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**REVIEW PAPER**

**Islamic leadership: Bibliometric analysis of global research using VOSviewer**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the structure of growing publications on Islamic leadership and its contribution to organizational effectiveness and long-term success using bibliometric analysis with VOSviewer. The sample population comprised all publications of the Scopus database from 2010 to 2023. In addition, a total of 244 publications were selected for bibliometric analysis and visualization, including original study articles, book chapters, reviews, conference papers, and other forms of literature written in English. The results showed the presence of three clusters, namely red (Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, and United Arab Emirates), green (United States, Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic, and Turkey), and blue (Iran, Israel, and China). These clusters represented regional cooperation in the exploration of Islamic leadership publications and their implications for organizational development. The results also showed that Islamic leadership was most commonly applied in education, psychology, community and health care, school, and government sectors. In addition, it was shown to be frequently related to trust, job performance, motivation, decision-making, job satisfaction, and empowerment. Islamic leadership placed great emphasis on motivation and job performance, as it ultimately recognized the importance of productive and purposeful work in employees' lives and society's overall well-being. Based on these results, Islamic leadership supported employees in achieving healthy work-life integration by encouraging time for family, worship of Allah (the God), and personal well-being.

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, there has been a significant resurgence of Islamic faith and religious observance among Muslims worldwide. This has led to increased demand for Islamic leaders who can guide and provide spiritual guidance to their communities (Egel and Fry, 2017). According to previous studies, Islamic leadership has evolved over different historical periods, from the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) (Anthony, 2020; Armstrong, 2023; Udin and Dananjoyo, 2023) to various caliphates, empires, and contemporary societies. In addition, Islamic scholars, imams, and religious leaders have gained prominence as influencers and voices of authority within their respective communities. This prominence is primarily due to the occurrence of several ethical scandals associated with leaders, which vary greatly in nature and severity (Ciulla, 2020; Moore et al., 2019; Said et al., 2018). Examples of scandals include financial mismanagement, misuse of authority, embezzlement, fraud, and other forms of unethical behavior. These actions are condemned within Islamic teachings and are considered violations of the trust and responsibility placed upon leaders. Although several studies have previously offered certain leadership styles, such as transformational, ethical, authentic, servant, relational (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2016; Hoch et al., 2018; Knights and O'Leary, 2005; Tumasjan et al., 2011), vertical (i.e., aversive, directive, transactional and empowering leadership) (Pearce and Sims, 2002), spiritual (Akbar et al., 2018; Blackaby and Blackaby, 2011; Ferguson and Milliman, 2008; Lawrenz, 2016; Maryati et al., 2019; Oh and Wang, 2020), digital (Arabiun et al., 2024), and global (Fry and Egel, 2021; Jones and Millar, 2010; Mendenhall et al., 2017; Stahl et al., 2016; Wijayanto et al., 2021) to overcome ethical scandals in business and organizational failures, the outcomes have not met expectations. In line with previous reports, several Muslim-majority countries typically experience political instability, authoritarian regimes, or governance issues due to various factors. These include weak leadership, which can undermine trust in governmental or religious authorities and contribute to perceptions of a lack of effectiveness (Abbasi et al., 2010; Pasha, 2011). Consequently, Islamic leadership principles can be applied to modern organizations to solve problems (Egel and Fry, 2017; Slamet et al., 2020), regardless of their religious affiliation. Islamic

leadership also emphasizes high moral standards, honesty, and integrity to create a collaborative and inclusive work environment. Several studies have shown that it encourages balance and moderation in all aspects of life, including work. In this context, leaders are expected to promote a healthy work-life balance, ensure employees' well-being, and create a nurturing work environment to enhance productivity within organizations. Despite the importance of the concept, there are limited reports focused on Islamic leadership. Therefore, this study aims to provide a comprehensive map of Islamic leadership literature and its correlated outcomes using a Bibliometric review with VOSviewer. The results are expected to provide insights into the contribution of Islamic leadership to organizational effectiveness and long-term success.

### *Review of literature*

#### *Islamic Society*

Islamic Society refers to a social structure and community guided by the principles and values of Islam, which is a religion founded by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the 7th century. In addition, it is characterized by adherence to Islamic teachings, which comprise various aspects of life, including spirituality, social interactions, economic, political, and personal matters (Beekun, 2012; Laluddin, 2014; Sokip et al., 2019). These also include a strong emphasis on monotheism (i.e., belief in the oneness of God), the Quran (i.e., the holy book of Islam), and the Hadith (i.e., the recorded actions and sayings of Prophet Muhammad) (Ali, 2010; Elkaleh and Samier, 2013; Zarpeyma and Bouzarinejad, 2022). The Quran and the authentic Hadith serve as the primary sources of guidance in Islamic Society to provide the moral and ethical framework (such as justice, honesty, humility, integrity, patience, compassion, gratitude, and empathy towards others) for Muslims, and shape their behavior and interactions with others within the community (Metcalf and Mimouni, 2011; Metcalfe, 2013). Muslims are also expected to follow the Five Pillars of Islam (Husti and Mahyarni, 2019; Tittensor et al., 2018) as a fundamental religious obligation to guide their lives. The Five Pillars include the declaration of faith that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger (Shahada), the ritual prayers performed five times a day (Salat), fasting during the holy month

of Ramadan (Sawm), giving to charity for helping those in need (Zakat), and the annual pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia (Hajj). Muslims are further expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with these values (Haron *et al.*, 2020; Nuruddin *et al.*, 2022; Rane *et al.*, 2020) to maintain a strong connection with Allah, build a sense of community, and instill mindfulness in life. Several studies have also shown that Islamic Society emphasizes the importance of charity and helping those in need. Voluntary charitable acts, known as Sadaqah, are encouraged to seek the pleasure of Allah and to support the less fortunate members of society. In addition, it is important to note that Islamic societies can vary widely in their interpretation and application of Islamic principles and practices, and regional influences often play a role in shaping the social fabric. This social structure typically exists in diverse regions around the world, ranging from predominantly Muslim countries with a legal system based on Sharia to multicultural communities with Muslim populations adhering to Islamic principles within the framework of secular laws.

#### *Leadership in Islamic Society*

Leadership is the ability to see beyond assumed boundaries and devise solutions that only a few individuals can visualize (Bayat, 2005; Daniëls *et al.*, 2019; Hay and Hodgkinson, 2006; Hunt and Fedynich, 2019; Rafiki, 2020; Kolzow, 2014). In the context of Islamic Society, it is an important aspect guided by principles and teachings derived from the religion of Islam (i.e., the Quran, the Hadith, and the scholarly interpretations of Islamic scholars) (Ahmad and Fontaine, 2012). In addition, the Prophet Muhammad is considered the ultimate example of leadership in Islam, and his qualities and teachings guide Muslim leaders in their roles and responsibilities. Islam places great emphasis on leadership and provides guidance on how leaders should behave, make decisions, and interact with followers. Islamic leadership is also believed to derive its authority from Allah (almighty God). Leaders are often seen as representatives of God on Earth and are entrusted with the responsibility of serving and guiding the community. Muslims believe that the almighty God chooses leaders who must strive to govern and lead in line with Islamic principles. Islamic leadership has been reported to emphasize justice and fairness in all aspects of

governance by avoiding oppression, corruption, and favoritism. Several studies have also shown that it promotes high moral and ethical standards (Kessi *et al.*, 2022; Galanou and Farrag, 2015; Muali *et al.*, 2021). Leaders are expected to exhibit honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness in their personal and professional lives (Gümüşay, 2019), as well as adhere to Islamic values and teachings, setting an example for the community through conduct. Islamic leadership further emphasizes compassion, kindness, and mercy towards others. Leaders show empathy and care for the needs and concerns of the people being led. This compassionate approach helps build strong bonds with their followers. This concept also further emphasizes the principle of serving others, with leaders being expected to be humble, selfless, and dedicated to the well-being of followers. There is also a need to prioritize the needs of the community and work towards their betterment. Moreover, Islamic leadership encourages consultation and collective decision-making. The principle of Shura promotes the engagement of the community in decision-making processes (Al-Raysuni, 2011; Mohiuddin, 2016). Leaders seek counsel from experts and consult with the people being governed, considering their opinions and feedback. Finally, Islamic leadership encourages the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom. Leaders are well-informed, seek knowledge (particularly religious knowledge), and make informed decisions based on sound judgment. By incorporating these principles into business practices, these individuals align organizations with Islamic values and contribute to the overall sustainability of their businesses and communities.

#### *The Great Man Theory (GMT) of leadership*

The GMT of leadership, also known as the Trait theory, suggests that great leaders are born with innate qualities or traits that facilitate their effectiveness (Ciulla, 2020; Hoskin, 2023; Turner and Tsang, 2023). According to the GMT, individuals possess certain inherent characteristics predisposing them to become great leaders (Bans-Akutey, 2021; Northouse, 2014; Peters, 2023), and not primarily a result of acquired skills or learning. The GMT, historically, originated in the 19th century and was based on the belief that leadership is primarily determined by personal attributes, such as intelligence, charisma, assertiveness, confidence,

courage, determination, and other qualities (Ayman and Lauritsen, 2018; Bass, 2019; Northouse, 2021). Leaders further possess these inherent qualities and notions that differentiate them from others (Sinek, 2011) and are believed to be naturally present as well as challenging to develop. In addition, it implies that great leaders are rare and only a few individuals possess the necessary traits to lead effectively. The GMT emphasizes the importance of individual leaders rather than considering broader environmental or situational factors that can influence leadership effectiveness. Consequently, it has been criticized for several reasons and perspectives, including (1) the GMT overlooks the potential for leadership development through education and training. It assumes that extraordinary leadership qualities are fixed and cannot be cultivated (Buchanan, 2020), (2) the GMT tends to focus on male leaders and their perceived innate qualities (Debnath and Mishra, 2017; Garikipati and Kambhampati, 2021), thereby neglecting the contributions of women to be effective leaders, and (3) the GMT only focuses on individual traits as the sole determinant of leadership effectiveness and ignores the influence of situational factors. The substantial empirical evidence shows that effective leadership is often contingent upon the specific context and challenges faced by the organization (Madanchian et al., 2017; Reiche et al., 2017).

#### *The Situational Theory of Leadership (STL)*

The STL, also known as the Contingency Theory of leadership, is a widely recognized leadership model developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard in the late 1960s. The STL suggests that effective leadership is determined by the interaction between leaders' style, the readiness of the followers, and the characteristics of the specific circumstances of leading (Benmira and Agboola, 2021; Thompson and Glasø, 2018). Therefore, leaders need to assess their followers' task requirements, capabilities, and experience and adjust the used approach accordingly (Mendenhall, 2017; Zaccaro et al., 2018). The theory also highlights the importance of flexibility and the ability to match leadership behaviors to the needs of the context to achieve the best outcomes (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Thompson and Glasø, 2015). According to the STL, effective leadership requires matching leadership style to the follower's readiness

level. First, leadership style includes *task-oriented or directive leadership* (i.e., leaders have a strong focus on setting goals, defining tasks, and providing clear instructions to followers by giving specific guidance and monitoring progress), and *relationship-oriented or supportive leadership* (i.e., leaders emphasize building relationships, providing support, and promoting a positive work environment by showing concern for followers' well-being, listening to their needs, and fostering open communication). Second, followers' readiness includes *low readiness* (i.e., followers have low competence to perform tasks independently), *some readiness* (i.e., followers have limited competence but are willing to learn and improve by the direction from the leader), *moderate readiness* (i.e., followers have the necessary competence but may lack the confidence to take full responsibility), and *high readiness* (i.e., followers have high competence and confidence in performing best outcomes). In addition, there are four main leadership styles according to the STL: (1) directing or telling: in situations where the task is highly structured and followers have low readiness, leaders are expected to provide specific instructions and closely supervise their followers; (2) coaching or selling: when the task is still structured but followers have moderate readiness, leaders provide guidance and engage followers in the decision-making process to develop their skills and confidence; (3) delegating or observing: when the task is unstructured and followers have high readiness, leaders delegate authority and responsibility to their followers, allowing them to make decisions and take ownership of their work; and (4) supporting or participating: in situations where the task is less structured but followers have a high level of readiness, leaders encourage participation, listen to the ideas and suggestions of followers, and provide support and resources as needed.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This study presented a Bibliometric analysis of the literature on Islamic leadership using the VOSviewer software. The global studies and literature on Islamic leadership published between 2010 to 2023 were accessed in the Scopus database. In addition, "Leadership" and "Islam" were used as keywords in the title to find publications that matched the closest to fulfilling the criteria. A total of 1,134 documents

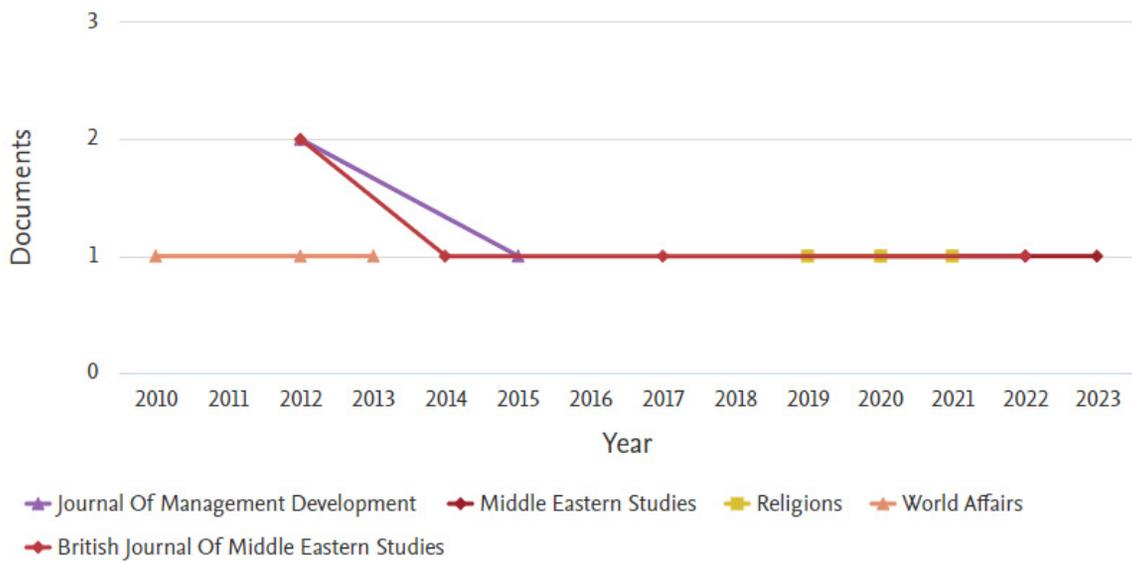


Fig. 1: Documents per year by source in the Scopus database (2010–2023)

on the topic of Islamic leadership were found in the Scopus database between 2010 and 2023, including 761 (67.1%) original study articles, 271 (23.9%) books and book chapters, 55 (4.9%) review articles, 30 (2.7%) conference papers, and 17 (1.5%) other forms of publications, such as editorials and notes. Almost all the publications (1,076, 94.9%) were written in English, followed by 23 (2.1%) Russian publications, 1,106 (93.5%) papers were final versions of publications, and 28 (2.5%) were articles in the press. After limiting to the final keywords “Leadership” and “Islam”, 244 documents were identified for further analysis. Among 244 documents, 222 (90.9%) were published in journal versions, 16 (6.6%) in the form of books, 5 (2.1%) in book series, and 1 paper in a conference proceeding. This study further used VOSviewer software for analyzing the final collected data. VOSviewer was a versatile tool for directly visualizing and analyzing Bibliometric networks (Bukar *et al.*, 2023; Ding and Yang, 2022; Oyewola and Dada, 2022; Xie *et al.*, 2020; Yu *et al.*, 2020). In addition, it acknowledged and allowed researchers to explore scientific literature databases, create visual representations of bibliographic data, and identify patterns as well as relationships among publications, authors, and keywords (Huang *et al.*, 2022; Markscheffel and Schröter, 2021; Sood *et al.*, 2021). VOSviewer could also be used to conduct

various types of analyses, such as co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword analysis (Jacobsen *et al.*, 2022; McAllister *et al.*, 2022); van Eck and Waltman, 2010; Zhang *et al.*, 2024).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

VOSviewer was used to address the study objectives, with the discussions and implications summarising the mapping of bibliographic data via VOSviewer.

Fig. 1 shows the top 5 journals in the sample that frequently published articles on Islamic leadership across different domains. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* from a reputable publisher (i.e., Taylor & Francis) had published 5 (2.05%) articles, followed by *the Journal of Management Development* from Emerald Publishing (3, 1.23% articles), *Journal of Religion and Health* from Springer Nature (3, 1.23% articles), *World Affairs* from Sage (3, 1.23% articles), and *Religions* from Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (3, 1.23% articles).

Fig. 2 classified the terms of the three clusters, namely red (i.e., Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, and United Arab Emirates), green (i.e., United States, Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic, and Turkey), and blue (i.e., Iran, Israel, and China). These three themes represented the cooperation among regions to focus on the study of Islamic leadership and its associate’s

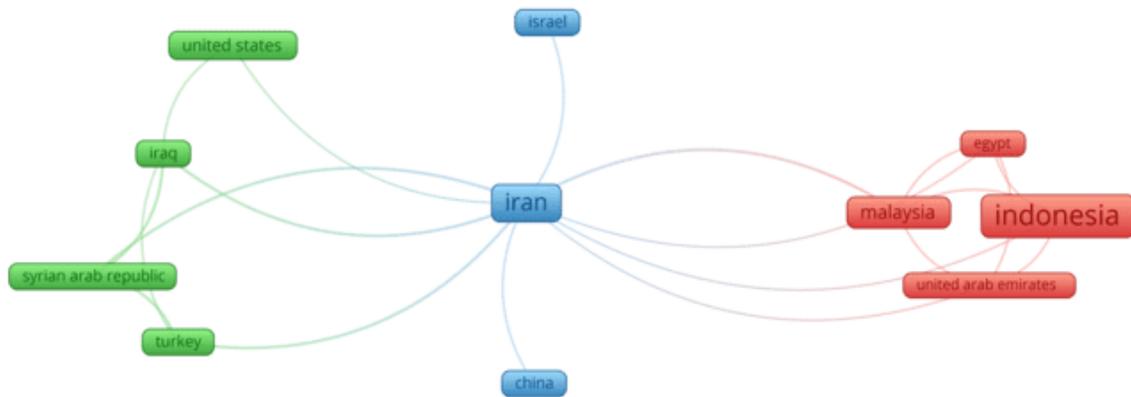


Fig. 2: Cooperation among contributing regions

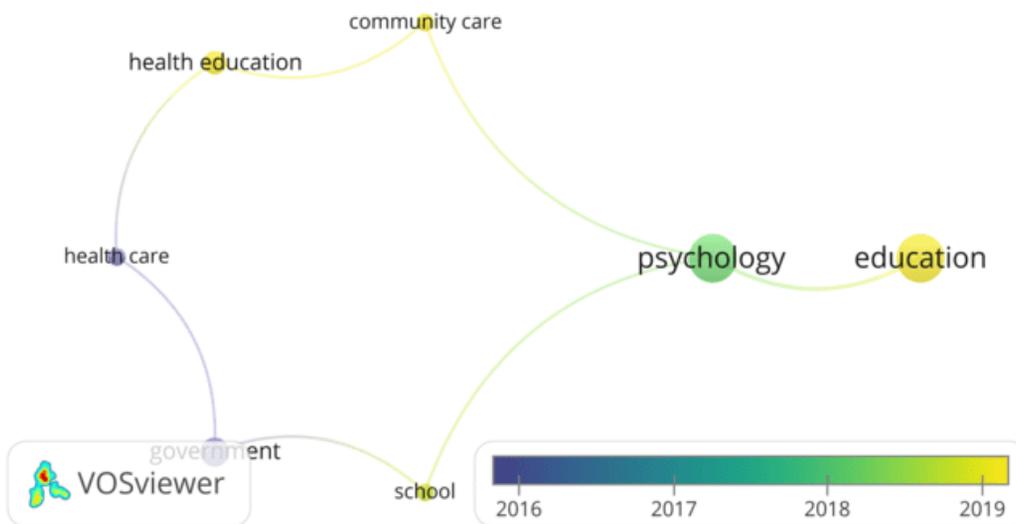


Fig. 3: The main terms are established based on the field

impact on organizational development. In addition, the 5 most prolific authors and co-authorship ultimately contributed to the paper focused on Islamic leadership. These included Purwanto, A. from Pelita Harapan University, Indonesia who generated 7 papers, followed by Mufid, A. with 6 papers from Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Khozinatul Ulum Blora – Indonesia, Faris, N. with 3 papers from the University of South Australia, Fahlevi, M. with 3 papers from Bina Nusantara University – Indonesia, and Wekke, I.S. with 2 papers from Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (STAIN) Sorong, Indonesia.

Based on Fig. 3, Islamic leadership was most commonly applied in education, psychology, community and health care, school, and government

sectors. For example, Saudi Arabia was a country that practiced Islamic leadership principles to operate the country’s social interactions and economic, political, and personal matters. Islamic law guided the governance, judiciary, and social policies to support the growth of the country. In addition, the implementation of Islamic leadership in Saudi Arabia reflected a balance between traditional values and modernization efforts.

Fig. 4 shows that Islamic leadership emphasizes trust as a fundamental aspect of leadership in enhancing job performance (Astuti *et al.*, 2020; Hamzah and Basri, 2021). In Islamic teachings, trust was seen as a critical component of any relationship, including the leader-follower relationship to foster a

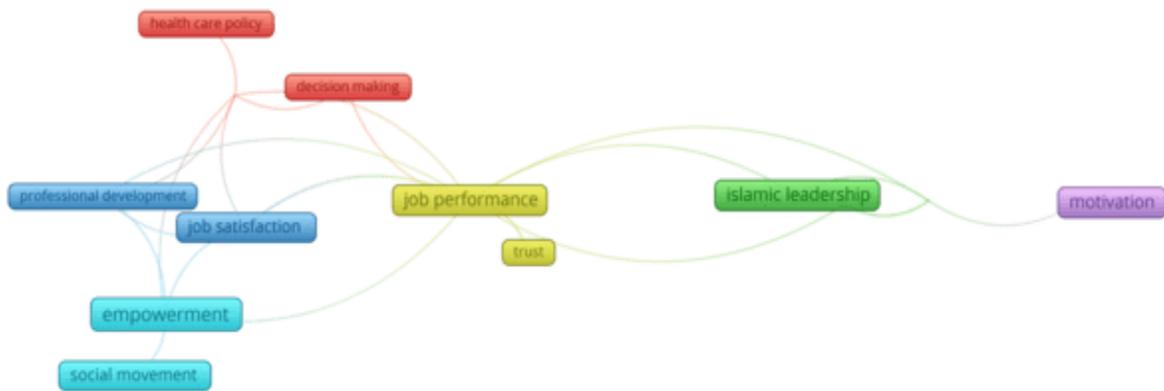


Fig. 4: The term co-occurrence network on Islamic leadership

positive work environment within an organization. Islamic leadership also strongly emphasizes the leader's trustworthiness to show integrity, honesty, and consistency in their actions and decisions. By establishing themselves as trustworthy, these individuals could create an environment where employees feel secure and confident in their intentions, leading to improved job performance. Islamic leadership also encourages leaders to empower their employees and provide the necessary support for enhancing their roles (Meiyani and Putra, 2019; Supriyanto, 2019; Zaim et al., 2024). By empowering employees, leaders showed trust in their abilities to improve job performance as employees were more likely to take ownership of work and strive for excellence. Islamic leaders further upheld high standards of honesty and integrity in business dealings to build trust with stakeholders and contribute to the well-being of the community. Islamic leadership promoted a holistic approach that considered employees' spiritual, ethical, and social aspects (Adawiyah and Pramuka, 2017; Faseruk and Hossain, 2017). In addition, it emphasized the importance of aligning work with a higher purpose and connecting to the service of Allah and the betterment of society. This perspective incorporated a sense of meaning and purpose in employees' work, which could significantly enhance their motivation and engagement to work. Islamic leadership promoted fairness and justice in dealing with employees. Leaders treated their employees with equity, ensuring that rewards, opportunities, and punishments were distributed fairly. When employees perceived fairness and justice in their leader's

actions, trust was established, leading to enhanced job satisfaction, job performance, and organizational success (Tajpour and Razavi, 2023). The concept also emphasizes the importance of recognizing and appreciating workers' efforts and contributions (Ahmad and Ogunsola, 2011; Noermijati et al., 2019; Zaim et al., 2021). Leaders expressed higher levels of gratitude (Ahmad and Fontaine, 2011; Mohammad, 2015) and acknowledged the achievements of their employees (Aini, 2020; Jamil, 2015). This recognition not only boosted self-esteem but also enhanced their motivation and dedication to perform effectively. Moreover, Islamic leadership promotes collaboration and consultation in decision-making processes. Leaders highly engaged their employees in decision-making and sought their input. By engaging employees in the decision-making process, leaders showed respect for their expertise and perspectives. This inclusive approach of leaders enhanced higher levels of employee job satisfaction, leading to high performance.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results showed that Islamic leadership was frequently related to trust, job performance, motivation, decision-making, job satisfaction, and empowerment. Islamic leadership also placed great emphasis on motivation and job performance, as it ultimately recognized the importance of productive and purposeful work in employees' lives and society's overall well-being. In addition, it supported employees in achieving healthy work-life integration by encouraging time for family, worship of Allah (God), and personal well-being. This

approach helped employees maintain motivation, thereby enhancing overall job performance. The practical implications of the study are that Islamic leadership emphasizes ethical conduct and decision-making based on Islamic principles to prioritize the needs of employees and strive to serve. Leaders were humble, empathetic, and compassionate towards employees, seeking to understand their concerns and actively supporting their well-being. This is aimed at fostering a sense of motivation, leading to increased job satisfaction and better performance. This study restricted the data collection and analysis to articles available in the Scopus scientific database, and it was acknowledged as a limitation. Although Scopus has become a comprehensive abstract and citation database covering a wide range of academic disciplines (Baier-Fuentes *et al.*, 2019; Dias *et al.*, 2019; Udin, 2023), it could still have biases in terms of geographical representation. The Scopus scientific database could result in a skewed perspective, particularly when the study topic was region-specific. Therefore, future studies could expand potentially valuable information available in other popular scientific databases to ensure comprehensive coverage of the literature, such as Web of Science, PubMed, JSTOR, IEEE Xplore, and Google Scholar. The addition of other languages, such as Arabic, Bahasa Indonesia, Bengali, or Urdu offers numerous advantages, including access to diverse perspectives, global reach, and policy implications. Embracing multilingualism enriched the study landscape and contributed to a more inclusive, interconnected, and culturally responsive academic community.

#### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

U. Udin has performed the writing of the original draft, investigation, methodology, and supervision.

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#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declared no potential conflict of interest regarding the publication of this work. In addition, the ethical issues including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and,

or falsification, double publication and, or submission, and redundancy have been completely witnessed by the authors.

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#### ABBREVIATIONS

GMT	Great Man Theory
STL	Situational Theory of Leadership

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