic business ethics, and religiosity, were not merged.

BiblioSpy® was used to analyse annual publication output, citations, journal productivity, Bradford's zones, highly cited publications, and publication life cycles. Author-keyword co-occurrence and overlay analyses were conducted to examine the development and structure of the field. The dataset comprised 579 author keywords. A minimum threshold of five occurrences was applied, resulting in the retention of 25 keywords for network analysis. The final network visualisation identified five clusters, as illustrated in Figure 4. The overlay visualisation depicted the average publication year associated with each keyword, thereby indicating shifts in thematic emphasis. However, the overlay visualisation does not provide a direct measure of changes in individual themes over time.

3.5 Transparency

The study reports the database, search date, publication period, search field, search query, eligibility criteria, screening results, and final dataset size. It also describes the keyword-cleaning procedure and analytical software used. Therefore, the reported results are limited to Scopus-indexed publications retrieved using the specified title-based search strategy.

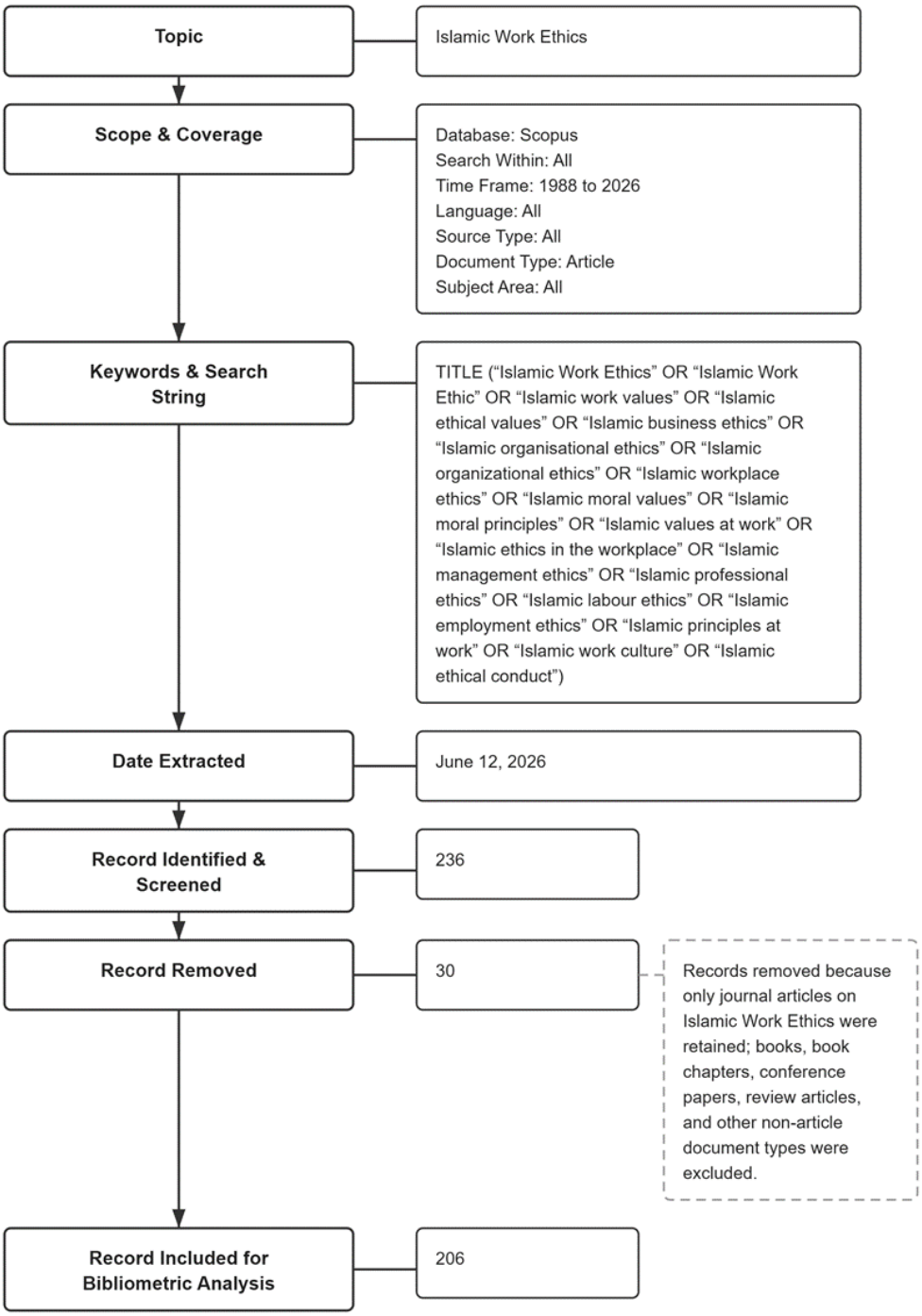


Fig.2. Flow diagram of the search strategy

Source: Generated by the author(s) using BiblioSpy® [22]
Note: The initial Scopus retrieval applied no language, source-type or subject-area restriction. Eligibility screening subsequently retained journal articles only and excluded books, book chapters, conference papers, review articles and other non-article document types, as described in Section 3.3.

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Documents profiles

The 1 provides document profile and citation data for the final version of Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) publications included in the bibliometric analysis. These data describe the extent and liveliness of the area, the productivity of scholars, the impact of citations, the structure of authorship and collaborative patterns. Rather than solely providing descriptive statistics, the document profile

defines the empirical basis for the assessment of the maturity, visibility and cumulative growth of IWE studies.

Table 1
Documents profiles and citation metrics

Main Information	Data
Publication years	1988:2026
Total Publications	206
Citable years	39 years
Total citations	5112
Number of cited papers	190
Average citations per cited paper	26.91
Average citations per year	131.08
Total contributing authors	687
Single-authored documents	24
Average authors per paper	3.33
International co-authorship Rate	69.9%
Total references	32469
h-index	36
g-index	65
m-index	0.923
Citation sum within h-core	3545

Source: Generated by the author(s) using BiblioSpy® [22].

With regard to the citation profile, the Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) is an identified, but developing, sub-field of organizational behavior, rather than a marginal area of Religious Ethics. After 39 years, the field has developed enough to merit serious study, with the majority of papers receiving citations and a substantial h-index. This demonstrates that IWE has gained respect beyond simply proposing an idea. Its impact originated in the first attempts to measure and theorize by Ali [1] and Ali and Al-Owaihan [3] and was later developed in the attitudes and change of organizations and the behavior of citizenship, knowledge and abuse in relation to supervisory control. From a theoretical point of view, the profile shifts IWE from a value-based to a contextual ethical framework focused on explaining workplace behavior. Future studies should test the limits of the direct-effect models that have been repeated many times and explore sectoral and cross-national differences.

4.2 Publication trends

Figure 2 and Table 2 document research developments on the Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) and chart the growing interest in the construct that moves from scattered to more regular patterns. The initial focus was mainly on the conceptual and operational clarification of the construct and included the development of Ali's [1] scale and later the conceptual differentiation of IWE as an ethical and work-related orientation. These clarifications provided the construct validity for subsequent empirical studies. The growth in the volume of publications, therefore, is not simply the case for increased scholarly interest and publication, but also about the Incorporation of the IWE construct into management and workplace behavior research.

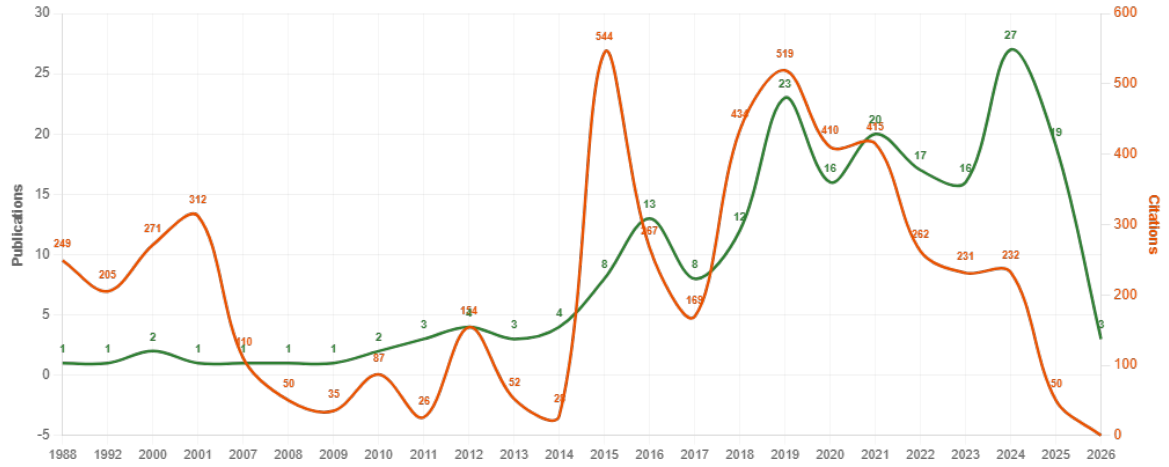


Fig. 2. Annual publications & citations

Source: Generated by the author(s) using BiblioSpy® (Ahmi, 2026).

The intermittent peaks of citations mean that the impact of scholarly work has been less because of a steady stream of publications and more because of a limited number of important first studies. For example, Yousef's [4], [5] earlier work brought the IWE construct into the study of organizational commitment, job satisfaction and attitudes toward change and, importantly, refocused the construct from a religious ethical viewpoint to a behavioral and attitudinal focus. Later citations of justice, knowledge sharing, abusive supervision and innovation indicate a shift toward employee behavior from macro-ethics to the construction of explanatory models. This is important because it shows that IWE has taken root and has been successful in producing empirical research; however, its scholarly emphasis is still more behavioral than fully comprehensive.

Table 2
Publication by year

Year	TP	NCA	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	h	g	m	e
2026	3	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025	19	72	15	50	2.63	3.33	4	6	0.105	3.46
2024	27	84	26	232	8.59	8.92	8	14	0.216	10.25
2023	16	57	15	231	14.44	15.4	8	15	0.222	11.87
2022	17	67	16	262	15.41	16.38	9	16	0.257	12.57
2021	20	72	18	415	20.75	23.06	11	20	0.324	16.16
2020	16	53	16	410	25.62	25.62	13	16	0.394	14.97
2019	23	66	21	519	22.57	24.71	11	22	0.344	19.05
2018	12	50	12	434	36.17	36.17	7	12	0.226	19.24
2017	8	25	7	169	21.12	24.14	6	8	0.2	11.45

Note: *TP = Total Publications; NCA = Number of Contributing Authors; NCP = Number of Cited Publications; TC = Total Citations; C/P = Citations per Publication; C/CP = Citations per Cited Publication; h = h-index; g = g-index; m = m-Quotient; e = e-index*
Source: Generated by the author(s) using BiblioSpy®.

The stronger publication activity suggests there may be more scholarly activity surrounding IWE. This is likely related to the growing interest in values-based management, ethical leadership and moral issues surrounding the workplace in predominantly Muslim and multicultural contexts. Yet, the decline in citation intensity needs to be addressed with caution. Given that newer publications have little time to obtain citations, this decline cannot be read as a negative reflection of the scholarship. The pattern suggests for scholars that there has been enough published work that the

field is ripe for synthesis. It also suggests that the field may be overworked and result in research that has diminishing returns. For institutions and practitioners, the trend indicates that IWE is used as a resource to understand commitment, knowledge and behavior outcomes and how employees respond to supervision in the workplace.

The changes in the patterns of temporal shifts in the scholarship suggest that IWE should no longer be perceived as a culturally unique construct of ethics. Rather, it is a framework under which one may analyze how values based on religion influence the behavior of an organization. Research should adopt longitudinal, multilevel and comparative designs to examine the limits of the framework as well as assess the extent to which it can be generalized across different sectors and cultures.

4.3 Life cycle of scientific production

Using the life cycle analysis in Figure 3, we can describe the growth of Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) research as either expanding, approaching maturity, or consolidating. Compared to the number of publications per year, the life cycle analysis accounts for the cumulative growth of the literature over a period of time, which is useful in the case of IWE research, given that the field spans almost four decades. IWE research started with the early measurement and conceptual studies and then expanded into the areas of organizational behavior, ethics, leadership and the outcomes of knowledge.

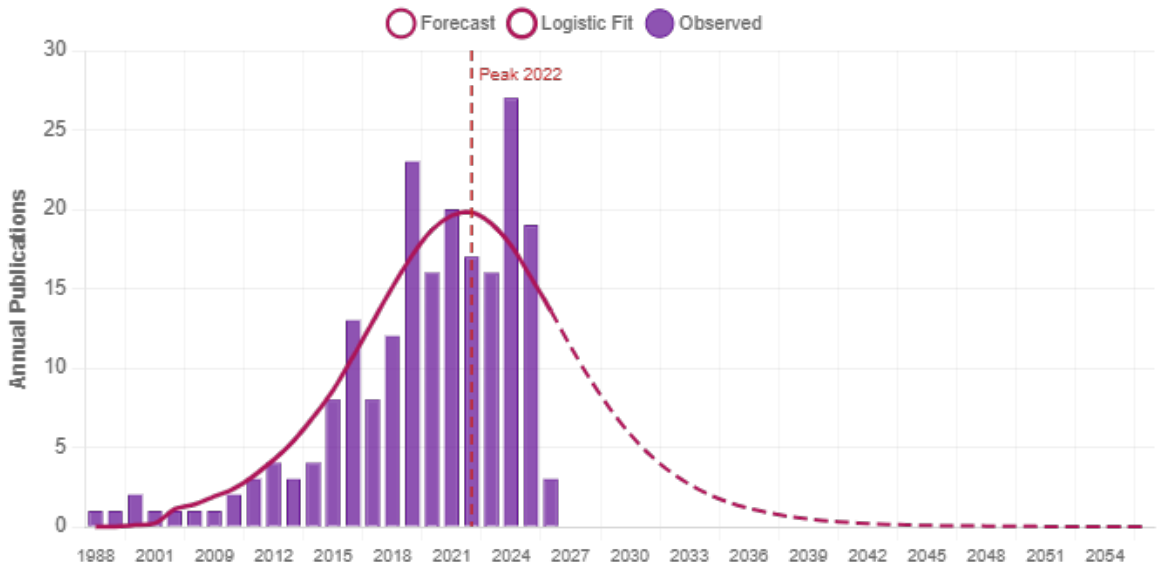


Fig.3. Life cycle of scientific production
Source: Generated by the author(s) using BiblioSpy®.

The life cycle analysis can describe the publication of IWE research as having gone beyond the early stages, but given the shape of the trajectory we see, the model of publication development should not be confused with the level of theoretical maturity that this trajectory may imply.

The modelled peak in the early 2020s suggests that IWE has reached a stage at which the publication of research is no longer solely dependent on foundational work, such as Ali's [1] scale development or the conceptual review by Ali and Al-Owaihan [3]. Rather, IWE research has reached a level of empirical development that allows for greater thematic diversity. However, publication activity following the modelled peak should not be interpreted as evidence of declining research

activity in the field. The model indicates a transition from rapid growth to a period of more measured and potentially fragmented research activity, in which new studies continue to emerge but may cluster around established constructs and relationships.

This trajectory corresponds to the initial transformation of IWE from a values-based construct into a variable in organisational behaviour research. Yousef [4] examined IWE in relation to organisational commitment and attitudes towards organisational change, while Yousef [5] extended this line of research by linking IWE to organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Khan et al. [6] broadened the literature by examining organisational justice and job outcomes, whereas Kumar and Rose [11] connected IWE to innovation capability. Kumar and Rose [23] further examined the role of knowledge sharing alongside IWE in explaining innovation capability. Murtaza et al. [7] extended IWE research to organisational citizenship behaviour and knowledge sharing, while Khalid et al. [9] introduced a more adverse workplace context by examining abusive supervision and knowledge hiding. Thus, the life-cycle evidence demonstrates that the field has achieved empirical legitimacy. However, this development also raises a theoretical concern. Research growth has occurred primarily through the extension of IWE to additional workplace outcomes, while the literature has not sufficiently addressed the boundaries and underlying mechanisms of this construct.

The theoretical interpretation of Figure 3 suggests that IWE is neither a recent construct nor a fully mature area of study. The field is likely at a midpoint between consolidation and refinement, where conceptual development is more important than publication volume. Future studies should employ longitudinal, multilevel, and comparative research designs, particularly across different national and sectoral contexts, to examine not only the ethical boundaries of IWE but also the extent to which it strengthens value congruence and its potential dependence on leadership, justice, or other institutional conditions.

4.4 Publications by Journals

Table 3 presents the journals that have published the most research on Islamic Work Ethic (IWE). The distribution of publications across journals reflects where the field has gained scholarly visibility, which disciplines have recognised the construct, and whether IWE has developed as an independent field of Islamic ethics or as a subdomain of management and organisational behaviour.

Table 3
Most active journals

Source Title	TP	TC	NCA	NCP	C/P	C/CP	h	g	m
Journal of Business Ethics	10	815	27	10	81.5	81.5	9	10	0.9
Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research	10	183	34	9	18.3	20.333	8	10	1
International Journal of Ethics and Systems	7	56	28	5	8	11.2	3	7	0.6
International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change	5	12	10	5	2.4	2.4	3	3	1.5
International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management	5	180	16	5	36	36	5	5	0.625
Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business	5	99	17	5	19.8	19.8	5	5	1.667
Personnel Review	5	462	19	5	92.4	92.4	4	5	0.16
Journal of Islamic Marketing	4	68	15	4	17	17	3	4	0.214
Problems and Perspectives in Management	4	15	14	4	3.75	3.75	3	3	0.429

Asian Academy of Management Journal	3	28	6	3	9.333	9.333	2	3	0.2

Note: *TP = Total Publications; TC = Total Citations; NCA = Number of Contributing Authors; NCP = Number of Cited Publications; C/P = Citations per Publication; C/CP = Citations per Cited Publication; h = h-index; g = g-index; m = m-Quotient; Source: Generated by the author(s) using BiblioSpy® [22].*

The Scopus database indicates that most IWE research is published in business ethics and Islamic management journals, with limited representation in other organisational behaviour or human resource management (HRM) journals.

The presence of IWE research in the Journal of Business Ethics indicates that IWE has gained recognition as an ethical and organisational construct and is not restricted to theology or religious studies. This has theoretical significance because Ali [1] and Ali and Al-Owaihan [3] established IWE as a system of work-related values, while an integral part of the field focuses on the study of behaviour. The presence of the International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management and the Journal of Islamic Marketing indicates that a substantial proportion of the literature focuses on Islamic business, finance, and management.

However, the distribution also indicates certain limitations. Yousef [4] linked IWE to organisational commitment and attitudes towards organisational change, while Yousef [5] examined organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Kumar and Rose [11] related IWE to innovation capability, Kumar and Rose [23] examined knowledge sharing and innovation, and Murtaza et al. [7] investigated organisational citizenship behaviour and knowledge sharing. Nevertheless, the literature remains concentrated in ethics and Islamic business journals. This suggests that IWE research is still largely confined to Islamic business ethics and management journals, presenting an opportunity for scholars to integrate IWE into broader frameworks of workplace behaviour. For practitioners, the concentration of research in applied management journals suggests that the field has considerable relevance to ethical leadership and values-based organisational design.

Future research should include comparative, theory-driven, and cross-cultural studies published in a wider range of management journals to examine whether IWE is relevant beyond the existing publication outlets and across different cultures and institutions.

4.5 Highly Cited Documents

Table 4 presents some of the most influential documents in Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) research. These publications help scholars identify studies that have contributed to the conceptual, empirical, and theoretical development of the field. They also illustrate the citation profile of IWE research within the broader domain of workplace ethics and provide a foundation for subsequent investigations of the IWE construct.

Table 4
Highly-Cited Papers

#	Authors	Title	Source	Cites	Cites per Year
1	Yousef [5]	Islamic work ethic: A moderator between organizational commitment and job satisfaction in a cross-cultural context	Personnel Review	312	12
2	Ali [1]	Scaling an Islamic work ethic	Journal of Social Psychology	249	6.38

3	Khalid et al. [9]	When and how abusive supervision leads to knowledge hiding behaviors: An Islamic work ethics perspective	Leadership and Organization Development Journal	228	25.33
4	Ali [2]	The Islamic work ethic in Arabia	Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied	205	5.86
5	Tlaiss [14]	How Islamic Business Ethics Impact Women Entrepreneurs: Insights from Four Arab Middle Eastern Countries	Journal of Business Ethics	183	15.25
6	Yousef [4]	Organizational commitment as a mediator of the relationship between Islamic work ethic and attitudes toward organizational change	Human Relations	180	6.67
7	Khan et al. [6]	Organizational Justice and Job Outcomes: Moderating Role of Islamic Work Ethic	Journal of Business Ethics	179	14.92
8	Murtaza et al. [7]	Impact of Islamic Work Ethics on Organizational Citizenship Behaviors and Knowledge-Sharing Behaviors	Journal of Business Ethics	154	14
9	Islam et al. [10]	Abusive supervision and knowledge sharing: moderating roles of Islamic work ethic and learning goal orientation	Management Decision	133	22.17
10	Gheitani et al. [8]	Mediating effect of intrinsic motivation on the relationship between Islamic work ethic, job satisfaction and organizational commitment in banking sector	International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management	117	14.62

Source: Generated by the author(s) using BiblioSpy® [22].

In the IWE studies, the construct of an ethically grounded value shifted towards an empirically grounded construct of work attitudes and behaviors.

The papers of Yousef [4], [5] and Ali [1], [2] indicate that the field's intellectual base consists of two primary aspects: the development of measurement and the application of the organization. The construct of IWE gained legitimacy in Ali's studies, while Yousef focused on attitudes related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and attitudes towards change and employment. These studies showed that IWE is more than just a description of Islamic moral values; it is a behavioral construct that can be tested in the realm of organizational theory and research.

The later papers add a new layer to the field of IWE research. The studies by Khan et al. [6], Murtaza et al. [7], Khalid et al. [9], Islam et al. [10] and Gheitani et al. [8] provide a new perspective on IWE within the domains of organizational justice, knowledge sharing, abusive supervision, intrinsic motivation and citizenship behavior. This creates a new dimension to the research of IWE from focusing on the individual values to relational and organizational values. The inclusion of Tlaiss [14] is also relevant as it creates a new of IWE research on women entrepreneurship and Islamic business ethics.

Theoretically, the citation structure shows that the IWE research dominates a small area of the literature; however, the impact of this research is clear. Future research should incorporate multilevel mechanisms, cross-cultural regions, leadership approaches within varying contexts and differing institutions. The literature should be of great interest to human resource practitioners, scholars and ethically orientated institutions, because current highly cited articles provide a tacit definition of IWE and its research implications.

4.6 Author's keyword analysis
4.6.1 Network visualization

The co-occurrence network of author's keywords in Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) research is shown in Figure 4. The purpose of this kind of analysis is not to find how often keywords are used; rather, it is to identify how different concepts are present in different pieces of literature and how the relationships among those concepts affect the structure of the field. In this case, the network shows the thematic structure of IWE research and demonstrates how the field integrates Islamic ethical frameworks with business ethics, banking, organizational behavior, religiosity and performance.

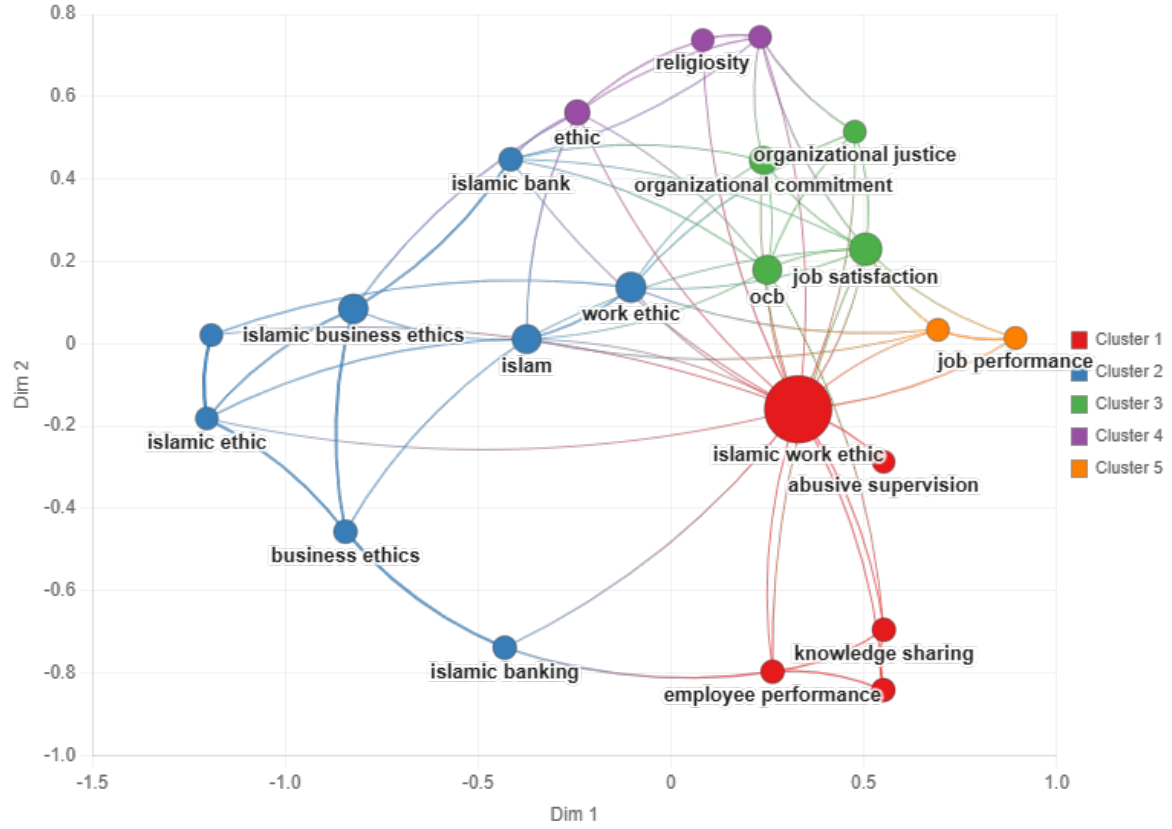


Fig.4. Network visualisation of the co-occurrence analysis of the author keywords
Source: Generated by the author(s) using BiblioSpy® [22].

Keyword co-occurrence analysis proposes that concepts occurring together in the same texts or publications reflect an intellectual association. When author keywords repeatedly co-occur in a given research field, they indicate a focus on similar theories, methods, or empirical data. This analysis is especially appropriate for the IWE field because the literature spans many adjacent areas, such as Islamic moral philosophy, business ethics, human resource management, leadership, organizational psychology and Islamic finance. A co-occurrence network thus provides not just a listing of most frequently occurring terms, but rather a framework of the field as constructed by different scholars.

The network gives a moderate degree of cohesion to research concerning the Islamic work ethic (IWE). Within this network, the term "Islamic work ethic" provides a focal point. This indicates that IWE research has an organizing construct. Elements in the surrounding clusters of the network show that different streams of research have developed more or less in parallel. One of these streams of research considers IWE as a possible predictor or moderator of attitudes and behaviors of employees.

Other streams consider the role of Islamic ethics in the conduct of business, banking and other related professional activities. Still others consider the relation between IWE and religiousness, spirituality and other moral dimensions. Overall, the different streams of research create a recognizable but incoherent core.

The position of "Islamic work ethic" as focal point of this research is expected as initial research established this as a measurable construct and a work-related ethical position within the field of studies [1], [2], [3]. The placement of "Islamic work ethic" in the center of the network also indicates that subsequent research did not ignore the construct. Rather, it suggests that the research consistently used the construct to analyze and explain workplace conduct. This represents a substantial advancement in the status of this construct from a culturally specific value system to a legitimate construct within the domain of organizational studies. For instance, the research of Yousef [4], [5] established a connection between IWE and organizational commitment, job satisfaction and attitudes toward change, which brought Islamic ethics into the mainstream of research on organizational behavior.

Cluster 1: Islamic Work Ethics as a Behavioral and Performance Mechanism

The first major cluster connects Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) as a behavioral control, motivational and relational mechanism. Terms such as "abusive supervision," "knowledge sharing," "knowledge hiding," and "employee performance" indicate that recent studies have employed IWE in explaining how employees address negative leadership and social exchange and tension and workplace knowledge behaviors. Khalid et al. [9] examined the impact of IWE on the relationship of abusive supervision and knowledge hiding. Likewise, Islam et al. [10] studied the impact of IWE in the relationship of abusive supervision and knowledge sharing. These studies relocate IWE as a boundary condition that defines whether employees retaliate, withdraw, or continue to act ethically with problematic supervision. In terms of the literature, this cluster advances IWE into darker organizational contexts beyond the limited positive attitude context.

Cluster 2: Islamic Business Ethics, Banking and Institutional Practice

The second cluster joins the phrases, "Islamic business ethics," "Islamic ethics," "business ethics," "Islamic bank," and "Islamic banking." This cluster demonstrates that IWE studies do not solely engage with individual employee psychology, they operate on the institutional and sectoral levels. Studies on Islamic banking and Islamic business ethics analyze the embedding of ethical values within organizational systems and financial services along with the different stakeholders' expectations. Tlaiss [14], Ismaeel and Blaim [24], Sidani and Al Ariss [25] and Musa et al. [26], represent this broader ethical discourse. They connect Islamic principles to responsible business, halal business, women entrepreneurs and Islamic banking practice. The primary contribution of this cluster is to indicate that IWE is part of the more extensive ecosystem of Islamic business ethics, where work values articulate governance of organizations and client trust and Shariah-based institutional legitimacy.

Cluster 3: Organizational Attitudes, Justice and Citizenship Behavior

This third cluster is constructed around "job satisfaction," "organizational commitment," "organizational justice," and "OCB." This is the most established stream of organizational behavior within the literature. Yousef [4], [5] published some of the first empirical studies that linked IWE to commitment, satisfaction and attitude toward change. At a later date, Khan et al. [6] studied the

relationship between organizational justice and the outcomes of employment. Murtaza et al. [7] tied IWE to citizenship behavior and organizational knowledge sharing. This cluster shows that the empirical logic that dominates the field is still attitudinal and behavioral: IWE is typically perceived as an ethical value framework that positively influences desired outcomes at work. This cluster's primary strength is cumulative empirical progress. Its primary weakness is the possibility of directly repeating established theories of models of cause and effect, moderation and mediation, without providing adequate theoretical depth.

Cluster 4: Religiosity, Moral Values and Ethical Orientation

The fourth cluster groups "religiosity," "ethic" and their related moral concepts. This cluster is essential because it tackles a boundary issue in IWE research: treating IWE as a distinct work ethic or as a part of personal religiosity. Alam and Talib [27], Zahrah et al. [28], Hassi et al. [29], Gürlek [30], Linando et al. [31] and Alqhaiwi et al. [13] prove that the conceptual importance of religiosity coexists and is not equal to IWE. This cluster therefore helps in bringing conceptual order. It proposes that future researches will need to distinguish Islamic belief, personal religiosity, moral identity and ethics in a work environment. Lack of this distinction in the field will result in overlapping constructs and excessive explanation of the behavior that takes place in the workplace.

Cluster 5: Job Performance and Work Outcome Applications

This smaller performance-oriented cluster links IWE with "job performance" and its related outcomes. This drop attempts to shift the focus from attitudes to measurable work outcomes. Evidence from Zahrah et al. [28], Hassi et al. [29], Al-Douri et al. [32], Udin et al. [33] and Nauman et al. [34] shows how IWE has emerged in the context of job performance, employee performance and the quality of work life. This cluster has a practical significance in that it shows how IWE is relevant not only to ethics and satisfaction, but to performance and to the effectiveness of the organization. However, this cluster has a theoretical limitation. If IWE is considered predominantly in the context of performance improvement, the ethical and spiritual dimensions of the construct may end up being evaluated primarily in functionalist management terms.

Important themes that bridge these segments include Islam. This integrates ethics and organization streams, by connecting IWE to its religious bases and its workplace applicability. Work ethic links the original literature on construct development to later human resource management (HRM) and organizational behavior (OB) literature. Job satisfaction integrates the commitment, justice and performance streams and Islamic banking integrates OB with a specific institutional area devoted to banking. These terms are essential because they indicate the locations in which integrative efforts are already occurring. They also indicate the places where more integrative efforts are required. For example, Islamic banking studies, while rich in context, do not always link up with the broader organizational behavior literature. Conversely, studies in organizational behavior do link IWE to the Islamic institutional framework, but do not discuss the Islamic context to the fullest extent.

This network shows a field that is neither fully developed nor undeveloped. It shows signs of conceptual maturity due to the presence of a core construct, behavioral outcomes and a substantial published empirical research. However, fragmentation occurs due to the separation of business ethics, religiosity and behavioral clusters and is evident in some of the empirical studies as well. This fragmentation is a part of the IWE scholarship and need not be a problem. The major problem with the subfields is that theoretically, they will continue to develop independently. Strong research agendas should aim to convergence to integrative and explanatory models by incorporating multiple

levels of ethics, leadership, individual and collective justice, institutional and sectoral contexts and governance.

The knowledge structure reveals a few areas that remain undeveloped. First, research in IWE is mostly concentrated in the area of employee attitudes, attitudes and knowledge behaviors and less research is conducted on strategic human resource, organizational culture, work design, employee voice, digital workplace and transformation. Second, most studies in IWE are of a cross-sectional survey nature which limits the researcher's understanding of causality and temporality. Third, the research in the network regarding the IWE and the contemporary issues of ethics in technology and sustainable, responsible leadership regarding the sustainability of the workplace and hybrid work is scarce. These are contemporary issues that arise in the workplace and impact the workplace ethics.

Future studies should proceed in multiple directions. First, researchers should develop multilevel models to study the relationship between the personal level of religiosity, IWE, leadership behavior, organizational climate and institutional context. This will help to understand to what extent IWE is an individual value, a group norm, or an organizational ethical resource. Second, it is important to study the scope of universality or contextual specificity of the impact of IWE on organizations in Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority countries. Third, researchers should study the stress, injustice and abuse framework (e.g. [9], [10]), contexts in which IWE has been shown to be the most relevant and further study the leadership style, the psychological contract, organizational justice and ethical climate. Fourth, researchers should study organizations outside of the banking and public sectors to include technologists, health, education, hospitality, small and medium enterprises and platform-based work.

The next priority is to enhance conceptual clarity. Though the terms presented in the networks are close to IWE, Islamic ethics, Islamic business ethics and religiosity, they cannot be synonymous. IWE pertains to workplace ethics, Islamic business ethics addresses broader issues of ethics in the marketplace and religiosity refers to an individual’s belief. Research should define these concepts, or at least justify the measures and should not use IWE as a stand-in for general Islamic ethics. Greater clarity in the concepts would improve the theory and be more useful to the research in the field of human resource management, organizational behavior and business ethics.

In summary, the co-occurrence network shows that IWE research has generated a dominant conceptual focus, but is still spread across multiple intellectual communities that are partially connected. Its major contribution is seen in the articulation of the relation between Islamic ethical values and attitudes and knowledge and leadership and practice in the arena of institutions. The next phase of this research should not just be about adding more components to IWE models. It should be about describing when, why and under what circumstances in an organization, IWE is a behavioral shaper. This will enable the field to move beyond just describing empirical phenomena and start articulating more strongly the theory behind the field and making the described phenomena more useful to academics, human resource practitioners, Islamic financial institutions and organizations that want to adopt more ethical and values-based approaches to work.

4.6.2 Overlay visualization

The overlay map of authors keywords for Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) research is given in Figure 5. The network visualization is able to identify clusters of concepts, whereas the overlay map provides a temporal dimension of when specific themes gain importance. Thus, the overlay map is able to explain the shift from framing ethical and religious issues to application of the concepts of organizational behavior and performance and knowledge-based research.

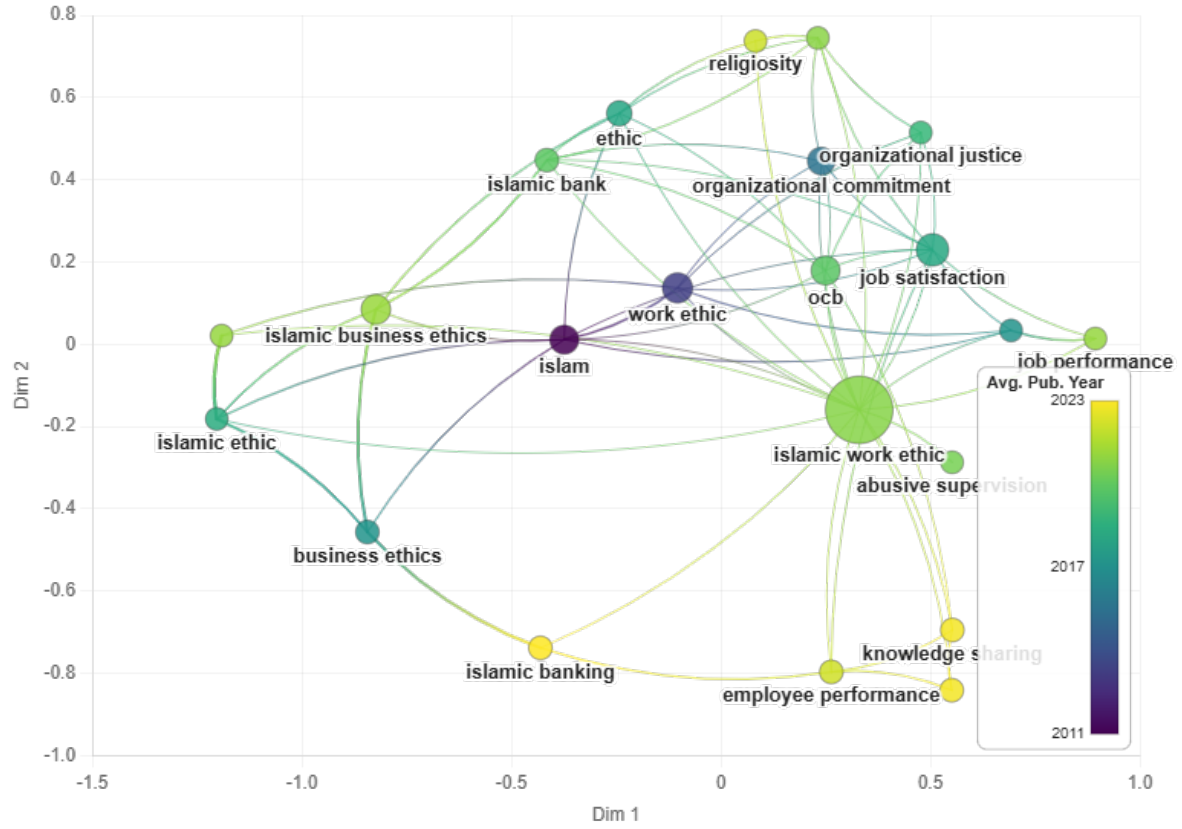


Fig. 5. Overlay visualisation of the co-occurrence of the author keywords
Source: Generated by the author(s) using BiblioSpy®[22].

In Figure 5, the size of a node indicates the occurrence of a keyword in the dataset and links indicate keywords that co-occur in the same publication. The color of the gradient of each node is an average of the publication year and where the theme first appeared. The location of the keywords within the map indicates the proximity of the concepts and in this case, keywords that are close to one another tend to be studied in the same context. The structure allows research to identify immature and mature concepts.

Early Foundations: Islam, Work Ethic and Islamic Business Ethics

The earliest layer focuses on “Islam,” “work ethic,” “Islamic ethic,” and “business ethics.” The first stage of the development of the field was the elaboration of Islamic ethical values and the distinction of IWE from general moral or religious discourse. Ali’s pioneering studies were important for this stage. He once and for all established IWE as a measurable construct in the domain of work and not an ambiguous theological matter [1], [2]. The early studies of IWE treated the concept mostly as a system of norms and culture that is rooted in Islam. The presence of “Islamic business ethics” and “business ethics” in this context indicates that the field also touched upon ethical issues in commercial and institutional contexts, whereas the former studies only focused on the ethics of employees.

Transitional Development: Commitment, Satisfaction and Organizational Justice

The transitional layer of the map includes the concepts of "job satisfaction," "organizational commitment," "organizational justice," and "OCB." These concepts show a shift from the domain of ethics to the domain of organizational behavior. Yousef [4], [5] played a major role in the construction of the field, as IWE was studied in the context of organizational commitment, job satisfaction and acceptance of change. In the following studies, this focus was extended to justice and citizenship behavior, so it was attempted to define IWE in terms of the employees' response to fairness and the obligation and voluntary behavior of the employees [6], [7]. This phase of the field construction is important, as it gave IWE a solid basis in empiricism and anchored it within the dominant theories of the workplace.

Most Recent and Emerging Themes: Performance, Knowledge Behavior and Abusive Supervision

The most recent themes include job performance, employee performance, knowledge sharing, knowledge hiding and abusive supervision. The presence of these themes indicates that contemporary IWE research is focused on the impact of Islamic ethical values and its complexities within the context of the contemporary organization. Khalid et al. [9] and Islam et al. [10] illustrate this shift by including IWE and abusive supervision and knowledge behavior, respectively. This shift in research is theorized to be important because IWE is starting to be studied in the context of ethical resources, beyond positive predictors of satisfaction and commitment. Al-Douri et al. [32] examined IWE and job performance through intrinsic motivation, Hassi et al. [29] linked IWE with employee performance through intrinsic motivation and Udin et al. [33] examined IWE in relation to affective commitment and employee performance. These studies demonstrate that researchers are starting to utilize IWE in more applied and outcome-based studies.

The maturity and trajectory of the field

The overlay of the data illustrate that the field is maturing, but still in a state of rapid growth. Themes of Islam, work ethic, satisfaction and commitment within the context of the organization have been the foundation of the field and remain the most widely used themes. The inclusion of abusive supervision, knowledge sharing and hiding and employee performance illustrate a clear path of the field in the management of knowledge and behavioral outcomes. Although the expansion of the explanatory power of IWE is positive, excessive testing of IWE may result in diminishing returns if the field continues to test IWE in the same vein as a moderator or mediator without articulating potential mechanisms.

Future Research Directions from Overlay Evidence

The field is shifting toward applied organizational behavior, including performance, leadership harm, ethical resilience and knowledge behavior. The next phase of research should address this shift. This would include studies on when IWE mitigates the negative impacts of unethical leadership, when it enhances knowledge sharing and when the strength of the IWE is moderated by organizational justice or an ethical climate. The proximity to the concepts of "religiosity," "ethic," and the outcomes of the organization also suggests the need to distinguish IWE from personal religiosity. They should not be considered parallel constructs.

Figure 5 shows a clear shift from the Islamic foundation of ethics to the application of ethics in the workplace. The next stage of the field will have less about adding more outcomes and more about describing the parameters within which IWE is an important ethical component of a workplace.

5. Discussion

The goal of this study is to include a longitudinal bibliometric and science mapping analysis of Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) research. The analysis signifies that IWE has primarily developed from a specialized, ethical and religious construct to an organizational behavior and business ethics research area. Overall, the field reflects signs of scholarly maturity consisting of a number of publications, a healthy citation count, discernible intellectual guides and recurrent themes. Even with this maturity, the field still largely remains immature in the scholarly realm. The publication transcends various journals and the research exhibits a publication and keyword fragmentation in the area of Islamic banking, Islamic business ethics, religiosity, performance and studies of organizational behavior.

5.1 Interpretation of Results

The publication and citation data suggest that IWE has gone beyond its initial stage. The construction and measurement of IWE as well as the legitimization of IWE were primarily initiated and developed by Ali [1], [2]. Yousef [4], [5]. provided the first studies that moved IWE into the area of organizational commitment, Job satisfaction and change-related attitudes. This transition considerably extended the boundaries of IWE from a normative Islamic system of values to a construct amenable to empirical study in the workplace. Thus, the growth in the IWE field is principally reflective of an increase in the number of studies and the progressive appreciation of IWE as an important lens for describing and understanding management and organizational behavior.

The life cycle evidence also shows that some IWE research is not fully consolidated at this stage. However, the recent surge in publication suggests scholars are paying attention to IWE. The field may be at the stage where more conceptual refinement is essential than wild growth. Many studies still consider IWE as a direct predictor, mediator or moderator of conventional workplace outcomes. Although this has led to significant cumulative knowledge, it may become a methodological trap if future studies continue to address the same subject and do not discuss how and under what circumstances the organizational context may yield IWE's effects.

This interpretation is also reinforced by the Journal distribution. The presence of the Journal of Business Ethics among the top rated and most cited journals shows that IWE has gone beyond some lines of research that are limited to some religious and regional scholarship. However, looking at the distribution of publications in the field of Islamic accounting, Islamic finance and Islamic management shows that the field is still confined to some specialty journals. This is not necessarily a drawback, since these journals provide the necessary institutional and cultural context for IWE. That said, the relative absence of IWE in more mainline HRM, organizational psychology and management journals may inhibit wider appreciation of IWE.

The most highly cited documents show that the various studies that are most highly cited connect IWE to some prominent organizational constructs, for example, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, distributive and procedural justice, abusive supervision and knowledge-related work behavior [4], [5], [6], [7], [9]. This suggests that to increase the visibility of IWE, its Islamic ethical base must be articulated to address some of the more salient questions in the field of organizational behavior.

5.2 Link to Theory and Literature

The findings suggest that IWE is not only an identity marker, but a unique work-related ethical perspective that has behavioral implications. The early studies in this field developed the

measurement and concepts. Later work in this stream advanced IWE to the study of organizational behavior. Yousef [4], [5] related IWE to commitment and satisfaction. Khan et al. [6] related IWE to organizational justice and outcomes of work. Murtaza et al. [7] further connected IWE to organizational citizenship and knowledge-sharing behavior, showing that the construct can explain discretionary and cooperative workplace behavior.

Recent studies have extended the theoretical boundaries of this construct by analyzing the role of IWE in the context of negative or stressful work environments. Khalid et al. [9] and Islam et al. [10] analyze the role of IWE in the context of organizational abuse, as well as knowledge hiding and knowledge sharing. This is an important extension to the theory, as it provides us with a new perspective and suggests that IWE might be an ethical restraint and a coping resource under the condition of workplace mistreatment/relationship strain. Thus, this theory is trying to move beyond the value-outcome relationship bordering on employee behavior and towards a more complex perspective.

As noted, keywords structuring show conceptual overlap between IWE, religiosity, Islamic ethics and Islamic business ethics. Some studies on religiosity, including Hassi et al. [29] and Linando et al. [31], consider these concepts as related but distinct and should not be taken as the same. This differentiation is important for theory building. Religiosity, Islamic business ethics and IWE should be differentiated. Islamic business ethics deals with wider dimensions of commerce and institutions, religiosity relates to personal belief orientation and IWE refers to values and ethical conduct at work. For theory building to continue, these distinctions are vital to avoid the construct being superfluous.

5.3 Theoretical Contribution

This study makes three contributions to IWE research. The first contribution is the provision of bibliometric evidence that IWE is a recognized yet unintegrated field of study. This allows the field to advance beyond personal accounts. Second, IWE research has gone through several stages of development, namely the stage of measurement, attitude modeling and organizational alignment, extension to the workplace and the recent focus on behavior and performance. The third contribution is the evidence of co-occurrences and overlapping evidence, which shows that the field is shifting from a general ethical grounding to the more concrete mechanisms of the organization, such as the behavior of knowledge, abusive supervision, performance and organizational justice, respectively.

This study suggests that IWE's flexibility, which allows for the integration of the discipline into business ethics, HRM, Islamic finance and leadership, is also a concern. This flexibility may lead to a lack of theoretical integration, thereby situating the field within a useful variable rather than a fully developed theory.

5.4 Practical and Policy Implications

The findings of this study have several implications for academics, human resource professionals, Islamic financial institutions, managers and policymakers relevant to values-based work systems. These implications are drawn from patterns in the reviewed literature rather than from direct tests of managerial interventions. For institutions, IWE provides a culturally situated ethical framework that has been associated in the reviewed literature with leadership, conduct of employees and organizational justice and knowledge-sharing within an organization. The reviewed studies linking IWE with commitment, satisfaction and citizenship behaviors and performance suggest that Islamic

ethical values may be relevant to these workplace outcomes, although the bibliometric analysis does not establish the effectiveness of specific organizational practices.

For Islamic banking and Islamic business operations, the findings of this study are particularly significant because Islamic banking and Islamic business ethics form visible themes in the keyword and publication structure of the field.

IWE may therefore be considered as a cultural factor rather than only a compliance-related or symbolic value within discussions of organization's culture, governance and employee behaviors. For human resource professionals, the reviewed literature provides a basis for further examining how IWE may relate to recruitment, training, ethical leadership, performance appraisal and workplace conduct policies. For policy makers and educational institutions, the development of the field highlights the potential relevance of Islamic ethics to management and professional practices. However, specific managerial and policy interventions require further empirical evaluation.

5.5 Future Research Directions

The future of research should focus on developing deeper models of causality, longer time frames and higher levels of analysis, rather than on cross-sectional models repeated ad infinitum. One major priority should be to understand whether IWE is an individual value, a norm of a particular team, a climate within an organization, or an institutional logic. Operating at this level should provide a better understanding of whether IWE is a personal morality, social value, leadership, or a system of the organization.

Second, future studies should examine boundary conditions. Initial studies suggest that IWE is likely to be especially relevant in the presence of injustice, abuse, or incivility at work or of ethical conflicts. Therefore, the interaction of IWE with ethical leadership, psychological safety, organizational justice, perceived organizational support and moral identity should be studied.

Third, research should expand beyond banking and employee attitude studies. Emerging keywords such as knowledge hiding and sharing, employee performance and abuse by management, as well as the digital workplace, sustainability, employee voice, hybrid work, platform labor and responsible leadership provide areas for further research. Comparative studies across Muslim-majority and non-Muslim-majority regions should also be undertaken to extend the scope of the studies in order to examine the boundaries and contexts of IWE.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the analysis used Scopus-indexed journal articles. This means that the relevant articles found in Web of Science, Google Scholar, regional databases, books, book chapters, or conference proceedings may have been disregarded, creating potential database coverage bias. Second, a search strategy based on titles improved the search's conceptual accuracy, but may have ignored articles that studied Islamic Work Ethics in the abstract, keywords, or full text, without mentioning the citation of the construct in the title. Third, the study used bibliometric indicators and science mapping. This means the study analyzed publication patterns and the impact of citations and appropriate structures of a theme. However, evaluating the quality, the depth of theory and the level of methodology of each individual study, was beyond the scope of this study. Fourth, the measurement of citations may have placed a greater importance on older articles because they have had more time to accumulate citations, creating citation-age bias and potentially disadvantaging more recent publications. Fifth, keyword co-occurrence analysis is solely based on author-picked keywords and database meta data.

Although spelling variations, abbreviations, hyphenation differences and singular-plural forms were standardized, some keyword standardization issues may remain because similar concepts can be expressed using different terminology. Finally, the data were collected on 12 June 2026; therefore, 2026 represents an incomplete publication year and should not be compared directly with complete publication years. Future researchers can progress this study using several databases and full-text review and qualitative synthesis.

6. Conclusion

This study helps develop the field of Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) by providing a framework in which existing studies can be integrated, instead of being scattered. The framework includes an identifiable line of thinking, visible cited works and visible directions as the field develops. The bibliometric and science mapping analyses have shown the progress of IWE beyond its initial nature of an ethically-based construct. The field does develop, but it is uneven. Flexibility of the field has led to its application in different domains, as in business ethics, human resource management, Islamic finance and behavior in organizations. However, the flexibility has, in fact, created theoretical dispersion.

The IWE field has progressed through a series of overlapping stages. The first stage was measurement and conceptualization, followed by modeling and description of organizational attitudes, institutional and sectoral application and more recently, engagement with knowledge behavior, abusive supervision, employee performance and organizational justice. This progress indicates the field is not as immature as before, but it still has a long way to go before it can be considered fully mature. This next phase is expected to focus on theorization, construction and integration.

There are useful implications for human resource managers, Islamic financial service providers and policymakers. The reviewed literature associates IWE with ethical behavior, organizational justice, workplace culture, commitment, knowledge sharing and performance. These patterns suggest that IWE may provide a useful values-based perspective for organizations, although the bibliometric analysis does not directly test the effectiveness of specific managerial or policy interventions.

The conclusions of this study must be interpreted within the bounds of its methodology, especially its use of Scopus-indexed journal articles, title-based retrieval, citation metrics and author keywords. Additional limitations include database coverage bias, citation-age bias, possible keyword standardization issues and the incomplete 2026 publication year. These bounds do not diminish the contribution of this study, but instead place constraints on the inferences that can be made. Future studies should attempt to widen this evidence base by utilizing multi-database studies, qualitative synthesis and longitudinal and cross-cultural comparisons. It is now imperative to move beyond showing that IWE matters to outlining when, why and under what conditions it becomes a significant ethical imperative for contemporary work within different organizations.

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Competing interests
The authors declare no competing interests.

Declaration of generative ai and ai-assisted technologies

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used generative AI tools for language refinement, editing support and manuscript organization. All AI-assisted outputs were reviewed, verified and edited by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity and final content of the manuscript.

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