Bridging Traditions: A Comparative Review of Islamic and Conventional Approaches to Human Resource Management

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Abstract
This conceptual paper aims to explore and compare the foundational principles and practices of human resource management (HRM) from both Islamic and conventional perspectives. Employing a comparative literature review approach, this study synthesizes existing scholarly discussions across five core HRM functions including recruitment and selection, training and development, performance evaluation, rewards and benefits, and occupational safety and health. Islamic HRM is grounded in a holistic understanding of human beings, integrating spiritual, ethical, emotional, and physical dimensions, and guided by core values such as Tawhid (monotheism), Syura (consultation), Ihsan (excellence), and Istiqamah (steadfastness). In contrast, conventional HRM emphasizes economic outcomes and productivity, treating employees primarily as resources for maximizing profit and efficiency. This paper highlights the conceptual divergence in goals, values, and approaches between the two paradigms. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the discourse on value-based and ethical management systems, particularly within Muslim-majority contexts. It provides both theoretical insights for advancing HRM scholarship and practical implications for organizations seeking to integrate Islamic principles into modern management frameworks. Furthermore, the paper lays a foundation for future empirical studies that can test, validate, and operationalize Islamic HRM practices in contemporary organizational settings.

Introduction

Management functions as a mechanism within an organization to systematically coordinate people and processes in order to achieve organizational goals. Flaws in management may result in inefficiencies, hinder work progress, and compromise the quality of output (Idris et al., 2019). It is also a critical factor in ensuring the long-term sustainability of organizations. Different management systems, such as Islamic management, conventional management, and Japanese management, have been applied across contexts to manage organizational affairs efficiently and effectively. Each system can support the achievement of organizational objectives when applied appropriately, depending on the organizational context and needs. However, in Islamic-based organizations and institutions, where most managers and employees are Muslims, the Islamic management system is more suitable. This is because Islamic management is rooted in the concept of *Tawhid* (monotheism), which guides individuals in fulfilling their dual roles as servants of Allah and as stewards (*khalifah*) on Earth (Fareed, 2022).

Within this framework, Islamic human resource management (HRM) provides a holistic approach that integrates both spiritual and physical dimensions, aiming to balance organizational objectives with ethical and moral responsibilities derived from divine guidance. The current literature suggests that Islamic HRM emphasizes principles such as Tawhid, Syura (consultation), Ihsan (excellence), and Istiqamah (steadfastness), which frame management as both an organizational duty and a form of worship. These principles extend beyond efficiency and output, underscoring values of justice, fairness, and the well-being of employees as integral to organizational success. In contrast, conventional HRM views employees primarily as resources or tools of production, where success is measured by tangible outcomes such as profit maximization, productivity gains, and consumer growth.

Despite increasing interest in Islamic perspectives on management, there remains a lack of comprehensive comparative studies that directly analyze HRM functions from both paradigms. Most existing studies either address Islamic management in isolation or discuss conventional HRM without considering alternative value-based systems. This gap highlights the need for a conceptual and comparative approach to understand how Islamic HRM can enrich, complement, or challenge conventional frameworks.

Beyond its role in organizational effectiveness, HRM also plays a crucial role in shaping ethical conduct, employee well-being, and long-term sustainability. In the contemporary globalized economy, organizations are increasingly challenged to balance economic performance with ethical and social responsibilities. While conventional HRM frameworks emphasize productivity and profit maximization, they often overlook the moral, spiritual, and cultural dimensions that are equally important in shaping organizational success, particularly in Muslim-majority contexts.

The study of Islamic HRM is therefore timely and necessary, as it provides an alternative paradigm that integrates spiritual values with professional practices. This area of study is important because it addresses the growing demand for management approaches

that are not only efficient but also just, value-based, and socially responsible. Furthermore, it responds to the need of organizations, especially Islamic financial institutions, educational establishments, and public sector agencies in Muslim countries that are seeking HRM models aligned with their religious and ethical values.

The significance of this study lies in its dual contribution. Theoretically, it advances the discourse on HRM by comparing conventional approaches with Islamic perspectives, thereby enriching existing literature on ethical and value-driven management systems. Practically, it offers insights for HR practitioners, managers, and policy makers on how to apply Islamic principles in recruitment, training, performance evaluation, rewards, and workplace safety. By doing so, the study demonstrates the utility and effectiveness of Islamic HRM as a comprehensive framework not only for Muslim-majority contexts but also as a potential alternative model in global HRM discourse.

Therefore, this paper adopts a conceptual approach using a comparative literature review to analyze five central HRM functions such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance evaluation, rewards and benefits, and occupational safety and health. By critically comparing these functions, the paper aims to contribute to theoretical discourse on ethical HRM and provide practical implications for organizations, particularly in Muslim-majority contexts, seeking to integrate Islamic values into modern HRM practices.

Exploring Human Resource Management: Bridging the Conventional and Islamic Worlds
Human resources are essential assets for each organization. They serve as the primary catalyst for generating, mobilizing and coordinating resources to achieve organizational goals. When managed efficiently and effectively, human resources can produce skilled and high-performance employees. This is crucial for realizing an organization's mission and vision (Ministry of Domestic Trade and Costs of Living). Human resource management encompasses practices related to the development, motivation and maintenance of individual within an organization, aligned with its goals and strategies (Rahman et al., 2013). It can be broadly defined as all activities related to the management of people within the firm (Boxall & Purcell, 2008).

Furthermore, human resource development can be defined as an effort to train and guide individuals within an organization. It aims to cultivate the competence, expertise and skills necessary for individuals to contribute effectively to organizational goals. In contrast, human resource management refers to a systematic effort within an organization to ensure that its aspirations and strategic objectives are achieved (Riduan, 2002). According to Salleh et al. (2015), the four main roles of human resources are as a strategic partner, agent of change, employee champion and administrative/management expert. When these roles are executed effectively, they can enhance efficiency, foster commitment and increase organizational competitiveness. However, these roles may vary depending on the organization's objectives, industry context and prevailing cultural values. Without skilled, knowledgeable, qualified and experienced employees, organizational performance is inevitably compromised. Effective human resource management has been shown to positively impact both employee and organizational performance (Anwar and Abdullah, 2021; Mohd Safix, 2021; Suriani, 2015; Salleh et al., 2015 and Azmi, 2008).

According to Khan (2016), human resource management in an Islamic context is rooted in ethical values, beliefs and intrinsic motivation. Azmi (2013) stated that human resource management practices from an Islamic perspective are based on two monotheistic philosophies, namely uluhiyyah and rububiyyah, as well as the three guiding principles: love for Allah, love for fellow human beings, and love for nature. Additionally, Islamic human resource management emphasizes an individual's understanding of their roles as a caliph (stewards) and regards their actions as acts of worship (ibadah) aimed at achieving success in both this world and the hereafter(al-falah). Furthermore, a study by Muis et al. (2018), found that human development management, from the perspective of Islamic philosophy, is structured around four elements, the ontological aspect, which uses monotheistic belief as its foundation; the epistemological aspect, which refers to the Quran and Hadith as primary sources; the axiology aspect, which applies values such as Ihsan (excellence), trust and justice and the teleology aspect, which emphasizes the pursuit Allah's pleasure as the ultimate goal of human development management.

From the ontological aspect, human development management must establish monotheism (tawhid) as the core pillar of its approach. From the epistemological aspect, it should view human beings as holistic entities, guided by authoritative Islamic sources, particularly the Quran. This perspective suggests that the most effective model for human development management is one that does not merely follow conventional management philosophies but instead is rooted in divine guidance. This understanding also influences another philosophical dimension of human development management, namely axiology or the theory of values. The study identified three essential values that must be embraced in Islamic management, namely courtesy, trust and sincerity (*Ikhlas*). These values contribute to a sustainable and integrated mechanism for managing human development management, balancing both spiritual and physical dimensions. Ultimately, this leads to teleological aspect - the theory of the ultimate goal. In Islamic human resource management, the ultimate aim is to attain the pleasure of Allah S.W.T. This goal motivates managers responsible for human development to carry out their duties with full commitment and sincerity, ensuring that their intentions align with the values of Islamic management (Muis et al., 2018).

According to Fadzila Azni (2010), management through the practice of the *syura* system aims to achieve three main goals in Islamic management. The first goal is establishing a management philosophy grounded in the Quran and al-Sunnah. The second goal is to prioritize the development of leaders, administrators and managers who possess noble characters and high-level competencies. The third goal is to implement management practices that promote well-being in both this world and hereafter *(al-falah)*. These three goals represent the key components of management methods within the *syura* framework: management philosophy, managerial character, and management practices. The integration of these components through the *syura* system forms the foundation of monotheism-based management. It begins with the effort to fulfil the humanistic trust between Allah S.W.T as the Creator and human beings as His servants and caliphs. Therefore, the involvement of employees in *musyawarah* (consultative processes) when addressing organizational matters fosters a spirit of cooperation, which in turn contributes to the production of excellent work and service.

According to Hasan al-Banna (2013), the fundamental principles of quality management from an Islamic perspective include the concepts of *Insaniyyah* and *Ihsan,* which are rooted in monotheism values, management based on *syura*, as well as organizational culture and high commitment. These elements significantly influence leadership characteristics, employee involvement and motivational attitudes within the organization. Consequently, this can lead to the development individuals who are satisfied with their work, thereby enhancing the overall quality and productivity of the organization. Moreover, Islamic quality management is not confined to the pursuit of employee or customer satisfaction alone; rather, it aspires to attain *mardhatillah* or the pleasure of Allah S.W.T, in all aspects of worldly affairs, with the ultimate goal of achieving eternal happiness in the Hereafter.

Hasan al-Banna (2013) further emphasized that Islam is a comprehensive way of life with inherent high value, and there is nothing greater than it. This is supported by a hadith of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W., narrated by 'A'idz bin Amr al-Muzani, which means: "Islam is high, and nothing is higher than it". The basic principles of the Islamic management system have been proven to positively influence various organizational functions, including management, planning, control and evaluation of both employers and subordinates. This system can address present and future challenges and realities. Indeed, without competent and high-quality employees, employers will struggle to achieve organizational goals or objectives. Therefore, the Islamic management system can be regarded as one of the most effective and holistic approaches to management.

Through the literature review, several scholars have examined the impact of human resource management based on Islamic principles on employee outcomes. One such scholar is Hadjri (2019), who found that Islamic based human resource management particularly through recruitment and selection, employee training and reward systems has a positive effect on employee performance. A study conducted by Kee and Masli (2021) explored the influence of Islamic work ethics on emotions and emotional intelligence among employees. This study involved 58 respondents, including management and professional staff at the Ministry of Human Resources. The findings revealed that the practice of Islamic work ethics significantly influences emotional intelligence and affects employee emotions through the implicit emotional dimension. Consequently, by applying Islamic work ethics, employees tend to express positive emotions and demonstrate sincerity when interacting with colleagues and customers. Rooted in the teachings of the Quran dan Hadith, Islamic work ethics, cultivate honesty, trustworthiness, and courage, particularly in facing challenges within the workplace, engaging with customers, and fulfilling daily responsibilities. Ultimately, the practice of Islamic work ethics reflects an attitude of integrity in carrying out one's duties.

Noh et al. (2015) conducted a study on the implementation of Islamic work ethics at JCorp Malaysia. The study identified seven key Islamic work ethic practices observed by JCorp employees: working as an act of worship to Allah S.W.T, discipline, trust, syura (consultation), justice, islah (continuous improvement) and earnestness. The effective implementation of these ethics has brought significant benefits to JCorp employees, the organization and the wider community. Among the benefits are increased employee productivity, higher levels of commitment to work, more opportunities for promotion, lower turnover rates and the retention of loyal and experienced employees. Furthermore, the application of Islamic work ethics has contributed to high business profits for JCorp, thereby supporting the economic

development of the state of Johor and the nation. This study demonstrates that with strong collaboration between management and employees, Islamic work ethics can be successfully implemented in an organizational setting. Based on the findings of previous studies by Hadjri (2019), Kee & Masli (2021) and Noh et. al (2015), it is evident that Islamic based human resource management and work ethics have had a positive impact not only on employees but also on the organizations that adopt these practices.

Human Resource Management (HRM) Indicators
The practice of human resource management can be observed across various contexts, encompassing key indicators such as employee recruitment, training and development, performance evaluation, reward and benefits management, as well as safety and health management.

Employee Recruitment
Recruitment is the process of identifying and attracting qualified candidates to fill vacant positions within an organization. This process is influenced by several factors, including government regulations, company policies, the supply and demand of labour, as well as the required skills and qualifications. Common methods of recruitment include direct applications and interviews through walk-ins or write-ins, employee referrals, notifications to relevant agencies such as the labour department and advertisements in print or electronic media. According to Zafir and Fazilah (2003), effective recruitment and selection practices lead to the hiring of employees who demonstrate greater loyalty to the organization. Furthermore, employee loyalty and commitment are key indicators of the effectiveness of an organization's recruitment and selection process. From an Islamic perspective, employee selection must meet five essential criteria such as competence, experience, responsibility, organizational suitability and reputation (Ali 2005, 2010).

Azmi (2013), in his writings, emphasizes the important of human resource management practices as reflected in the Quran and Hadith, particularly in the context of employee selection. According to Azmi (2013), the selection and recruitment of employees serve as the foundation for an organization's performance. Without hiring individuals who meet the desired criteria, it is unlikely that an organization will able to achieve its objectives. The essential qualities that Muslim employee must possess include competency, good morals, piety and trustworthiness. Individuals who are pious and have strong faith are also likely to exhibit secondary attributes such as honesty, patience, gratitude, truthfulness and the ability to keep promises. These attributes should be identified and assessed prior to inviting a candidate for an interview. All decisions related to employee selection must be made through careful deliberation to ensure that the outcomes are fair and equitable.

Hashim (2009, 2010) asserted that, according to Islamic teachings, the selection process must conducted fairly and equitably, as emphasized in the Quran. He stated that employee selection in Islam must adhere to specific principles. The first principle is justice. The second principle is that the selection process should be based on qualifications and must not be influenced by factors such as wealth, age, race, political power, friendship, or familial relationships. The third principle is honesty, and the fourth is ensuring that the responsibilities assigned are within the individual's capabilities. Azmi (2010) similarly emphasized that, in an Islamic context, those responsible for the employee selection process must ensure that no

discrimination occurs. Selection must be based on the applicant's qualifications and expertise. Additionally, the candidate's character should be assessed and given due considerations. Therefore, it can be concluded that employee selection should be transparent and aligned with the organizational needs. In an Islamic context, the selection process must be conducted fairly and equitably to prevent discrimination and nepotism.

Training And Development
The Human Resource Management Division is responsible for the planning and development of human resources, organizational development, and service management for members of the Ministry. The division prioritizes human capital development to produce highly skilled and knowledgeable employees with positive work ethics. This objective can be achieved through training and continuous learning (Ministry of Domestic Trade and Costs of Living).

According to Ibrahim (2006), organizational training is a structured learning program designed to enhance employees' knowledge, skills and performance. It is a process that transforms employee behavior in the workplace through the application of learning principles. Training and development programs represent continuous efforts to improve employees' competencies. Training is also aimed at enhancing job related skills that are beneficial to both employees and the organization. The success of an organization largely depends on its workforce. Every employee, whether at the top, middle or lower level, is a valuable asset to the organization. Therefore, investing in human capital through employee training is a critical strategy for organizational development (Ismail et al., 2013). An effective organization is one that allocates adequate financial resources, time and support for the planning, implementation, and supervision of training programs (Cascio, 1998).

According to Azmi (2013), training and employee development are practices implemented after candidates are hired. In Islam, the objective of training and development is not only to enhance mental capabilities but also to foster spiritual and physical growth. Islam training practices emphasize the importance of addressing spiritual development before focusing on mental and physical training, as the mind cannot be properly developed without a strong spiritual foundation. In essence, strong spirituality promotes and sound mind and body. Career advancement is encouraged in Islam, as it allows individuals to improve their living conditions. Therefore, employers are encouraged to provide the necessary facilities and support to help employees advance in their careers. As employees progress, their motivation and job satisfaction are likely to increase, which in turn contributes to improved organizational performance. In addition, employee performance must be regularly evaluated based on principles of justice and the process must be free from discrimination and favoritism. Employees who demonstrate excellent performance should be rewarded through promotions; salary increases or other forms of recognition. Conversely, employees who exhibit weak performance should be provided with training opportunities or given motivation and counselling, particularly if personal issues are affecting their work.

There are several Islamic concepts related to training and development. The first concept is *Etqan,* which refers to the awareness and commitment to self-improvement, involving continuous efforts to enhance one's performance (Branine & Pollard, 2010). The second concept is *Al-Falah*, which signifies the pursuit of excellence and perfection. Both *Etqan* and *Al-Falah* reflect the Islamic emphasis on success and progress through personal

dan professional development. In this regard, employees are encouraged to enhance productivity and work quality by upgrading their skills and acquiring new knowledge. According to Azmi (2010), Islamic teachings advocate that employers should provide opportunities for employees to develop their skills through training, special assignments and mentorship without any discrimination based on race, skin color, gender or religion. The objective of training is to develop and increase employees' capabilities so they can contribute effectively to the organization's performance. From an Islamic perspective, it is essential for employers need to implement training and development initiatives in an equitable and inclusive manner.

A study conducted by Lamsah et al. (2021) examined human resource management through the lens of military training and its impact on employees' performance. The finding revealed a significant relationship between military-based training modules and employee performance, particularly in terms of team cooperation. According to Lamsah et al. (2021), training based on military modules can effectively develop both the mental and physical resilience of civilian workers, especially in managing workplace stress. Furthermore, the cognitive and psychomotor development fostered through such training aligns well with the job requirements. The holistic implementation of military training has shown a positive impact on the achievement of an organization's goal, mission and vision, thereby optimizing the contribution of human capital.

Performance Evaluation
Shahnawaz & Juyal (2006) stated that performance evaluation is an important indicator of employee performance, satisfaction and commitment within an organization. In the Islamic context, employee performance evaluation is also regarded as a key component of human resource management. Previous studies have shown that employee performance is directly influenced by factors such as recruitment, selection, training programs, performance evaluation and rewards (Bako & Kolawole, 2016; Athar & Shah, 2015; Hameed et al., 2014). According to (Rahman et al., 2013), employee performance evaluation must be grounded in the principles of justice, sincerity and concern and must be conducted based on established criteria. Factors to be considered in measuring employee performance as practice by Khalifah Umar: feedback from public complaints (customer feedback), feedback from subordinates, and performance monitoring. Performance evaluation serves as a crucial aspect of human resource management, aiming to assess productivity, enhance employee performance, support promotion decisions, and determine salary increments. Therefore, performance evaluation is a vital element in Islamic human resource management and must be conducted fairly and without any form of discrimination.

Several factors must be considered when measuring employee performance, including quality, quantity, punctuality, and effectiveness (Robbins, 2008). According to Ali (2010), Khalifah Umar outlined three approaches to evaluating employee performance: feedback from public complaints (customer feedback), feedback from subordinates, and direct performance monitoring. Performance evaluation is a crucial aspect of human resource management, aimed at assessing productivity, enhancing employee performance, facilitating promotions, and determining salary increments. Therefore, employee performance evaluation is a vital component of human resource management within the Islamic context such evaluations must be conducted fairly and be free from all forms of discrimination.

Tang Swee et al. (2015) examined the relationship between human resource management and organizational performance, focusing on manufacturing organizations in Malaysia. A total of 137 organizations participated in the study. The findings revealed that the higher the level of human resource management practices within an organization, the higher its expected performance. These findings are consistent with the views of Salleh et al. (2015). Similarly, Anwar and Abdullah (2021) investigated the impact of human resource management practices on the performance of government agencies. This study employed a quantitative research method, involving 240 respondents. The results indicated that human resource management, particularly through decentralization, has a positive relationship with the performance of government agencies.

Suriani (2015) examined the relationship between human resource management practices and organizational commitment among employees at Philip Morris International (PMI) in Malaysia. The findings indicated that performance evaluation is the most significant factor in enhancing organizational commitment among employees at PMI. This is because a transparent and fair performance evaluation system encourages employees to maintain a high level of commitment, thereby contributing to improved organizational performance. At the same time, such a system helps the organization achieve its predefined targets and goals.

Rewards And Benefits Management
Rewards and benefits are defined as wages, salaries, annual leave, and other facilities provided by an organization based on specific job roles (Zafir et al., 2003). Reward management is also a key component of human resource management, referring to the compensation employees receive for performing their duties effectively. It includes both monetary rewards (such as salaries and bonuses) and non-monetary rewards (such as employee benefits) (Martocchio, 2017). Rewards have a significant influence on employee motivation and performance (Safuan & Kurnia, 2021; Sembiring et al., 2020).

Employee rewards are a critical component in human resource management within the Islamic context. Rewards refer to what organizations provide to their employees in return for their contributions (Amin et al., 2014). According to Sardar et al. (2011), rewards can be categorized into two types: monetary and non-monetary. Monetary rewards include salary, bonuses, and other financial incentives, while non-monetary rewards may encompass benefits such as annual leave. Rahman et al. (2013) argue that, according to Islamic teachings, rewards must be determined based on several key principles. These include mutual agreement between employer and employee, alignment with the nature and level of work performed, consideration of the employee's abilities and competencies, and the exclusion of all forms of discrimination. Islam prohibits coercion and forced labour; thus, the wages offered must be fair and proportionate to the work undertaken. Azmi (2013) emphasizes that a reward is a form of payment for the employee's efforts and should be disbursed promptly upon the completion of the work. Delays or failure to provide compensation are considered forms of injustice in Islam. The amount paid should be commensurate with the type and quality of work, as well as the employee's capabilities. Similarly, Salleh (2012) asserts that rewards based on Islamic principles must be pre-determined in accordance with clearly defined contractual terms. These should reflect current market conditions and consider the employee's experience and qualifications. Furthermore, such compensation must be sufficient to meet the employee's basic needs and paid without delay. In summary, within the

Islamic framework, employee rewards must be fair, non-discriminatory, aligned with the scope of work, and disbursed immediately upon job completion.

Employee reward is a key element that must be emphasized in human resource management, particularly within the Islamic context. Rewards refer to the compensation or benefits provided by an organization to its employees (Amin et al., 2014). According to Sardar et al. (2011), rewards can be classified into two categories: monetary and non-monetary. Monetary rewards include salaries, bonuses, and other financial incentives, whereas non-monetary rewards encompass benefits such as annual leave. Rahman et al. (2013) assert that, in accordance with Islamic teachings, rewards should be determined based on several principles. These principles include mutual agreement between employer and employee, commensurability with the work performed, alignment with the employee's ability and competency, and freedom from any form of discrimination. Islam prohibits coercion and forced labor; therefore, wages must be just and proportionate to the work completed. Azmi (2013) emphasizes that a reward represents payment for the employee's efforts and should be disbursed promptly upon completion of the work. Any delay or failure to pay wages is considered a form of injustice in Islam. The payment must be fair and commensurate with both the nature of the work and the employee's capabilities. Similarly, Salleh (2012) notes that rewards, from an Islamic perspective, must be determined in advance based on clearly defined contractual agreements. These agreements should reflect prevailing market conditions and consider the employee's qualifications and experience. Moreover, the rewards must be fair, sufficient to meet basic needs, and paid without delay upon the completion of work. In conclusion, within the Islamic framework, employee rewards must be just, non-discriminatory, aligned with the scope and quality of work, and promptly disbursed.

Hasan al-Banna (2013) emphasized that the Islamic management system, which is inherently more holistic, should incorporate fundamental principles as a comprehensive guide to enhance existing quality management systems in both Western and Eastern contexts. These fundamental principles include the value of *Insaniyyah* (humanity), the characteristics of *Ihsan* (excellence) grounded in monotheistic values, management based on *Syura* (consultation), and a culture of *Istiqamah* (steadfastness and commitment to tasks). When these principles are embedded in every aspect of management practice, they can lead to increased job satisfaction and ultimately result in true success (*al-Falah*) and the attainment of Allah S.W.T.'s pleasure. A work environment that emphasizes *Insaniyyah*, *Ihsan*, and *Syura* is likely to cultivate a positive and conducive atmosphere. Employees will be more motivated and diligent, leading to increased efficiency and effectiveness in their tasks. The characteristics of *Ihsan*, such as empathy and sensitivity towards employees' needs, contribute to nurturing loyal and committed employees who are less likely to leave the organization. This, in turn, helps reduce the high costs associated with recruitment and training of new staff. Moreover, the principles of *Ihsan* highlight the importance of providing a fair and appropriate reward system for employees. It is undeniable that implementing quality management programs often entails a heavy workload and requires a high level of commitment from both management and employees. Therefore, the reward aspect should not be overlooked, as it serves to recognize and appreciate employee contributions. Examples of such recognition include organizing family day events, issuing letters of appreciation, and offering promotions.

A study by Elsafty and Ragheb (2020) found that monetary rewards, such as bonuses provided during the COVID-19 pandemic, are positively associated with employee retention and the willingness to continue working within an organization. In response to the pandemic, several national governments implemented policies to provide financial support to both employees and organizations, aiming to address the health crisis while ensuring compliance with stay-at-home orders. For example, the United States government introduced two weeks of paid sick leave to support employees undergoing quarantine, receiving treatment related to COVID-19, caring for infected family members, or managing childcare responsibilities due to the closure of schools and daycare centres. These initiatives aimed to reduce financial burdens and promote public health compliance. However, this unprecedented situation posed a significant challenge for management in maintaining employee motivation and engagement, particularly following extended periods of leave or remote work.

Occupational Safety And Health
In this context, management holds the responsibility of protecting employees while they are at work. It is essential for management to ensure that the workplace is free from any psychological or physical hazards that may cause harm or even lead to death. The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced a new threat in the workplace (Hecker, 2020). This unprecedented situation has placed significant pressure on employees (Shaw et al., 2020) and posed major challenges to organizational management (Hamouche, 2020). The impact of the pandemic on workers' health varies depending on their work environment and specific roles. Among the primary challenges faced by organizations during the pandemic are controlling the spread of the virus, protecting workers from infection, and increasing employee awareness and compliance with safety protocols and regulations implemented in the workplace. In addition, the administration of vaccines presents another layer of complexity for employers, who must manage vaccination campaigns within the organization and, in some cases, bear the cost of employee vaccinations (Rothstein et al., 2021). Nonetheless, the core challenge for employers remains identifying potential risk factors and implementing effective preventive measures whether employees are physically present in the workplace or working remotely.

Comparative Overview of Islamic and Conventional HRM Functions
Based on the review of literature, it is evident that Islamic and conventional approaches to human resource management (HRM) differ significantly across various functions. While conventional HRM is generally driven by economic objectives and productivity outcomes, Islamic HRM integrates spiritual, ethical, and social dimensions into management practices. These differences can be observed clearly in areas such as recruitment, training, performance evaluation, rewards, and occupational safety. To provide a clearer synthesis of these distinctions, Table 1 presents a comparative summary of the fundamental differences between Islamic HRM and conventional HRM across the five major functions discussed.

Table 1

Comparison Between Islamic and Conventional Approaches to HRM Functions

HRM Function	Islamic HRM Perspective	Conventional HRM Perspective
Recruitment & Selection	Considers both competence (*kafaah*) and moral character (*akhlaq*); fairness and justice in hiring decisions.	Focuses primarily on skills, qualifications, and cost-effectiveness.
Training & Development	Viewed as continuous learning (*fardhu kifayah*) to enhance knowledge, skills, and ethics.	Aimed at improving technical skills and productivity for organizational efficiency.
Performance Evaluation	Emphasizes fairness, accountability, and intention (*niyyah*); guided by values of *ihsan*.	Based on measurable outputs, efficiency, and key performance indicators (KPIs).
Rewards & Benefits	Must be fair, timely, and sufficient to meet basic needs; linked to justice and avoidance of exploitation.	Focuses on financial incentives (salary, bonuses) and non-financial perks to motivate performance.
Occupational Safety & Health	Employer is responsible to protect employees physically and psychologically; rooted in Islamic principles of justice and compassion.	Compliance-based; emphasizes legal requirements, risk management, and workplace safety standards.

Source: Author's compilations based on literature review

As summarized in Table 1, the comparison between Islamic and conventional HRM highlights fundamental differences in their underlying philosophies and approaches. Conventional HRM is predominantly concerned with efficiency, measurable outcomes, and economic growth, often treating employees as resources for achieving organizational objectives. In contrast, Islamic HRM emphasizes justice, fairness, and the holistic development of employees by integrating spiritual, ethical, and social values into HR practices. This distinction demonstrates that Islamic HRM does not merely aim for productivity but also aspires to achieve balance between organizational success and human well-being. Such integration provides an alternative framework for organizations, particularly in Muslim-majority contexts, to enhance employee motivation, strengthen organizational commitment, and achieve sustainable performance.

Conclusion

This conceptual paper has compared the foundational principles and practices of human resource management (HRM) from Islamic and conventional perspectives. The analysis across five core HRM functions such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance evaluation, rewards and benefits, and occupational safety and health demonstrates significant differences between the two paradigms. While conventional HRM is primarily driven by material outcomes and productivity, Islamic HRM emphasizes a holistic approach that integrates spiritual, ethical, and physical dimensions, guided by values such as Tawhid (monotheism), Syura (consultation), Ihsan (excellence), and Istiqamah (steadfastness).

This study contributes to the literature by positioning Islamic HRM as a value-based alternative to conventional frameworks. It highlights the integration of spiritual and ethical principles into HRM functions, thereby expanding the discourse on human resource theories

beyond materialistic and economic perspectives. By conceptualizing HRM within an Islamic worldview, the paper enriches theoretical debates in the fields of management, organizational behaviour and ethics.

The findings suggest that organizations, particularly in Muslim-majority contexts, may benefit from aligning their HRM practices with Islamic principles. Implementing justice in recruitment, fairness in performance evaluation, ethical treatment in rewards, and responsibility for employee welfare not only enhances organizational trust but also motivates employees to work diligently and with integrity. This integration may improve long-term sustainability by fostering loyalty, commitment, and higher job satisfaction.

As a conceptual and comparative study, this paper provides a theoretical foundation for further empirical investigation. Future research should focus on testing the proposed ideas through quantitative and qualitative approaches, such as surveys, interviews, or case studies, to evaluate how Islamic HRM practices are applied in real organizational settings. Moreover, comparative studies across different cultural or industrial contexts could provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of Islamic HRM in contemporary business environments.

In conclusion, Islamic HRM offers a comprehensive framework that balances organizational objectives with ethical responsibilities and human well-being. By integrating Islamic principles into HRM practices, organizations can achieve sustainable success that encompasses economic growth, spiritual fulfilment and societal well-being.

Acknowledgment

Conflict of Interest
The authors would like to declare no conflict of interest.

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