

WORK ETHOS FRAMEWORK TOWARDS WORK-LIFE BALANCE

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Abstract: *In accordance to the 2024 Global Work-Life Balance Index, Malaysia maintains the second least favorable work-life balance worldwide. Excessive workload overwhelms Malaysians, which ensues to inadequate rest, scarcity of time spent on personal and familial time which eventually influence feelings of life fulfillment in general. Therefore, constructing a conceptual framework known as the RAHMAH Work Ethos Framework for Work-Life Balance is the primary objective of this research. The investigation utilizes a qualitative case study approach. A thorough work culture that serves as the basis for the proposed model was established through a literature review that utilized document analysis to incorporate components of Islamic work ethics into the RAHMAH paradigm. The results highlight six aspects of Islamic ethics at work: taqwa (God-consciousness), amanah (trustworthiness), integrity, ihsan (excellence), discipline, and itqan (perfection in work). Conversely, the RAHMAH tenets promote compassion, tranquility, balance, hospitality, authenticity, and respect. Confluence of the two develops a thorough work culture that boasts outstanding output, worship-based work ethics, harmonious relationships, employee satisfaction, and corporate loyalty. This research endeavor is additionally anticipated to bring forth a theoretical and practical contribution towards establishing an ethical, humanistic, and spiritually driven working atmosphere across workplace organizations. In fostering a workplace that strikes an equitable equilibrium between worldly necessities and spiritual goals, it likewise assists policymakers, employers, educators, and Muslims. It is expected that following the RAHMAH ethos framework will facilitate the development of a more compassionate, professional, and thriving community at large, which is consistent with the desired outcomes of Malaysia MADANI.*

Keywords: *RAHMAH; Work Ethos; Framework; Work-Life Balance*

Introduction

Work ethos plays a vital role in setting up an efficient, liable, and integrity-based community. According to its etymology, the term "ethos" is Greek and indicates "attitude," "personality," "character," and "belief." Etos as per the Fourth Edition of *Dewan* Dictionary, is the distinctive aspect of a country, culture, or time period. Matters regarding a person's convictions as to how he or she ought to undertake tasks meant to yield results are referred to as work ethos or work ethics. Nonetheless, the Islamic work ethos prioritizes more than output, encompassing intellectual, material, and spiritual components. Any service undertaken with a pure heart and aligns with Islamic law as laid out in Islam, becomes an act of worship and grants the performer divine rewards. Consequently, the Islamic work ethos supports values like accountability throughout any conduct, trustworthiness (*amanah*), and sincerity (*ikhlas*) to govern Muslims in performing their duties.

The capacity to strike a balance between professional duties with personal and familial obligations is termed as work-life balance, which depends on an array of aspects, notably organizational, culture, work, mindset, personality, and domestic (Ramli et al., 2024; Ismail et al., 2022). Jayasingam et al. (2023) assert that the sphere of life comprises beyond familial duties but also the well-being of employee. Personnel who preserve a proper equilibrium of work and personal life are more inclined to be pleased with their employment, enjoy better social lives, draw in top talent, sustain their present workforce, and boost organizational growth and motivation. Pursuant to the 2024 Global Work-Life Balance Index, Malaysian society is at present suffering from an absence of work-life harmony, ranking second in the world (Morhan, 2024). This leads to a loss of personal and family time along with inadequate rest for many Malaysians, that diminishes their overall well-being. Sarpong (2024) contends that experts have been particularly impacted by overwhelming workplace requirements, which renders it tough to maintain a healthy equilibrium of work and life. The circumstance is further made more acute by the nation's prohibitive living expenses and low average income (Amri, 2024).

As advocated by the Malaysia MADANI concept, the RAHMAH values: *Ramah* (Compassion), *Aman* (Tranquility), *Harmoni* (Harmonious), *Mesra* (Hospitality), *Alami* (Natural), and *Hormat* (Respectful), highlight human development in accordance with Islamic ethics (JAKIM, 2023). Numerous entities, despite this, have not entirely embraced these RAHMAH tenets which has given rise to less favorable workplace conditions and sub-optimal performance (Ministry of National Unity Malaysia, 2023). This points to a lack of internal drive and awareness of Malaysians, that appears to be a significant hurdle to successfully integrating the Islamic and RAHMAH work ethos into execution. In order to thoroughly clarify the way that RAHMAH work ethos paradigm could contribute a harmonious balance between work and life to Malaysians, a research gap must be filled. Studies on the integrated RAHMAH work ethos paradigm are scarce with the majority of prior research dwelling on either the Islamic work ethos or RAHMAH components separately (Syahdila, 2023; Sudirman et al., 2024).

Literature Review

The notion of *Islamic work ethos* implies a set of moral, ethical, and spiritual guidelines that stem from the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. Individual perspectives and conducts whilst undertaking duties and obligations on the job are dictated by the ideals acquired from these two sources. In their research of the Malaysian banking industry, Wahab and Wahab (2021) noted that the Islamic work ethos incorporates traits like sincerity, discipline, honesty, and trustworthiness (*amanah*), all of which substantially boost corporate dedication towards job tasks and commitments. Affective, normative, and persistent dedication among employees are highly

positively correlated with Islamic work ethos, according to their research. They landed on an understanding that an enhanced ethical and efficient working atmosphere emerges when Islamic values are assimilated and implemented therein (Wahab & Wahab, 2021). In conformity with this, Syahdila (2023) reiterated that this Islamic concept can be considered as an expression of worship that draws a servant closer to Allah SWT and is not just financially oriented. She stated in her study that virtues like integrity, trust, self-control, and hard labor are expressions of devotion and conviction. Labor is perceived in this light as an extension of devotion that demands solid ethical standards and spiritual engagement. This view is backed by a research from Shahzad et al. (2024), which established that an Islamic work ethos fosters moral and professional conduct at work. A profound awareness of social duty, teamwork, and accountability are all exhibited by those who adhere to said Islamic ideals in their employment. The emergence of a robust human resource and corporate efficiency are contingent upon these core values.

Wahab and Wahab's (2021) investigation additionally underscored the favorable impact of Islamic ethics at work on organizational commitment. In alongside setting up an effective work culture, researchers observed that principles like integrity, discipline, and trust enhance overall business operations as well as diminished turnover among workers. Based to their study, firms that stand for Islamic work ethos typically have more committed and driven staff, which promotes the efficacy of human resource management (Wahab & Wahab, 2021). Relying on the *maslahah* (public interest) principle, Sudirman et al. (2024) discovered a correlation connecting Islamic work ethos and both job performance and family well-being. It indicated that adopting Islamic values within one's employment has perpetual societal and monetary benefits for those involved in addition to their families and communities they live in. This study accentuated how Islamic workplace standards, that are centered on the notions of civic duty, benevolence (*ihsan*), and justice, could strengthen familial bonds and elevate employee quality of life (Sudirman et al., 2024). Moreover, Andriani (2022) survey of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) employees in Jakarta revealed that an Islamic work ethos contributes to constructive conduct among staff. Cooperation, civic engagement, and support from staff members are instances of practices that could contribute to organizational competitiveness. Based on the study, taking into account Islamic principles into workplace conduct optimizes interpersonal ties within the company while contributing to job performance (Andrianiet al., 2022).

In Islam, the notion of Rahmah extends to attributes of compassion, gentleness, and goodness in all facets of life. The six values of RAHMAH: *Ramah* (compassion), *Aman* (tranquility), *Harmoni* (harmonious), *Mesra* (hospitality), *Alami* (natural), and *Hormat* (respectful), are utilized to establish a Madani community. In its official release, the Ministry of National Unity Malaysia (2023) presented the Rahmah paradigm as a basis to build a society that is civilized, thriving, and inclusive. Through initiatives that cultivate empathy, respect for fellow individuals, and collaboration among all socioeconomic strata, each Rahmah Community program strives to foster greater social cohesion. Considering the Rahmah concepts ought to enhance interpersonal relations and facilitate a tranquil, inclusive workspace absence of prejudice, they are highly pertinent in the setting of Islamic ethics at work. It is feasible to enhance corporate performance and employee well-being through the development of the Rahmah work ethos model. Rahmah components per the Ministry of National Unity, constitute a necessity for fostering ethical and supportive settings at work apart from being vital to social relations (Ministry of National Unity Malaysia, 2023). Further studies have verified the key role of Rahmah principles in promoting a stimulating work atmosphere. Rahmah's fundamental

principles of empathy and reverence for each other are thought to mitigate disputes, boost employee engagement, and improve teamwork. This is consistent with the teachings of Islam, that implore Muslims to exhibit compassion, equity, and mutual respect in all spheres of existence, involving their professional settings.

An individual's capacity to effectively handle and coincide professional obligations alongside personal duties in a way that precludes contend or undue strain is known as work-life balance. Time management, active participation with regard to job and home life, as well as obtaining contentment in both domains are all part of such equilibrium (Hashim & Fakhruddin, 2025). For employees, specifically those involved in academics, maintaining a work-life balance is exceedingly crucial given that it mitigates stress and disputes which can result in absenteeism, lack of dedication, decreased productivity, mental health problems, and familial disputes (Mohamed & Sulaiman, 2022). A 2025 study that explored the implications of balance between work and life on subjective well-being was released in the Kognisia Journal. It revealed that a healthy work-life harmony had an enormous effect on employee well-being in numerous types of instances, namely the way employment interferes in private affairs and vice versa (Alwi, 2025). Striking an equilibrium of work and personal life is intimately related to psychological and physical health. In an effort to safeguard against burnout and increase productivity, companies are thus urged to set in place mental health support programs (Ahmad, 2023; Mohamed & Sulaiman, 2022).

Methodology

The RAHMAH Work Ethos Framework, which aspires towards enhancing work-life balance, was explored and refined in this research effort through a qualitative case study design. Document analysis became the primary means employed in gathering data and analysis. Such was carried out through the use of the Google Scholar database for conducting a thorough literature review of academic publications released from 2021 to 2025. In a bid to identify pertinent themes, values, and gaps in the body of literature, the study reviewed prior investigations featuring keywords like *Islamic work ethos* and *Rahmah Madani*. There is a notable gap in the literature on Islamic work ethos, given that only one study explicitly dealt with the premise of Rahmah Madani, although eight were judged pertinent to the research focus out of 35 research papers. A conceptual framework that promotes ethical, spiritual, and well-rounded professional environments developed by merging the outcomes of Rahmah principles and Islamic work ethics. With the backing of this technique, the researchers were able to incorporate RAHMAH concepts like compassion, peace, and respect with Islamic values like *taqwa*, *amanah*, *ihsan*, and *itqan*. This led to an extensive structure for work-life balance that stood in compliance with Malaysia MADANI's aspirations.

Findings

Leveraging the Google Scholar database, an analysis of previously published studies that uses the term *Islamic work ethos* over the five preceding years, from 2021 to 2025, was undertaken. The span of time was decided on so as to discover current gaps in research while simultaneously gather extensive and in-depth insights on an array of scholarly research. A mere eight among the 35 studies that emerged in the initially displayed search results were deemed relevant to the researcher's suggested keyword and scope.

Table 1: Prior Research on the Ethos of Islamic Work over the Last Five Years (2021–2025)

Year	Author	Title	Findings
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1	2025	Abdul et al.	<i>Peran Pendidikan Islam dalam Membentuk Etos Kerja Profesional di Era Digital</i>	A professional work ethic grounded on the notions of discipline, integrity, accountability and diligence is imparted via Islamic education. The Islamic professional code acts as an extension of devotion alongside assurance known to cultivate ethical conduct and professionalism.
2	2024	Ismail & Muhammad Akbar	<i>Etos Kerja Dalam Perspektif Manajemen Pendidikan Agama Islam Multikultural</i>	When it concerns overseeing religious education in a multicultural setting, the Islamic work ethic lays an intense priority on professionalism, tolerance, collaboration, and innovation.
3	2023	Akhsan et al.	<i>Etos Kerja Islami Pada Keberhasilan Usaha Pedagang Etnis Arab di Pasar Ampel Surabaya</i>	One the key factors Arab traders became adept at commerce is their solid Islamic work ethic, that rests on the core values of diligence, integrity, and civic duty.
4	2023	Halizah	<i>Pengaruh Etos Kerja Islami, Motivasi Kerja, Kompensasi, dan Lingkungan Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Karyawan Dengan Kepuasan Kerja Sebagai Variabel Intervening</i>	The Islamic ethic of work can exert a bearing on the extent of an officer's competence. The concept of inner religious belief that is parallel to the message of <i>Surah Al-Inshirah</i> , verses 7–8, is referred to as Islamic work ethic.
5	2023	Rusmania & Faraby	<i>Implementasi Etos Kerja Pedagang Etnis Madura Muslim Pada Destinasi Wisata Pantai Jumiang</i>	Pursuant to the Islamic approach to work, one ought to lead a life of devotion through maximizing the finest use of their capacity to succeed in material and non-material domains, while engaging in religious activities. A trader needs to adopt this approach that is consistent with the <i>Qur'an</i> and <i>Hadith</i> .
6	2021	El Badriati	<i>Etos Kerja Dalam Perspektif Islam dan Budaya</i>	The attributes of integrity, accountability, discipline, and professionalism constitute the core elements of the Islamic work ethic and should be embedded in Muslim workplace culture.
7	2021	Nisak & Adityawarman	<i>Analisis Pengaruh Etos Kerja Islami, Disiplin Kerja, Dan Gaya Kepemimpinan Terhadap Kinerja Pegawai Pada Kantor Wilayah Kementerian Agama Provinsi Jawa Tengah</i>	Officers' career achievement is profoundly affected by the execution of Islamic work ethic, discipline, and leadership style that take precedence.
8	2021	Winarto	<i>Peran Mediasi Etos Kerja Islami Antara Praktik Human Resource dan Kinerja Organisasi Pada Lembaga Keuangan Syariah</i>	The operational effectiveness of Islamic financial institutions can be strengthened by the Islamic approach to work, that may correlate favorably human resource management with corporate success.

Source: Researcher's Analysis

Table 1 illustrates that the Islamic work ethos prioritizes virtues rooted in Islamic teachings, that include integrity, discipline, accountability, diligence, and professionalism. Labor that adheres to them is recognized in Islam as an expression of worship (*ibadah*) and a trust (*amanah*), which can contribute to employee and organizational drive, morale, and work efficiency. Previous research indicates that Islamic work ethos are crucial in an array of fields, notably education, business, and Islamic monetary institutions. Subsequently, a review of preceding studies employing the term Rahmah Madani in the Google Scholar database over the five years prior (2021–2025) was carried out as well. Nevertheless, only one study appears to be relevant to the researcher's specified keyword and scope of the thirty that the the initial query turned up.

Table 2: Earlier studies on Rahmah Madani conducted between 2021 and 2025

Year	Author	Title	Findings
1 2023	Ibrahim	<i>Membangun Negara MADANI: Visi dan Kerangka Dasar Reformasi</i>	It outlines a social and administrative model for inclusive growth driven by equality and prosperity which has its foundation on MADANI tenets. The protection and supply of goods necessary for everyone to thrive is known as <i>ihsan</i> or <i>rahmah</i> .

Source: Researcher's Analysis

It can be determined from the previous research listed in Tables 1 and 2 that they have centered on general measurement of Islamic work ethos concepts without specifically highlighting Rahmah values that consist of discipline, integrity, accountability, diligence, and professionalism based on the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. With only one significant study identified in the preceding five years, it certainly shows that the literature on Rahmah is notably sparse, implying this Rahmah framework is not getting much consideration. Thus, through merging Rahmah principles with Islamic work ethos ideals, this research is crucial to establish a RAHMAH Work Ethos Framework that can promote work-life balance in Malaysian society. By operating as a primary ethical underpinning in the workplace, these values will bolster interpersonal relationships and ethical conduct at work for the betterment of all involved.

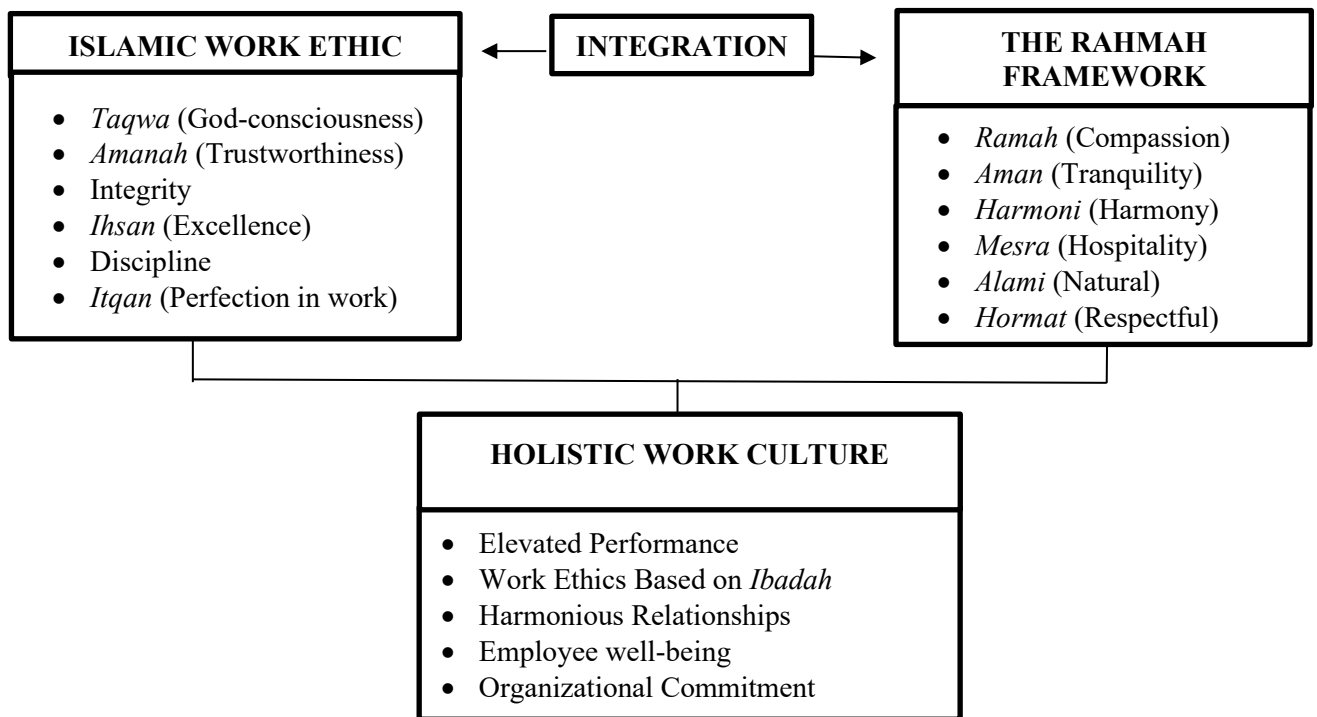


Figure 1: RAHMAH Work Ethos Framework towards Work-Life Balance

Conclusion

The RAHMAH Work Ethos Framework integrates the core Islamic ethical standards of respect, accountability, integrity, mindfulness, trustworthiness, and harmony into workplace culture, enabling an holistic approach for obtaining a harmonious balance between work and personal life. The framework fosters upright conduct, productivity, and employee satisfaction through maintaining a setting that regulates spiritual, emotional, and professional well-being. To contribute to a more balanced and values-based workplace culture, companies are urged to implement the RAHMAH values into their policies, leadership development programs, and employee assistance programs. The framework's applicability spanning various fields and its lasting impact on organizational effectiveness ought to be verified through further research.

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