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The Role Of Islamic Religiosity In Shaping Islamic Work Ethic: A Systematic Review And Its Implications For Vocational And Higher Education

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Abstract

Declining work discipline, productivity, and organizational commitment underscore the importance of strengthening the Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) among Muslim workers. Although Islamic religiosity is widely recognized as one of the primary factors shaping ethical work behavior, empirical findings regarding its relationship with the Islamic work ethic remain inconsistent across different contexts. Unlike previous studies that have generally focused on organizational settings, this study systematically synthesizes empirical evidence from both corporate and educational contexts to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic work ethic, along with its implications for vocational and higher education. This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach following PRISMA guidelines. Articles published between 2012 and 2025 were obtained from Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, ProQuest, Google Scholar, and other academic databases based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Of the 267 articles identified, 17 empirical studies met the eligibility criteria for analysis. The synthesis results show that the majority of studies (62%) reported a positive and significant relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic work ethic, while other studies found either no significant relationship or one dependent on specific contexts. This relationship was influenced by various demographic and contextual factors, such as age, gender, organizational culture, and national background. Evidence from the education sector also indicates that Islamic religiosity contributes to the formation of professional ethics and improved

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performance among teachers and lecturers, thereby affirming its relevance for the development of vocational and higher education. These findings suggest that strengthening Islamic religiosity has the potential to support the formation of ethical work values within educational settings, while also providing direction for future empirical research on curriculum development and character education.

Keywords: Systematic Literature Review, Islamic religiosity, Islamic work ethic, work behavior, vocational education.

INTRODUCTION

Increasing competitive global rivalry requires organizations to enhance productivity, discipline, and work commitment as key factors in sustaining competitiveness. Various challenges, such as low work motivation, rising absenteeism, and declining employee loyalty, have become issues affecting organizational effectiveness across sectors (Agustina & Wibowo, 2021; Schnabel et al., 2022). This condition indicates that organizational success is determined not only by the technical competence of human resources, but also by internal values that shape positive, ethical, and responsible work behavior. Identifying the factors capable of strengthening such behavior is therefore increasingly important, from both a managerial and educational perspective.

In the context of Muslim societies, one concept that has received considerable attention is the Islamic Work Ethic (IWE). Unlike conventional notions of work ethic, IWE regards work not merely as an economic activity but also as a form of worship, moral responsibility, and contribution to societal welfare (Alam & Talib, 2016). Values such as honesty, trustworthiness, diligence, discipline, and responsibility constitute the core principles shaping a Muslim's professional conduct (Feess et al., 2014). Numerous studies have shown that the application of these values contributes to improved individual and organizational performance.

Among the various factors believed to influence the formation of the Islamic Work Ethic, Islamic religiosity is one of the most widely examined. Islamic religiosity refers to the level of belief, religious practice, understanding of religious teachings, spiritual experience, and internalization of Islamic moral values in daily life (Hood et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2001; Worthington et al., 2003). Individuals with higher levels of religiosity tend to display greater integrity, organizational commitment, responsibility, and work orientation than those with lower levels of religiosity (Roccas et al., 2002; Saroglou, 2002; Osman-Gani et al., 2013). Religiosity is thus regarded as a psychological and spiritual foundation capable of fostering the formation of the Islamic Work

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Ethic.

Nevertheless, the formation of the Islamic Work Ethic does not begin only once an individual enters the workforce, but rather during the educational process. Character education, religious education, and vocational education play an important role in instilling Islamic work values in students before they enter professional life. Vocational schools, universities, and Islamic educational institutions thus serve as strategic environments for cultivating the Islamic Work Ethic from an early stage. At the same time, educators themselves belong to a professional group expected to apply these values in their daily work practices. Several studies have shown that religiosity, Islamic work motivation, and the Islamic Work Ethic influence the professional behavior of teachers and lecturers, including Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), academic performance, and the quality of educational service. These findings suggest that the education sector plays a dual role: as both a site where the Islamic Work Ethic is formed and a context in which it is applied in professional practice.

Although the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic has been widely studied, existing findings remain mixed. A number of studies report that Islamic religiosity has a positive and significant effect on the Islamic Work Ethic (Agustina & Wibowo, 2021; Walker et al., 2012). Conversely, other studies find no significant relationship between the two variables (Ningsih et al., 2018; Rozikan & Zakiy, 2019). Moreover, a recent longitudinal study drawing on World Values Survey data shows that the strength of this relationship shifts over time, indicating that religiosity is not always a consistent predictor of the Islamic Work Ethic across different periods and cultural contexts. This suggests that the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic is dynamic and shaped by multiple factors.

Beyond temporal variation, several studies also show that this relationship is influenced by individual characteristics and social environment. Factors such as age, gender, minority status, organizational culture, and national context have been reported to moderate the effect of religiosity on work ethic (Schnabel et al., 2022; Feess et al., 2014). For instance, Muslim workers in Western countries tend to exhibit a higher work ethic than those in Muslim-majority countries. Similarly, cross-cultural research on local and expatriate workers in the Gulf region shows that the effect of religiosity on work ethic depends heavily on organizational characteristics and the social environment in which individuals work. These variations indicate that the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic cannot be understood in simple terms, but instead requires a more comprehensive synthesis of empirical evidence.

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The diversity of these findings points to a clear research gap. To date, most studies have focused on specific organizational contexts or worker groups, and thus have not provided a comprehensive picture of the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic across sectors. Furthermore, although research on teachers and lecturers is growing, no study has yet systematically integrated empirical evidence from the education sector with findings from the corporate and industrial sectors. As a result, the factors underlying divergent research findings — and their implications for the development of vocational and higher education — have not been comprehensively explained.

Based on this gap, the present study conducts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of national and international publications on the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic. Unlike prior reviews, this study synthesizes empirical evidence not only from the corporate sector but also integrates findings from the education sector to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the two variables. This study offers four main contributions. First, it presents a systematic synthesis of the pattern of relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic across various work contexts. Second, it identifies the demographic and contextual factors that influence the strength of this relationship. Third, it enriches theoretical development on religiosity and work behavior from an Islamic perspective. Fourth, it offers practical implications for vocational institutions and universities in designing curricula, character education, and learning strategies that support the formation of the Islamic Work Ethic among students as future workers and among educators as professionals.

METHODS

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to synthesize empirical evidence on the role of Islamic religiosity in strengthening the Islamic Work Ethic (IWE). The SLR approach was selected because it provides a systematic, transparent, and replicable research procedure for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing published research findings, thereby minimizing researcher bias. The study follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines, which comprise the stages of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and determination of included studies.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted in June 2026 across five electronic databases: Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. These five databases were selected

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for their broad coverage of publications in the fields of education, psychology, management, and the social sciences.

Article searches were conducted using a combination of keywords with the following Boolean operators:

("Islamic Religiosity" OR "Religious Commitment") AND ("Islamic Work Ethic" OR "Work Ethic") AND ("Employees" OR "Teachers" OR "Lecturers" OR "Educators" OR "Vocational Education" OR "Higher Education")

Articles were restricted to publications from 2010–2025, written in Indonesian or English, available as full text, and published in scientific journals.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Articles were selected based on the following inclusion criteria:

1. Constitute empirical research examining the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic.
2. Published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.
3. Involves respondents comprising employees, teachers, lecturers, educators, or Muslim workers.
4. Measure Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic as primary variables.
5. Present empirical data enabling a synthesis process.

Articles were excluded if they met any of the following criteria:

1. Constitute a conceptual article, review article, conference proceeding, thesis, or dissertation.
2. Do not address the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic.
3. Do not use worker or educator respondents.
4. Measure religiosity in general terms without indicators of Islamic religiosity.
5. Constitute a duplicate article.

Article Selection Process

The article selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 flow as shown in Figure 1. At the identification stage, 267 articles were obtained, consisting of 207 articles from electronic databases and 60 articles from other sources. Duplicate articles totaling 65 were then removed, leaving the remaining articles to proceed to the screening stage.

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At the screening stage, articles were selected based on the relevance of their titles and abstracts to the research topic, yielding 87 articles eligible for further review. Of these, 42 articles were excluded for failing to meet the inclusion criteria. A total of 45 articles then proceeded to the eligibility assessment stage; however, 33 articles could not be obtained in full-text form. An assessment was subsequently conducted on the fully available articles, resulting in the exclusion of 15 articles for not aligning with the research focus and a further 13 articles for failing to meet the inclusion criteria. Ultimately, 17 empirical articles met all the criteria and were used as the data sources for this study.

All reference management, duplicate article identification, and bibliography compilation processes were carried out using Mendeley software.

Data Extraction

Each article meeting the criteria was extracted using a data extraction sheet containing information on author name, year of publication, country of study, respondent characteristics, analytical method, research variables, key findings, and research implications. The data extraction process was carried out to facilitate comparison across studies and to identify patterns in the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic across various research contexts.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using content analysis and thematic synthesis. The first stage involved grouping articles based on study characteristics such as country, respondent type, analytical method, and research results. The next stage involved thematic synthesis to identify patterns in the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic, the demographic and contextual factors influencing this relationship, and its implications for the corporate and education sectors. The synthesis results were then presented descriptively in tables and narrative form to provide a comprehensive picture of the development of research in this field.

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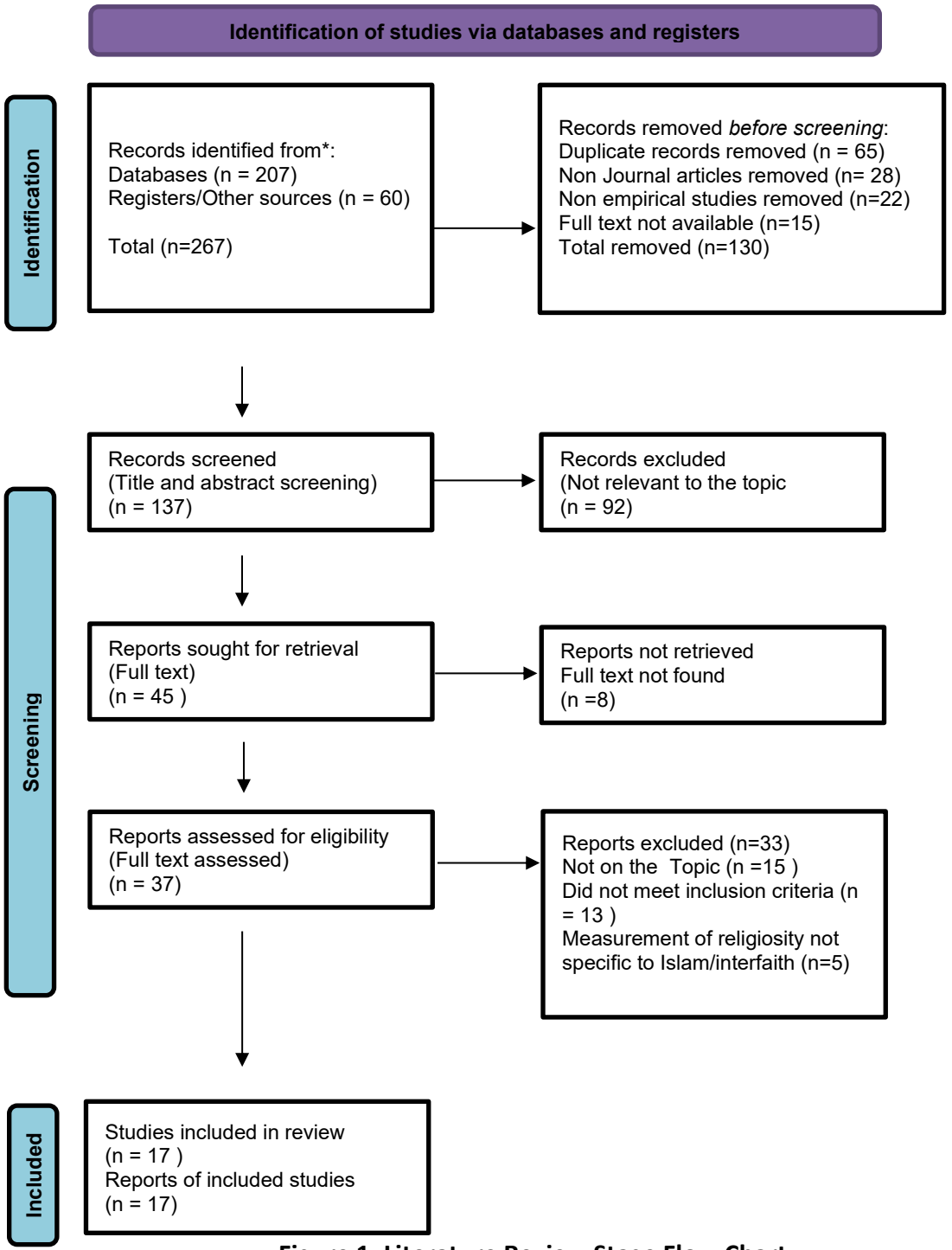


Figure 1. Literature Review Stage Flow Chart

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RESULTS

Characteristics of the Included Studies

A total of 17 empirical studies met all the inclusion criteria and were analyzed in this systematic review. These studies were published between 2012 and 2025 and originated from various countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, the United States, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, Israel, Jordan, and cross-country studies. Most studies employed a quantitative approach using regression analysis, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), and Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) as analytical methods.

Based on the research context, most studies were conducted in the corporate sector, involving workers from industry, finance, trade, socio-religious organizations, and the public sector. In addition, four studies (23.5%) were specifically conducted in the education sector, with respondents comprising lecturers, educators, and Islamic school teachers. This indicates that research on Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) is not only developing within business organizational settings but has also begun to attract attention within educational contexts. The complete characteristics of all analyzed articles are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Included Articles (n = 17)

No	Author(s)	Year	Country	Sample	Method	Key finding
1	Walker, Smither, & DeBode	2012	USA	330 workers	Correlational, regression	Religiosity positively correlated with acceptance of ethical work sketches
2	Feess, Mueller, & Ruhnau	2014	37 countries	27,202 employees	Multilevel regression	Religiosity level significantly affects work ethic; Muslim work ethic higher only in some countries
3	Sharabi	2016	Israel	898 Jewish, 215 Muslim	Correlational, regression	Religiosity affects work ethic

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No	Author(s)	Year	Country	Sample	Method	Key finding
				workers		dimensions among Jews but not among Muslims
4	Zahrah et al.	2016	Malaysia	499 employees	PLS-SEM	Islamic religiosity → IWE significant (p=.011); IWE → performance significant (p=.000)
5	Alam & Talib	2016	UK, US, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan	377 employees	SEM	Religiosity significantly affects IWE; nationality has no effect
6	Yudiani	2016	Indonesia	36 lecturers	Simple regression	Religiosity explains 71% of variance in IWE; not all dimensions significant
7	Ningsih, Sobari, & Gustiawati	2018	Indonesia	24 salon workers	Multiple regression	Religiosity not significant; compensation significant
8	Budi	2019	Indonesia	51 traders	Simple regression	Religiosity significantly affects work ethic (p=.000)
9	Rozikan & Zakiy	2019	Indonesia	50 employees (LAZ)	Simple regression	Religiosity does not significantly affect IWE

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No	Author(s)	Year	Country	Sample	Method	Key finding
10	Agustina & Wibowo	2021	Indonesia	57 teaching staff	Multiple regression	Religiosity significantly affects work ethic (p=.000)
11	Mat Ali & Ahmad	2021	Malaysia	243 Muslim workers	Multiple regression	Religiosity significantly affects work ethic (p=.030)
12	Schnabel et al.	2022	USA	22,059 employees	SEM	Gender/religion patriarchy interacts with work ethic; religiosity level not driven by religion type
13	Linando, Tumewang, Nahda, & Nurfauziah	2023	Indonesia	2,474 Muslim respondents (WVS)	Panel/regression	Religiosity significant in 2006 wave, not significant in 2018 wave
14	Alqhaiwi, Koburtay, & Syed	2024	Jordan	427 employees	PLS-SEM	Religiosity moderates IWE–moral identity relationship
15	Ali, Al-Aali, & Krishnan	2024	Saudi Arabia	Expatriate & national managers	Descriptive comparison	Expatriates > nationals on IWE; males > females on IWE
16	Nafingah & Mardiana	2025	Indonesia	107 Islamic school teachers	Simple regression	IWE and transformational leadership significantly

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No	Author(s)	Year	Country	Sample	Method	Key finding
						affect OCB
17	Sari et al.	2025	Indonesia (pesantren)	Lecturers, STPDN Rangkasbitung	SEM-PLS	Academic culture, leadership, and Islamic motivation significantly predict lecturer performance

Geographically, the studies analyzed were dominated by Indonesia, followed by Malaysia and the United States. The distribution of countries of origin of the studies is presented in Figure 2.

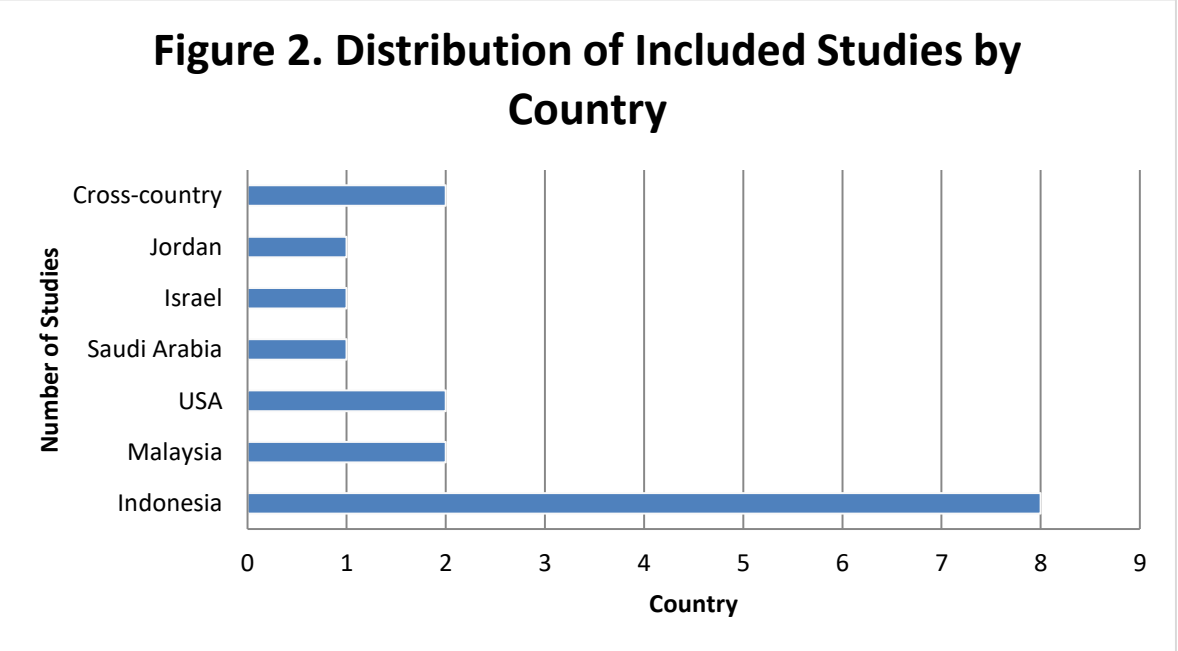


Figure 2. Distribution of Included Studies by Country

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Figure 2 shows that most studies originated from Indonesia (n = 8), followed by Malaysia and the United States (n = 2 each). This finding indicates that research on Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic remains dominated by countries with large Muslim populations.

Relationship between Islamic Religiosity and Islamic Work Ethic

Of the 13 studies that directly examined the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic, eight studies (61.5%) reported a positive and significant relationship between the two variables (Walker et al., 2012; Zahrah et al., 2016; Alam & Talib, 2016; Yudiani, 2016; Budi, 2019; Agustina & Wibowo, 2021; Mat Ali & Ahmad, 2021). In contrast, three studies (23.1%) found no significant relationship (Sharabi, 2016; Ningsih et al., 2018; Rozikan & Zakiy, 2019), while two studies (15.4%) indicated that the relationship depended on temporal factors or the demographic characteristics of respondents (Schnabel et al., 2022; Linando et al., 2023).

These findings indicate that Islamic religiosity generally contributes to the formation of the Islamic Work Ethic, although the magnitude of this influence is not always consistent across research contexts. This variation in results suggests that the relationship between religiosity and the Islamic work ethic is influenced by both individual characteristics and the environment in which a person works. A summary of the proportion of research findings is presented in Figure 3.

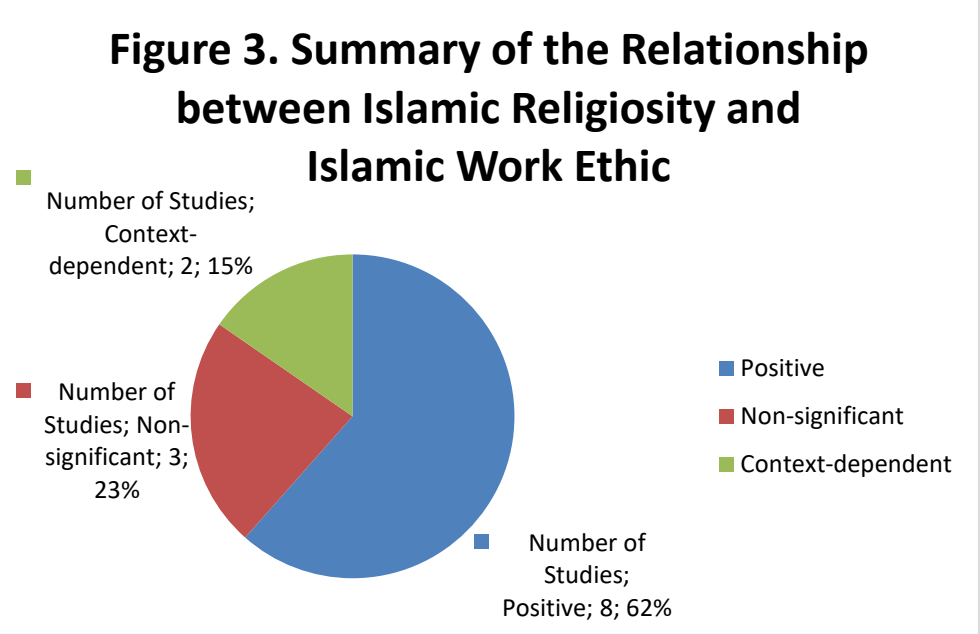


Figure 3. Summary of Empirical Findings

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Figure 3 shows that the majority of studies (61.5%) reported a positive and significant relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic. A total of 23.1% of studies found no significant relationship, while 15.4% indicated that the relationship depended on demographic or contextual factors.

Thematic Synthesis

Thematic synthesis produced four main themes explaining the mechanism underlying the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic.

Theme 1. Islamic Religiosity Strengthens Ethical Work Behaviour

Most studies indicate that Islamic religiosity contributes to the formation of ethical work behavior, such as honesty, responsibility, integrity, and adherence to organizational rules. These values are formed because Islamic teachings regard work as a trust (*amanah*) that must be carried out responsibly and in accordance with Islamic moral principles (Walker et al., 2012; Zahrah et al., 2016).

Theme 2. Islamic Religiosity Enhances Work Motivation and Productivity

The second theme indicates that Islamic religiosity enhances individual work motivation and productivity. Individuals who regard work as a form of worship and a responsibility to Allah tend to exhibit higher intrinsic motivation, driving them to work professionally and contribute optimally to their organization (Zahrah et al., 2016; Alam & Talib, 2016; Yudiani, 2016).

Theme 3. Demographic and Contextual Factors Moderate the Relationship

The synthesis also indicates that the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic is not universal. Factors such as age, gender, nationality status, organizational culture, and social context influence the strength of this relationship (Schnabel et al., 2022; Ali et al., 2024). Furthermore, a longitudinal study based on World Values Survey data shows that the influence of religiosity on work ethic changes over time, indicating that this relationship is not always stable across different research periods (Linando et al., 2023).

Theme 4. Relevance of Islamic Religiosity in Educational Settings

Four studies in this review indicate that Islamic religiosity and Islamic work values also play an important role in the education sector. Among the studies that directly examined this

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relationship, Yudiani (2016) found that religiosity explained 71% of the variance in the Islamic Work Ethic among lecturers at the Faculty of Ushuluddin, UIN Raden Fatah, while Agustina and Wibowo (2021) reported that religiosity had a significant effect on the work ethic of educators at the State Police School.

Two other studies extended the discussion to different professional outcomes. Nafingah and Mardiana (2025) found that the Islamic Work Ethic had a significant effect on the Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) of Islamic school teachers, while Sari et al. (2025) found that Islamic work motivation contributed to improved lecturer performance within a pesantren-based higher education setting. These findings indicate that Islamic religiosity plays a role not only in shaping students' work ethic through the educational process, but also in shaping the professional behavior of educators as key actors within the education system.

Summary of Findings

Overall, the results of this systematic review indicate that Islamic religiosity is a factor that consistently contributes to the formation of the Islamic Work Ethic across most of the studies analyzed. Nevertheless, the strength of this relationship is influenced by various demographic and contextual factors, and therefore does not always produce uniform findings across studies. Furthermore, empirical evidence from the education sector shows a pattern of relationship consistent with that observed in the corporate sector, indicating that Islamic religiosity holds strong relevance for the development of work ethic, both within organizational settings and educational institutions.

DISCUSSION

Sociodemographic Factors Influencing the Relationship Between Religiosity and Islamic Work Ethic

The synthesis of the analyzed studies indicates that variation in research findings is largely influenced by sociodemographic factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, nationality, type of occupation, and cultural background. These factors influence how individuals internalize religious values and translate them into daily work behavior. Accordingly, the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic cannot be understood as linear, but rather as shaped by the characteristics of respondents and the context in which they work.

For instance, Sharabi (2016) found that older Muslim workers tended to exhibit a higher work ethic than younger workers. This finding suggests that increasing age may enhance the

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internalization of religious values through longer life and work experience. Consistent with this finding, Feess et al. (2014) confirmed that differences in demographic characteristics lead to more varied expressions of religiosity in the workplace, resulting in differing levels of work ethic among individuals.

Gender-based differences were also found in several studies. Schnabel et al. (2022) reported that women with high levels of religiosity and modern value orientations exhibited greater motivation to achieve career equality with men. In contrast, Ali et al. (2024) found that male workers in Saudi Arabia scored higher on the Islamic Work Ethic than female workers. Nationality status was also found to influence this relationship. Ali et al. (2024) showed that expatriate workers scored higher on Islamic work ethic than local workers, whereas local workers exhibited a greater tendency toward consumptive behavior. These findings indicate that the relationship between religiosity and work ethic is shaped not only by individual belief, but also by social conditions, organizational culture, and an individual's position within the work environment.

Overall, these synthesis results indicate that sociodemographic factors function as contextual factors that can either strengthen or weaken the influence of religiosity on the Islamic Work Ethic. Research on the Islamic work ethic should therefore take into account respondent characteristics and the research environment in order to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the variation in findings observed.

Religiosity as a Foundation for the Formation of the Islamic Work Ethic

Religion fundamentally provides a set of values, norms, and moral guidelines that form the basis of human behavior across various aspects of life, including work (Zahrah et al., 2016). Although several studies in this review also involved respondents from other religious backgrounds, such as Judaism and Christianity (Feess et al., 2014; Sharabi, 2016), most studies focused on Islamic religiosity as a factor influencing the formation of the Islamic Work Ethic.

From an Islamic perspective, work is regarded not merely as an economic activity to meet basic needs, but also as a form of worship and moral responsibility to Allah SWT. Values such as trustworthiness (*amanah*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), excellence (*ihsan*), honesty, diligence, and responsibility form the core principles shaping a Muslim's professional conduct (Alam & Talib, 2016). The Qur'an and Hadith provide a strong normative foundation regarding the importance of working productively, honestly, and fairly. A widely referenced Hadith underscores Islam's regard for effort and labor carried out through lawful (*halal*) means (Yudiani, 2016). Islamic religiosity can

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therefore be understood as an internal mechanism that drives individuals to carry out their work with full responsibility and integrity.

The findings of this review also reinforce the perspective of Religious Commitment Theory, which explains that the internalization of religious values shapes individual attitudes and behavior across various aspects of life, including work behavior. When religious teachings become part of an individual's personal commitment, that individual works not solely to obtain economic reward, but is also driven by moral and spiritual responsibility. Within the Islamic context, these religious values serve as a source of intrinsic motivation that fosters the formation of the Islamic Work Ethic. Religiosity thus functions not only as a religious identity, but also as a psychological foundation shaping ethical, responsible, and welfare-oriented professional behavior.

Nevertheless, the synthesis also shows that religiosity does not always exert the same influence across studies. This variation indicates that the relationship between religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic is dynamic and must therefore be understood within its underlying social, cultural, and temporal context. Beyond considering individual religiosity, research on the Islamic work ethic must therefore also account for contextual factors that shape how religious values are translated into work behavior.

The Dynamics of the Relationship Between Religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic Over Time

One important finding of this review is that the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic is not always stable over time. Linando et al.'s (2023) study, which used two waves of World Values Survey data among Muslim respondents in Indonesia, found that religiosity was a significant predictor of the Islamic Work Ethic in 2006, but this effect was no longer significant in 2018. This finding indicates that changes in social context can influence the strength of the relationship between religiosity and work behavior.

Such changes may be driven by various factors, including technological development, urbanization, generational shifts, and transformations in how society expresses religiosity in daily life. Generations raised in different social environments are likely to integrate religious values into professional behavior in different ways. Religiosity is therefore not a static construct, but continues to evolve alongside societal change.

This finding is reinforced by Alqhaiwi et al.'s (2024) study, which showed that religiosity does not always function as a direct predictor of the Islamic Work Ethic. Instead, religiosity may act as a moderating variable that strengthens the relationship between the Islamic work ethic and individual moral identity. This finding suggests that the influence of religiosity on work behavior

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may operate through mechanisms more complex than a direct relationship between variables.

Overall, these findings indicate that the inconsistencies identified across the studies in this review should not be understood as contradictions, but rather as consequences of differences in respondent characteristics, organizational context, culture, and social change over time. Research on religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic must therefore take temporal and contextual dimensions into account in order to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the dynamics underlying the relationship between these two variables.

Religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic in the Education Sector

One important finding of this systematic review is the growing body of research examining the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic within the education sector. Of the 17 studies analyzed, four studies (23.5%) specifically involved teachers, lecturers, and educators as respondents. Although this number remains relatively limited compared to studies in the corporate sector, these studies show a consistent pattern of findings — that religiosity and Islamic work values contribute to the formation of professional behavior within educational settings.

Yudiani (2016) found that religiosity explained approximately 71% of the variance in the Islamic Work Ethic among lecturers at the Faculty of Ushuluddin, UIN Raden Fatah. This finding indicates that higher levels of lecturer religiosity correspond to a stronger Islamic work ethic in the performance of academic duties, although not all dimensions of religiosity contributed equally. Consistent results were also reported by Agustina and Wibowo (2021), who found that religiosity had a significant effect on the work ethic of educators at the State Police School. Both studies demonstrate that religiosity plays a role in shaping the professional attitudes of educators through the internalization of Islamic values into their work activities.

The synthesis of studies also shows that the influence of Islamic values extends beyond the formation of work ethic alone, reaching into various other professional outcomes. Nafingah and Mardiana (2025) reported that the Islamic Work Ethic had a significant effect on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) among Islamic school teachers. This indicates that individuals with a strong Islamic work ethic tend to display voluntary behaviors that support organizational effectiveness beyond their formal duties. Meanwhile, Sari et al. (2025) found that Islamic work motivation, together with academic culture and transformational leadership, contributed significantly to improved lecturer performance within pesantren-based higher education institutions. These findings demonstrate that religiosity and Islamic values exert a broader

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influence on the quality of professional behavior than simply enhancing work ethic.

Taken together, these findings reinforce the view that educational institutions serve a dual function in developing human resources grounded in Islamic values. On one hand, educational institutions serve as sites for internalizing religious values and work ethics among students. On the other hand, teachers and lecturers, as professionals, are also expected to apply these values in carrying out their duties. Religiosity thus contributes not only to shaping students' character, but also to enhancing the professionalism of educators as key actors in the educational process.

Practical Implications for Education and Organizations

The findings of this study offer several practical implications for both educational institutions and organizations. In the education sector, the synthesis results indicate that Islamic religiosity has the potential to serve as one foundation for character education and the formation of students' work ethic. Vocational schools, universities, and Islamic educational institutions can therefore integrate religiosity values into curricula, learning processes, co-curricular activities, and academic culture as a means of instilling professional ethics from an early stage. This approach is expected to produce graduates who possess not only academic competence and technical skills, but also moral integrity, responsibility, and a commitment to ethical values in the workplace.

In the organizational sector, the findings of this study indicate that developing the Islamic Work Ethic cannot be achieved through improvements in technical competence alone. Organizations must also cultivate a work culture that supports the internalization of religious values such as honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, and professionalism. An organizational culture aligned with these values has the potential to enhance intrinsic motivation, organizational commitment, and the quality of employee work behavior. Nevertheless, the implementation of such strategies must be adapted to the characteristics of the organization, workforce diversity, and the sociocultural context in which the organization operates.

Limitations of the Findings and Directions for Future Research

Although the synthesis results indicate a positive relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic, the findings within the education sector should be interpreted proportionally. The four studies analyzed measured religiosity, the Islamic work ethic, or work motivation among teachers and lecturers as professionals. No study to date has directly evaluated how curricula, learning processes, or character education programs in vocational schools and universities shape the Islamic Work Ethic among students or learners.

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The implications proposed in this study regarding curriculum development for vocational and higher education therefore represent a theoretical extrapolation based on the pattern of relationships found among educators. In other words, if religiosity is shown to contribute to the formation of educators' work ethic, then educational institutions conceptually have the opportunity to instill the same values in students as future members of the workforce. However, this assumption still requires empirical validation through primary research directly involving students or evaluating the effectiveness of curriculum interventions based on Islamic values.

Furthermore, several studies that found no significant relationship between religiosity and the Islamic work ethic (Ningsih et al., 2018; Rozikan & Zakiy, 2019) indicate that professional competence, work environment, and organizational factors may also influence the formation of work ethic. Both studies used relatively small sample sizes and did not examine the dimensions of religiosity in depth. These non-significant results are therefore insufficient to invalidate the general pattern found across most of the studies reviewed. Rather, these findings suggest that the relationship between religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic is multidimensional and must be analyzed alongside other psychological, organizational, and cultural variables.

Based on these findings, future research is encouraged not only to examine the direct relationship between religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic, but also to explore the role of mediating and moderating variables, such as organizational culture, leadership, intrinsic motivation, moral identity, and generational characteristics. In addition, experimental and longitudinal research is needed to understand how changes in religiosity over time influence the development of the Islamic work ethic across various organizational and educational contexts.

Concluding Synthesis of the Discussion

Overall, the synthesis conducted in this study shows that Islamic religiosity is an important factor in the formation of the Islamic Work Ethic, although this relationship is shaped by various individual, organizational, social, and cultural factors, as well as contextual changes over time. These findings affirm that religiosity cannot be regarded as the sole determinant of work behavior, but rather as a source of values that interacts with the environment in which an individual works. The development of the Islamic Work Ethic therefore requires a comprehensive approach involving the strengthening of individual religiosity, the cultivation of an organizational culture that supports ethical behavior, and the role of educational institutions in internalizing Islamic values from an early stage. This study thus offers a theoretical contribution by enriching the understanding of the relationship between religiosity and the Islamic work ethic, while also

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providing practical implications for human resource development in both the corporate and education sectors.

CONCLUSION

This study conducted a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of 17 empirical studies published between 2012 and 2025 to examine the role of Islamic religiosity in strengthening the Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) and its implications for vocational and higher education. The synthesis results show that the majority of studies (61.5%) reported a positive and significant relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic, while other studies found either no significant relationship or one influenced by demographic or contextual factors. These findings indicate that Islamic religiosity is an important factor in the formation of the Islamic work ethic, although the strength of its influence varies across organizational contexts and respondent groups.

This study offers several important contributions to the literature. First, it presents an empirical synthesis that integrates findings from both the corporate and education sectors, providing a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic. Second, it identifies various factors influencing the consistency of this relationship, such as age, gender, organizational culture, nationality, and social change over time. Third, it shows that religiosity functions not only as an individual factor, but also as part of the organizational and educational environment that shapes professional work behavior.

Practically, the findings of this study suggest that strengthening Islamic religiosity has the potential to support the formation of a more ethical, responsible, and morally oriented work culture. Within the education context, these findings provide a conceptual basis for vocational institutions and universities to integrate religiosity values into character education, curriculum development, and the professional development of educators. Nevertheless, these implications should be interpreted with caution, as most of the empirical evidence analyzed focuses on teachers and lecturers as professionals, rather than on students or the direct implementation of curricula.

This study has several limitations. The review only included articles published in Indonesian and English and focused on empirical studies measuring Islamic religiosity and the Islamic Work Ethic. In addition, most of the studies employed a cross-sectional design, limiting their ability to explain longitudinal changes in the relationship between the two variables or to provide deeper insight into causal relationships.

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Future research is therefore recommended to develop longitudinal studies, expand the scope of countries and cultural contexts examined, and test the effectiveness of educational interventions and organizational development programs in fostering the Islamic Work Ethic. Research involving students and learners, as well as evaluations of curricula based on Islamic values, is also needed to provide empirical evidence for the educational implications proposed in this study.

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