# Industrial Relations with Ukhuwwah (Brotherhood), 'Adl (Justice), and Ihsan (Benevolence)

Suhaimi Mhd Sarif [1]*, Dolhadi Zainudin[2], Yusof Ismail[3], Yayan Firmansah[4]

[1, 2, 3] Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia

[4]Faculty of Economics and Management, Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia

*Corresponding author(s). E-mail(s): suhaimims@iium.edu.my

Contributing authors: [2]dolhadi@iium.edu.my, [3]yusof.edu@gmail.com, [4]yayaf@unida.gontor.ac.id

## Abstract

*Traditional perspectives on industrial relations argued that the persistent competition among different entities, including workers, capitalists, bureaucrats, and authorities, with the goal of reducing operating costs while maximising financial profits. In contrast, Islamic values such as ukhuwwah (brotherhood), 'adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence) place importance on establishing a harmonious and ethical relationship between employers and employees, which serves as a solid foundation for creating a positive work environment. This study used grounded theory method through focused group discussion to explore the integration of Islamic values into the industrial relations of Islamic universities. It focuses on insights from participants who emphasised the significance of promoting positive human relationships, incorporating Islamic teachings, and maintaining a balance between procedural work and community-building activities. The study's findings suggest that incorporating these principles can establish a cohesive and morally upright work environment that is advantageous for both employees and organisations. Suggestions for the industrial relations unit, top management, board of governors, and the government involve cultivating strong unity through team-building, maintaining fairness with clear and open policies, and promoting excellence by supporting professional growth and empathetic work conditions.*

*Keywords: Ukhuwwah, 'Adl, Ihsan, Industrial Relations*

## Introduction

The basis for industrial development from conventional and traditional human resource management perspectives is rooted in ongoing conflict between various entities such as employees, employers, capitalists, bureaucrats, and authorities. The main objective of this endeavor is to minimize operational expenses while maximizing financial gains. According to Arudsothy (1990), industrial relations arise from the struggles of workers influenced by political and bureaucratic controls.

Conversely, in Islamic teachings, industrial relations are based on the values of ukhuwwah (brotherhood), 'adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence), prioritizing a harmonious and ethical connection between employers and employees. These ideas, rooted in Islamic beliefs, offer a strong basis for cultivating a favorable work atmosphere. According to Akhtar (1992), Islamic teachings emphasize the employer-employee relationship with the three values of ukhuwwah (brotherhood), 'adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence), prioritizing a

harmonious and ethical connection between employers and employees. The study also highlights how these principles can foster a harmonious working environment.

Zakiyy (2021) employs a qualitative method of document analysis to identify relevant principles used by the Industrial Court in Malaysia and from the Al-Qur'an, assessing whether Quranic values can be integrated into current practices for resolving disputes in collective agreements. Zakiyy (2021) finds that the values of equity, fairness, benevolence, and mutual understanding mentioned in the verses of the Al-Qur'an align with the objectives of the Industrial Relations Act 1967 in Malaysia and the principles applied by the Industrial Court in adjudicating trade disputes. Similarly, Abd Razak and Nik Mahmod (2021) emphasize the importance of Islamic principles of social justice in the Malaysian trade union movement, while Ahmad (2024) discusses enhancing trade union leadership through lessons from past experiences. Al-Twal, Alawamleh, and Jarrar (2024) investigate the role of Wasta social capital in enhancing employee loyalty and innovation in organizations, showing how cultural factors influence industrial relations.

## Problem statement

Organisations in the Association of South East Asian (ASEAN) region experiences persistent conflict in its industrial relations, involving several entities including employees, employers, capitalists, bureaucrats, and authorities. The main driving force behind this conflict is the aim to reduce operating costs while maximising financial profits (Arudsothy, 1988; Sharma, 1989; Bhopal, 1997; Hess, 2008; Shahiri, Osman, & Park, 2016; Kuruvilla & Arudsothy, 2005; Warner, 2014; Kumar et al., 2013; Shahiri et al., 2016).

In contrast, Islamic teachings suggest a different system for industrial relations that is founded on the principles of ukhuwwah (brotherhood), 'adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence). These principles emphasise the need of creating amicable and ethical relationships between employers and employees, which in turn promotes a positive work environment (Akhtar, 1992). The incorporation Islamic values into industrial relations can enhance equity, fairness, benevolence, and mutual understanding, which are in line with the goals of the Industrial Relations Act 1967 and the principles upheld by the Industrial Court in Malaysia (Zakiyy, 2021; Abd Razak & Nik Mahmod, 2021; Ahmad, 2024; Al-Twal, Alawamleh, & Jarrar, 2024).

The issue stems from the contradictory paradigms of traditional workplace relations, characterised by adversarial dynamics and commercial motivations, as opposed to the ethical and peaceful values promoted by Islamic teachings. This disparity emphasises the necessity for a thorough analysis of how Islamic principles can be methodically incorporated into the policy and implementation of industrial relations in order to address conflicts, advance social equity, and improve organisational commitment and creativity. This need is especially pertinent in the context of Islamic universities in two ASEAN countries, specifically Malaysia and Indonesia.

## Research questions

There are two research questions. Firstly, what is the impact of the concepts of ukhuwwah (brotherhood), 'adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence) on employee satisfaction and workplace harmony in Islamic universities? Secondly, how can Islamic universities implement strategies to successfully incorporate the principles of ukhuwwah, 'adl, and ihsan into their industrial relations procedures in order to improve employee productivity and organisational commitment?

## Research objectives

There are two research objectives. Firstly, the study aims to explore the influence of the principles of ukhuwwah (brotherhood), 'adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence) on

employee-employer relations to increase satisfaction and create workplace harmony in Islamic universities. Secondly, the research seeks to recommend effective strategies for Islamic universities to integrate the principles of ukhuwwah, 'adl, and ihsan into their industrial relations practices to enhance employee productivity and organizational commitment.

**Significance of the Study**

There are two important reasons for this study. Firstly, this study aims to advance the ethical perspectives on the discipline of Industrial Relations. The primary objective of the advancement of ethical industrial relations is to emphasise the capacity of incorporating Islamic principles such as ukhuwwah (brotherhood), 'adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence) into industrial relations policies and practices. By adopting this approach, it aims to distance itself from the commonly confrontational and profit-oriented methods that frequently result in disputes and labour unrest. Conversely, the study promotes a framework that is both ethical and harmonious, giving priority to equity, fairness, and mutual understanding. The results could offer significant perspectives for policymakers and practitioners in the ASEAN region, specifically in Malaysia and Indonesia, to establish more sustainable and equitable industrial relations systems.

Secondly, this study aims to promote organisational loyalty and innovation. The incorporation of Islamic principles into industrial interactions has the capacity to greatly improve organisational loyalty and innovation. Organisations can enhance employee morale and commitment by cultivating a work atmosphere that promotes mutual respect, justice, and charity. This is particularly important in the contexts of Islamic universities. Thus, this study aims to investigate the systematic integration of these values into the industrial relations frameworks of Islamic universities in Malaysia and Indonesia. The acquired knowledge could assist educational institutions and other organisations in the area to establish work environments that are more encouraging and inventive, thereby enhancing organisational performance and employee contentment.

**Literature Review**

This section delineates the epistemological discussion of the Industrial Relations with Islamic perspectives and values.

**Nature of industrial relations**

Industrial relations is a field of study that falls under the broader discipline of human resource management. It is also available at law schools as a component of labour law. There is a variation in the method of studying industrial relations among these faculties (Lim et al., 2012; Aminudin, 2024). Law faculties prioritise the study of the legal components of industrial relations within the framework of labour law. This includes analysing regulations, ensuring adherence to them, and resolving disputes. On the other hand, management faculties prioritise the practical aspects of industrial relations in the context of human resource management. They concentrate on implementing methods and techniques to effectively handle relationships between employers and employees in organisations.

Industrial relations refers to the complex web of relationships and interactions between employers, employees, trade unions, and the government within the workplace. It encompasses the study and practice of managing these relationships to ensure a harmonious, productive, and legally compliant working environment.

**Components of industrial relations**

Industrial relations involve various aspects, including how employers and employees interact, negotiate, and resolve conflicts (employee-employer relations); the legal framework governing employment, including labor rights, working conditions, and dispute resolution mechanisms (labor laws and regulations); the process by which employers and trade unions negotiate wages, working hours, and other employment terms (collective bargaining); methods and processes used to address and resolve conflicts or grievances between employers and employees (workplace dispute resolution); organizations that represent employees' interests, advocate for their rights, and engage in collective bargaining with employers (trade unions); and the role of government agencies and institutions in regulating, monitoring, and influencing industrial relations practices to ensure fairness and compliance with laws (government and institutional role).

According to Aminuddin (2024), the study of Industrial Relations incorporates management and industrial relations with industrial relations and employment law. Likewise, Lim et al. (2012) emphasizes on the importance of a partnership approach in labor relations, highlighting that collaborative strategies can lead to a strategic competitive advantage. Industrial relations aim to balance the interests of various stakeholders, promote fair treatment of workers, and maintain industrial peace and productivity.

**Traditional viewpoints of industrial relations**

The traditional viewpoints on industrial relations are based on the notion of an ongoing conflict between various entities, such as workers, capitalists, bureaucrats, and authorities. The main objective of this endeavour is to minimise operational expenses while maximising financial gains. According to Arudsothy (1990), industrial relations arise from conflicts and discussions that are impacted by political and bureaucratic restrictions. The dynamic nature of industrial interactions in the ASEAN region has been examined by several researchers, such as Arudsothy (1988), Sharma (1989), Bhopal (1997), Hess (2008), and Shahiri, Osman, & Park (2016).

These studies highlight the fact that the establishment of industrial relations in various countries is greatly influenced by their distinct historical and economic circumstances. For example, Bhopal (1997) and Kuruvilla & Arudsothy (2005) analyse the impact of these circumstances on labour relations and the dynamics between workers, employers, and governments. Warner (2014) and Kumar et al. (2013) emphasise the varied methods and results of industrial relations practices in different countries within the area. Shahiri et al. (2016) enhance the existing research by examining current problems and patterns in industrial relations, offering a thorough comprehension of how past and economic influences persistently influence the sector.

**Islamic institutional relations perspectives**

Industrial Relations, based on the values of ukhuwwah (brotherhood), 'adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence), prioritise a harmonious and ethical connection between employers and employees. These ideas, which are based on Islamic beliefs, offer a strong basis for cultivating a favourable work atmosphere.

Ukhuwwah, which refers to the concept of brotherhood, promotes a feeling of camaraderie and reciprocal assistance among colleagues in the workplace. This principle promotes a perspective where employees and employers perceive each other as members of a broader family, emphasising the utmost importance of mutual respect, support, and cooperation. Ukhuwwah fosters a sense of belonging and unity, hence establishing a workplace atmosphere that promotes the value and respect for all individuals. Consequently, this fosters collaboration, elevates team spirit, and cultivates a collective commitment to attaining mutual objectives.

'Adl, which refers to the concept of justice, guarantees impartiality and fairness in all interactions inside the workplace. This principle requires companies to ensure fair treatment for all employees, assessing them based on their abilities and contributions rather than showing favouritism or prejudice. Equitable remuneration, equitable working conditions, and unbiased conflict resolution are fundamental elements of 'adl. By maintaining fairness and impartiality, companies can cultivate trust and devotion among employees, ultimately resulting in increased job satisfaction and productivity. When employees are aware that they are being treated equitably, they are more inclined to feel inspired and dedicated to their job.

Ihsan, which refers to benevolence, motivates individuals to surpass their fundamental obligations and exhibit compassion and kindness. This concept highlights the significance of prioritising the welfare of others and fulfilling one's obligations with a strong sense of moral accountability. In the realm of industrial relations, ihsan refers to the demonstration of empathy, comprehension, and assistance between employers and employees. This may entail offering aid to coworkers in need, establishing a nurturing work atmosphere, and cultivating a culture characterised by benevolence and magnanimity. By placing a high importance on the welfare of others, ihsan contributes to the establishment of a workplace that is more compassionate and considerate. This can have a substantial positive impact on employee contentment and the unity of the organisation.

Collectively, these principles establish a harmonious and ethically sound structure for industrial relations that is in accordance with Islamic beliefs. This framework not only fosters a constructive and respectful work environment, but also guarantees that the organisation functions in an ethical and socially responsible manner. By incorporating the principles of ukhuwwah (brotherhood), 'adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence) into their operations, organisations can foster a work culture that is not only efficient but also ethically upright, resulting in enduring prosperity and viability.

**Islamic institutional framework**

Akhtar (1992) provides an Islamic framework for employer-employee relationships, highlighting how these principles can foster a harmonious working environment. Akhtar (1992) explains that in Islamic teachings, the employer-employee relationships based on three fundamental principles: ukhuwwah (brotherhood), 'adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence). These principles are essential for creating a fair, balanced, and compassionate employment environment.

Ukhuwwah (brotherhood) refers to the strong bond and sense of unity that exists between individuals. It represents a deep connection and mutual support among people.

Ukhuwwah fosters camaraderie and underscores the significance of unity and reciprocal assistance among all individuals in the community, including within the professional setting. It promotes the practice of treating colleagues with respect, empathy, and cooperation, acknowledging that all individuals are members of a wider community united by common beliefs and principles. In a professional context, this means creating a nurturing and cooperative work atmosphere where both employees and employers prioritise each other's welfare.

'Adl, which translates to justice, is a concept that refers to the quality of being fair, impartial, and equitable.Adl is a term that encompasses the principles of justice and fairness. Ensuring equitable treatment and upholding the rights of all individuals is of utmost importance. Within the framework of employer-employee relationships, 'adl imposes a structure of individual and societal obligations, guaranteeing that both parties complete their duties and responsibilities in a fair manner. This entails providing equitable compensation, implementing clear and open guidelines, and ensuring impartial treatment, so fostering a harmonious and equitable workplace where the rights of all individuals are upheld.

Ihsan, also known as benevolence, refers to the act of doing good or showing kindness and compassion towards others. It encompasses the concept of going above and beyond what is expected, and ihsan is the fundamental concept of exhibiting kindness and performing virtuous actions. In the workplace, Ihsan promotes the idea of employers and employees willingly relinquishing their rigid entitlements for the benefit of others, demonstrating acts of righteousness and ethical superiority. For example, a company may offer supplementary assistance to an employee in need, or an individual may voluntarily assist a colleague without anticipating any reciprocation. Ihsan cultivates a culture characterised by empathy and altruism, which improves the overall synergy and efficiency of the workplace.

## Islamic values into industrial relations

According to Islamic teachings as well, employees are required to maintain elevated moral principles, including truthfulness, honesty, and responsibility. The Qur'an and hadith stress the significance of these attributes as al-quwwah (strength) and encourage individuals to exert themselves diligently to provide for themselves and their families, considering such endeavours as striving in the cause of Allah. The Prophet Muhammad emphasised the importance of obtaining a legitimate income, considering it to be equivalent in significance to the act of jihad in the perspective of Allah. Employees should possess qualities of trustworthiness and productivity. The most exemplary workers are those who demonstrate al-quwwah (strength) and al-qudrah (capability). Al-quwwah, also known as strength, encompasses an employee's physical and mental fortitude, their capacity to withstand difficulties, and their general energy in carrying out responsibilities. It includes not just physical endurance but also moral and ethical fortitude, such as integrity, dependability, and the capacity to maintain high moral principles, including candour and honesty.

As for Al-qudrah, also known as capability, refers to an employee's aptitude, expertise, and mastery in their specific areas of work. It entails possessing the requisite knowledge, competence, and proficiency to carry out responsibilities with effectiveness and meet job

requirements. An al-qudrah employee is characterised by their adeptness in handling responsibilities, comprehensive understanding of task subtleties, and fruitful contributions to the organisation.

In addition, an employee must possess a clear understanding (فـهـم واضــــح) of their obligations and carry out their tasks with proficiency (بكفـاءة) as seen in the Qur'anic verse, "Appoint me over the storehouses of the land. Indeed, I will be a knowing guardian" (Surah Yusuf, verse 55).

Zakiyy (2021) employs a qualitative method of document analysis to identify the relevant principles used by the Industrial Court and from the Al-Qur'an, assessing whether Quranic values can be integrated into current practices for resolving disputes in collective agreements. This study finds that the values of equity, fairness, benevolence, and mutual understanding mentioned in the verses of the Al-Qur'an align with the objectives of the Industrial Relations Act 1967 and the principles applied by the Industrial Court in adjudicating trade disputes. Similarly, Abd Razak and Nik Mahmod (2021) emphasize the importance of Islamic principles of social justice in the Malaysian trade union movement, while Ahmad (2024) discusses enhancing trade union leadership through lessons from past experiences.

Al-Twal, Alawamleh, and Jarrar (2024) investigate the role of Wasta social capital in enhancing employee loyalty and innovation in organizations, showing how cultural factors influence industrial relations.

Based on the epistemological discussion, the study posited that the industrial relations with ukhuwwah (brotherhood), 'adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence) as the Islamic oriented Industrial Relations. Figure 1 shows the epistemological framework of the Islamic oriented Industrial Relations.
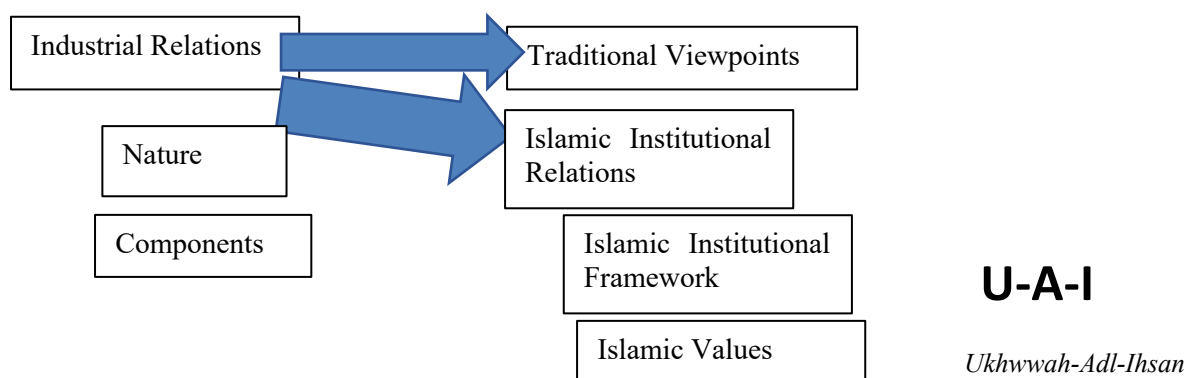


**Figure 1.**
**Epistemological framework of the Islamic oriented industrial relations**

**Research Method**
This study employed a qualitative research methodology using the grounded theory technique. Grounded theory is a method that involves collecting and analysing data at the same time to develop theory. It uses a combination of induction and deduction, known as

abductive reasoning (Corley, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 2017). The main objective of these simultaneous endeavours is to construct a theory that is profoundly influenced by the evidence, resulting in a theoretical output that is firmly based.

This grounded theory method used a focus group discussion with selected staff of Islamic Universities.The first phase in the grounded theory method was started with a preliminary literature review to understand the context and identify gaps in existing knowledge related to the research topic within Islamic universities.

Then the study developed a research design that outlined the objectives, research questions, and the grounded theory approach. The research instruments have been validated by independent researchers. The study secured informed consent from the participants. The data collection method was focus group discussions.

In the data collection phase, the study conducted a focus group discussion in a small and diverse groups of staff members. The lead researcher became the facilitator guided the discussion, ensuring that all participants have the opportunity to share their views. These discussions are recorded and transcribed. Participants were encouraged to elaborate on their experiences and perceptions.

As for the data analysis phase, there were several processed, namely initial coding or open coding, where the collected data was divided into discrete parts and coded for significant concepts and themes. Constant comparison was used to continuously compare new data with existing codes to identify similarities and differences. Then, the axial coding, identified relationships among the initial codes and grouping these codes into broader categories and subcategories. The context and conditions under which the phenomena occur were considered for interactions and consequences.

Finally, the selective coding involved identification of a core category that represented the central phenomenon of the study and integrated other categories around this core category, refined the theory to ensure it is coherent and comprehensive. At the theoretical development phase, data collection and analysis continued until no new significant themes or insights emerge, indicating theoretical saturation. A grounded theory that is well-supported by the data is constructed, explaining the central phenomenon and its related categories. At the validation and refinement phase, it involved checking and verification, where findings were shared with participants. Feedback was gathered to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the theory, and the theory is refined based on participant feedback and further analysis. Figure 2 depicts the grounded theory method process.
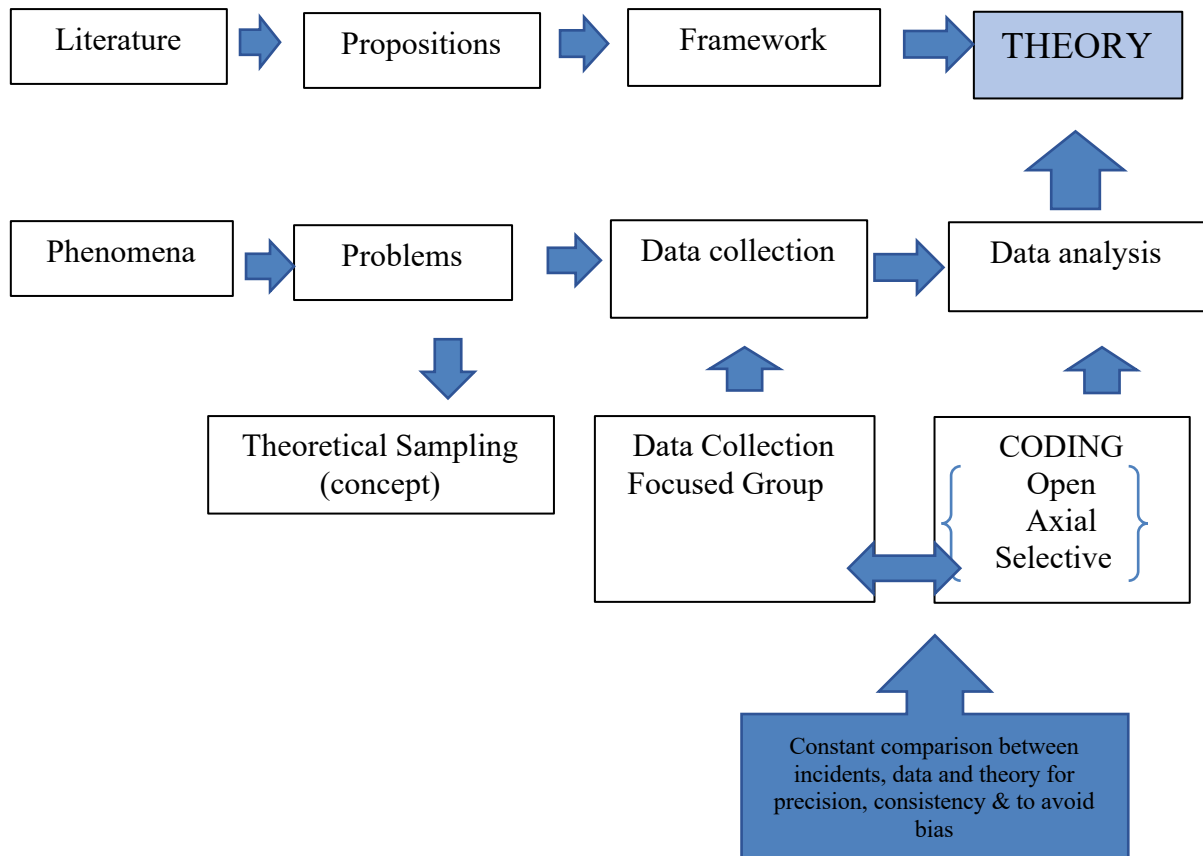
**Figure 1.**
**The grounded theory method process**

## Result and Discussion

The focus group discussion began with participants introducing themselves and describing their roles at their respective Islamic universities. The participants included NH from the IT department, MA from security advisory, YR from knowledge repository services, ZF from financial services, LH from corporate services, ZW from health services, and IH from corporate services. With extensive experience ranging from 10 to 20 years, the participants provided a rich foundation for discussing industrial relations in the context of Islamic principles.

## Contractual relationships

When asked to provide insights on industrial relations within Islamic universities, participants collectively defined it as a relationship based on employment contracts, social contracts, and Islamic faith contracts. NH emphasized the harmony between employer-employee relationships aimed at attaining the Pleasure of Allah. NH stated, "The harmony between employer-employee relationships should be aimed at attaining the Pleasure of Allah. This spiritual goal should be central to our interactions and management practices." Supporting NH's view, MA emphasized, "It's crucial for both employers and employees to work in harmony to ensure smooth industrial processes. Without this cooperation, achieving our operational goals becomes much harder."

YR added, "Fostering good human relationships within organizational structures is vital. When we build strong, positive relationships, it benefits everyone and helps the university function more effectively." ZF concurred with YR, NH, and MA, saying, "We need to integrate Islamic teachings in managing people. These principles guide us to be fair, compassionate, and just in all our dealings, which is essential for a healthy work environment."

LH highlighted, "Our work should be procedural and target-oriented, involving employers, employees, and the government. Clear procedures and objectives help ensure that everyone is on the same page and working towards common goals." ZW noted, "The regulated nature of these relationships is important. Regulations provide a framework that ensures fairness and consistency in how we manage our staff and operations." IH concluded the arguments by other colleageus by saying, "Islamic universities have a unique vision and mission to achieve goodness. This mission should guide all our actions and decisions, aligning them with our core values and objectives."

In essence, MA highlighted the need for both employers and employees to work in harmony to ensure smooth industrial processes. YR noted the importance of fostering good human relationships within organizational structures. ZF pointed out the integration of Islamic teachings in managing people. LH discussed the procedural and target-oriented nature of work involving employers, employees, and the government. ZW remarked on the regulated nature of these relationships, while IH underscored the unique vision and mission of Islamic universities to achieve goodness.

## Ukhuwwah-Adl-Ihsan approach

The discussion then turned to incorporating the principles of ukhuwwah (brotherhood), 'adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence) into the industrial relations at Islamic universities. Participants argued that ukhuwwah can be integrated into the operations of Islamic universities by fostering a strong sense of community and mutual support among staff. This principle encourages teamwork, collaboration, and the sharing of knowledge and resources. NH from the IT department emphasized the importance of creating an environment where staff feel valued and supported, which can lead to higher job satisfaction and productivity. MA, YR, ZF, LH, ZW, and IH shared similar insights, noting that regular team-building activities and opportunities for staff to engage in social and professional networks can enhance this sense of brotherhood.

According to NH, "When we talk about integrating the principle of ukhuwwah, or brotherhood, into our industrial relations, I is crucial to focus on creating an environment where staff feel valued and supported. At my department, I have seen how much of a difference it makes when team members know they can rely on each other. This not only boosts morale but also leads to higher job satisfaction and productivity."

MA responded: "I completely agree with NH. At my department, the sense of brotherhood is essential. When staff members feel that they are part of a community, they are more likely to go above and beyond their duties. We need to have regular team-building activities and opportunities for social interaction to strengthen these bonds."

YR agreed with NH and MA by saying that, "Yes, fostering good human relationships within our organizational structures is vital. At my office, we have started implementing more collaborative projects, which has really helped in building trust and cooperation among the team. Encouraging teamwork and the sharing of knowledge and resources is key to embodying the principle of ukhuwwah." ZF responded: "From a financial services perspective, integrating Islamic teachings in managing people is fundamental. The principles of fairness and compassion are at the heart of our work. By fostering a strong sense of community and mutual support, we can ensure that our staff feel respected and valued. This not only aligns with the principle of ukhuwwah but also enhances our overall work environment."

While concurred with other colleagues, LH emphasied by saying that: "Our work should be procedural and target-oriented, but that doesn't mean we can't also focus on building a sense of brotherhood. In corporate services, we have found that clear procedures and objectives help, but it's the mutual support and teamwork that truly drive success. We should encourage regular team-building activities and create opportunities for staff to engage in both social and professional networks." As for ZW, ZW said: "I've seen how important it is for staff to feel supported by their colleagues. The regulated nature of our relationships helps ensure consistency and fairness, but we also need to foster a sense of community. Regular team-building activities and a supportive work environment can go a long way in enhancing this sense of brotherhood."

IH said: "Islamic universities have a unique vision and mission to achieve goodness, and this should guide all our actions and decisions. By integrating the principles of ukhuwwah, 'adl, and ihsan into our industrial relations, we can create a more harmonious and ethically sound work culture. It's about aligning our core values with our everyday practices to foster an environment where everyone feels valued and supported."

While agreeing with IH, MA pointed out that: "I also think we need to consider how we can implement the principle of 'adl, or justice, in our industrial relations. This means establishing clear and transparent policies that govern employment practices, conflict resolution, and performance evaluation. Fair treatment and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities are essential to fostering a culture of fairness and trust."

YR mentioned: "Incorporating the principle of ihsan, or benevolence, is also important. This involves going beyond the minimum requirements and striving for excellence in all our actions. Providing continuous professional development opportunities and support for personal growth can make a significant difference in staff morale and motivation." ZF supported YR's opinion by saying that: "Yes, fostering a compassionate work environment where staff feel cared for and motivated to perform their best is essential. This not only benefits the individual staff members but also contributes to the overall success of the university."

LH said: "By focusing on these principles, we can create a more supportive and productive work environment. It's about aligning our operations with our core values to foster a sense of community, fairness, and excellence." As for ZW mentioned that: "Regular team-building activities, clear and transparent policies, and a commitment to professional development are all crucial to integrating these principles into our industrial relations." Indeed, IH pointed that: "Ultimately, it's about creating a work culture that reflects our Islamic values and promotes a harmonious and ethically sound environment for everyone."

**Integrated approach**

NH emphasized the importance of integrating the principle of ukhuwwah, or brotherhood, into industrial relations by creating an environment where staff feel valued and supported. In the IT department, NH has observed the positive impact when team members know they can rely on each other, which not only boosts morale but also leads to higher job satisfaction and productivity. MA agreed, stating that in security advisory, the sense of brotherhood is essential. When staff members feel part of a community, they are more likely to go above and beyond their duties. MA highlighted the need for regular team-building activities and opportunities for social interaction to strengthen these bonds.

YR echoed these sentiments, noting that fostering good human relationships within organizational structures is vital. In knowledge repository services, collaborative projects have helped build trust and cooperation among the team. Encouraging teamwork and the sharing of knowledge and resources is key to embodying the principle of ukhuwwah. From a financial services perspective, ZF emphasized that integrating Islamic teachings in managing people is fundamental. The principles of fairness and compassion are at the heart of their work. By fostering a strong sense of community and mutual support, staff feel respected and valued, aligning with the principle of ukhuwwah and enhancing the overall work environment.

LH discussed the importance of balancing procedural and target-oriented work with building a sense of brotherhood. In corporate services, clear procedures and objectives are essential, but mutual support and teamwork drive success. LH suggested encouraging regular team-building activities and creating opportunities for staff to engage in both social and professional networks. ZW, reflecting on health services as a dental therapist, highlighted the importance of staff feeling supported by their colleagues. While regulations ensure consistency and fairness, fostering a sense of community is also necessary. Regular team-building activities and a supportive work environment enhance this sense of brotherhood.

IH pointed out that Islamic universities have a unique vision and mission to achieve goodness, which should guide all actions and decisions. By integrating the principles of ukhuwwah, 'adl, and ihsan into industrial relations, a more harmonious and ethically sound work culture can be created. Aligning core values with everyday practices fosters an environment where everyone feels valued and supported. MA added that implementing the principle of 'adl, or justice, requires establishing clear and transparent policies governing employment practices, conflict resolution, and performance evaluation. Fair treatment and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities are essential to fostering a culture of fairness and trust.

NH supported this, emphasizing that ensuring all staff members have access to the same opportunities for advancement and are evaluated based on their merit and contributions is critical. This creates an environment of trust and fairness. YR added that incorporating the principle of ihsan, or benevolence, involves going beyond minimum requirements and striving for excellence in all actions. Providing continuous professional development opportunities and support for personal growth can significantly boost staff morale and motivation.

ZF agreed, noting that fostering a compassionate work environment where staff feel cared for and motivated to perform their best is essential. This benefits individual staff members and contributes to the overall success of the university. LH concluded that focusing on these principles can create a more supportive and productive work

environment. Aligning operations with core values fosters a sense of community, fairness, and excellence. ZW reiterated the importance of regular team-building activities, clear and transparent policies, and a commitment to professional development in integrating these principles into industrial relations. IH ultimately emphasized that the goal is to create a work culture reflecting Islamic values and promoting a harmonious and ethically sound environment for everyone.

In terms of 'adl (justice), participants argued that 'adl is crucial in ensuring fairness in all dealings within the university. This principle can be implemented by establishing clear, transparent policies and procedures that govern employment practices, conflict resolution, and performance evaluation. MA emphasized the need for fair treatment and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. NH, YR, ZF, LH, ZW, and IH echoed these concerns, stating that all staff members should have access to the same opportunities for advancement and be evaluated based on their merit and contributions, fostering a culture of fairness and trust.
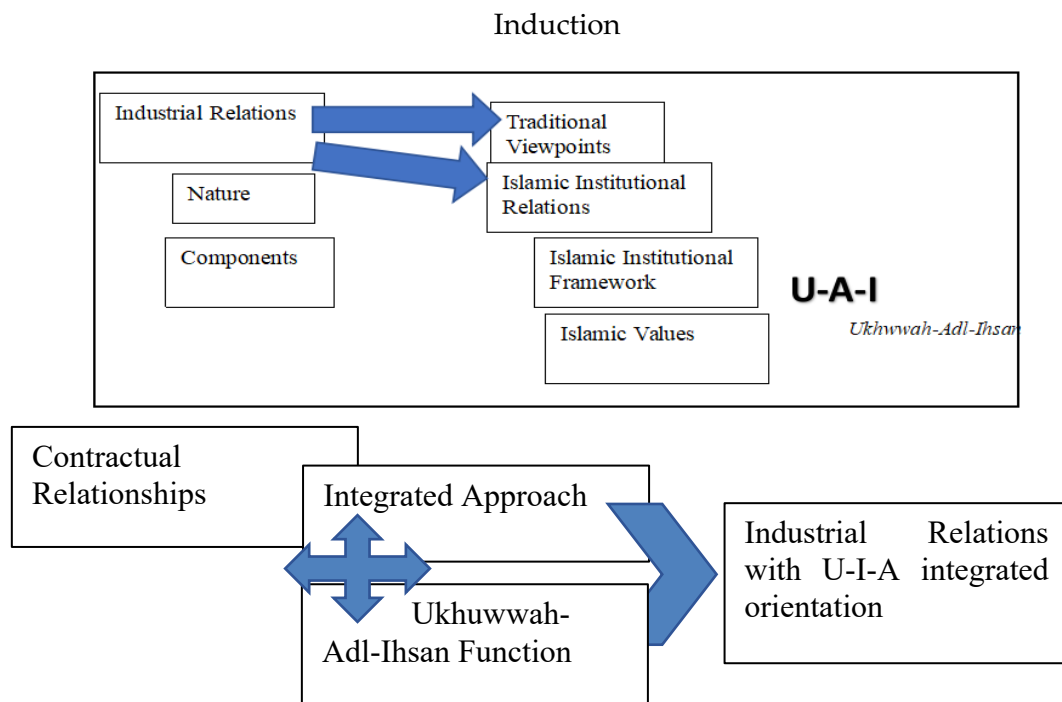
Induction



**Figure 3.**
**Grounded theory industrial relations theory with the emphasis on ukhuwwah, 'adl and ihsan**

As for ihsan (benevolence), participants argued that ihsan involves going beyond the minimum requirements and striving for excellence in all actions. This can be reflected in the university's commitment to the welfare and development of its staff. YR pointed out the importance of providing continuous professional development opportunities and support for personal growth. NH, MA, ZF, LH, ZW, and IH agreed, emphasizing that fostering a compassionate work environment where staff feel cared for and motivated to perform their best is essential.

By integrating the principles of ukhuwwah, 'adl, and ihsan into their operations, Islamic universities can create a harmonious and ethically sound work culture that benefits both the staff and the institution.

By combining the induction framework with deduction framework, the study developed Industrial Relations with U-A-I integrated orientation. Figure 3 depicts the grounded theory industrial relations theory with the emphasis on ukhuwwah, 'adl and ihsan.

## Recommendations

The Industrial Relations Unit of Islamic universities are recommended to cultivate ukhuwwah (brotherhood) with consistent team-building exercises and social engagement opportunities that effectively enhance the connections among staff members. Efforts that actively promote cooperation, collaboration, and the exchange of knowledge and resources will contribute to the development of a supportive community. In addition, the implementation of mentorship programmes guarantees that employees feel appreciated and assisted, resulting in a substantial increase in job satisfaction and productivity. To uphold the principle of 'adl (justice), it is necessary to establish explicit and transparent regulations that govern employment practices, conflict resolution, and performance evaluation. It is imperative to ensure that all staff members are treated fairly and that resources and opportunities are distributed equitably among them. Regularly reviewing and updating policies is necessary to sustain a culture characterised by fairness and trust. To foster ihsan or benovalence, it is essential to offer ongoing professional development opportunities and assistance for personal advancement. An empathetic work atmosphere that cultivates a sense of real concern for staff well-being and fosters motivation for optimal performance should be nurtured. It is crucial to motivate employees to pursue excellence in all their actions, surpassing the minimum expectations.

To the top management of Islamic universities, it is essential to include Islamic principles into leadership. Top management should demonstrate exemplary behaviour, reflecting the concepts of ukhuwwah, 'adl, and ihsan in all interactions and decision-making processes. It is important to actively promote a culture of leadership that places a high emphasis on ethical conduct, compassion, and justice. In addition, the top management also needs to improve communication and to promote transparency. Thus, it is crucial for the top management to maintain open channels of communication with personnel to keep them informed about policy changes, chances for career progression, and organisational objectives. In addition, it is crucial to foster a transparent atmosphere in which employees feel at ease expressing their problems and suggestions.

Moreoever, the top management also should facilitate the advancement of one's professional skills. There is a need for allocation of resources for staff training and development programmes that are in accordance with Islamic principles. Acknowledging and incentivizing the contributions and accomplishments of employees will strengthen a culture characterised by exceptional performance and ihsan (benovalance).

**Conclusion**

The conventional viewpoint on industrial connections, marked by discord and motivated by economic goals, dramatically differs from the Islamic approach, which prioritises harmonious and ethical relationships. The principles of ukhuwwah (brotherhood), 'adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence) offer a comprehensive foundation for establishing a healthy and productive work environment in Islamic universities. The study participants emphasised the importance of these concepts in promoting a favourable work culture.

To uphold the principle of ukhuwwah, the Industrial Relations Unit should provide frequent team-building activities and social contact opportunities, fostering teamwork, cooperation, and the exchange of resources. It is important to establish mentorship programmes in order to enhance staff's sense of worth, which will result in higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity. It is crucial for 'adl to establish explicit and open policies that regulate employment procedures, conflict resolution, and performance evaluation. It is important to guarantee just treatment and equal allocation of resources and opportunities, with policies constantly assessed to sustain a culture of justice and trust.

As for advancing ihsan, it entails offering ongoing chances for professional development and fostering personal improvement. Thus, there is a of creating a nurturing work atmosphere that prioritises the well-being and motivation of personnel is crucial. Likewise, motivating employees to consistently pursue excellence in all endeavours will yield advantages for both individuals and the university as a collective entity.

It is important for top management to include Islamic values into their leadership style, exemplifying ethical conduct, compassion, and fairness in all their dealings. In addition, it is important also for the top management to keep communication lines open and promote transparency to ensure that staff members are well-informed and feel comfortable expressing their concerns.

Apart from the top management, the Board of Governors also should assure that the strategic objectives and policies align with Islamic beliefs, while consistently evaluating their influence on staff morale and achievement. The process of policy formulation should include a wide range of stakeholders, in order to provide thorough and inclusive governance. In doing so, there is a need to assure sufficient resources to be assigned to projects that promote community, equity, and professional growth.

The government should establish and uphold labour regulations that align with Islamic ideals in educational institutions. Thus, universities that promote ethical work cultures should receive additional financial support and incentives. In addition, there should be nationwide training programmes for workers and management on Islamic values.

Islamic universities can establish a harmonious and morally sound work culture by incorporating the principles of ukhuwwah, 'adl, and ihsan. This will improve staff well-being, encourage fairness and justice, and create a friendly and productive atmosphere that aligns with Islamic ideals.

**Acknowledgement**

International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and University of Darussalam (UNIDA) Gontor, Indonesia.

## References

Abd Razak, S. S., & Nik Mahmod, N. A. K. (2021). Embracing the Islamic principles of social justice in the Malaysian trade union movement. *UUM Journal of Legal Studies (UUMJLS)*, 12(2), 1-21.

Ahmad, M. H. (2024). Enhancing trade union leadership: Lessons from the past experience. Politics and Humanism, 3(1), 10-24.

Akhtar, M. R. (1992). An Islamic framework for employer-employee relationships. *American Journal of Islam and Society*, 9(2), 202-218.

Al-Twal, A., Alawamleh, M., & Jarrar, D. M. (2024). An investigation of the role of wasta social capital in enhancing employee loyalty and innovation in organizations. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 13(1), 12-17.

Aminuddin, M. (2024). *Malaysian Industrial Relations & Employment Law* (11th ed.). McGraw Hill.

Arudsothy, P. (1988). Labor law and industrial relations in Malaysia. *Labour & Industry: A Journal of the Social and Economic Relations of Work*, 1(3), 463-485.

Arudsothy, P. (1990). The state and industrial relations in developing countries: The Malaysian situation. *ASEAN Economic Bulletin*, 307-329.

Beng, C. S., & Chew, R. (2005). The development of industrial relations strategy in Singapore. In T. Kochan, R. Lansbury, & A. Verma (Eds.), *Employment relations in the growing Asian economies* (pp. 62-87). Routledge.

Bhopal, M. (1997). Industrial relations in Malaysia multinational preferences and state concessions in dependent development: A case study of the electronics industry. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 18(4), 567-595.

Caraway, T. L. (2023). *Organized labor in Southeast Asia*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Corley, K. G. (2015). A commentary on "What grounded theory is…": Engaging a phenomenon from the perspective of those living it. *Organizational Research Methods*, 18(4), 600–605. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428115574747

Dunkley, G. (1982). Industrial relations and labour in Malaysia. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 24(3), 424-442.

Duasa, J., Mhd Sarif, S., & Abdul Sabian, N. A. (2020). Unified theory of firm: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, 11(7), 1453-1478.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (2017). Discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research (1st ed.). New York: Routledge.

Hess, M. (2008). Community as a factor in union organization. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 21(4), 497-510.

Kuruvilla, S. (1996). Linkages between industrialization strategies and industrial relations/human resource policies: Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, and India. *ILR Review*, 49(4), 635-657.

Kuruvilla, S., & Arudsothy, P. (2005). Economic development strategy, government labour policy and firm-level industrial relations practices in Malaysia. In T. Kochan, R. Lansbury, & A. Verma (Eds.), *Employment relations in the growing Asian economies* (pp. 158-193). Routledge.

Kumar, N., Martinez Lucio, M., & Rose, R. C. (2013). Workplace industrial relations in a developing environment: Barriers to renewal within unions in Malaysia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 51(1), 22-44.

Lim, G. S., Holley, W. H., Jennings, K. M., & Wolters, R. S. (2012). *The Labor Relations Process: A Partnership Approach to Creating Strategic Competitive Advantage* (1st ed.). Cengage Learning.

O'Brien, L. (1988). Between capital and labour: Trade unionism in Malaysia. In R. Southall (Ed.), *Labour and unions in Asia and Africa: Contemporary issues* (pp. 136-170). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Rafiki, A., & Wahab, K. A. (2014). Islamic values and principles in the organization: A review of literature. *Asian Social Science*, 10(9), 1-3.

Shahiri, H., Osman, Z., & Park, K. (2016). Union relevance in the Malaysian labour market. *Asian-Pacific Economic Literature*, 30(2), 45-56.

Sharma, B. (1989). Union growth in Malaysia and Singapore. *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society*, 28(3), 446-458.

Wan, D. (2010). Singapore industrial relations system in the globalization era. In *The multi-dimensions of industrial relations in the Asian knowledge-based economies* (pp. 125-147).

Warner, M. (2014). *Culture and management in Asia*. Routledge.

Zakaria, N. S., & Ahmad, S. A. (2024). Enculturation of ubudiyyah, mas' uliyyah and iqtan (UMI) principles in conventional employment relations. *Semarak International Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture*, 1(1), 35-49.

Zakiyy, N. (2021). Resolving issues in collective agreements: Harmonizing the Industrial Court and Quranic approaches. *Asian Journal of Law and Governance*, 3(4), 28-36.