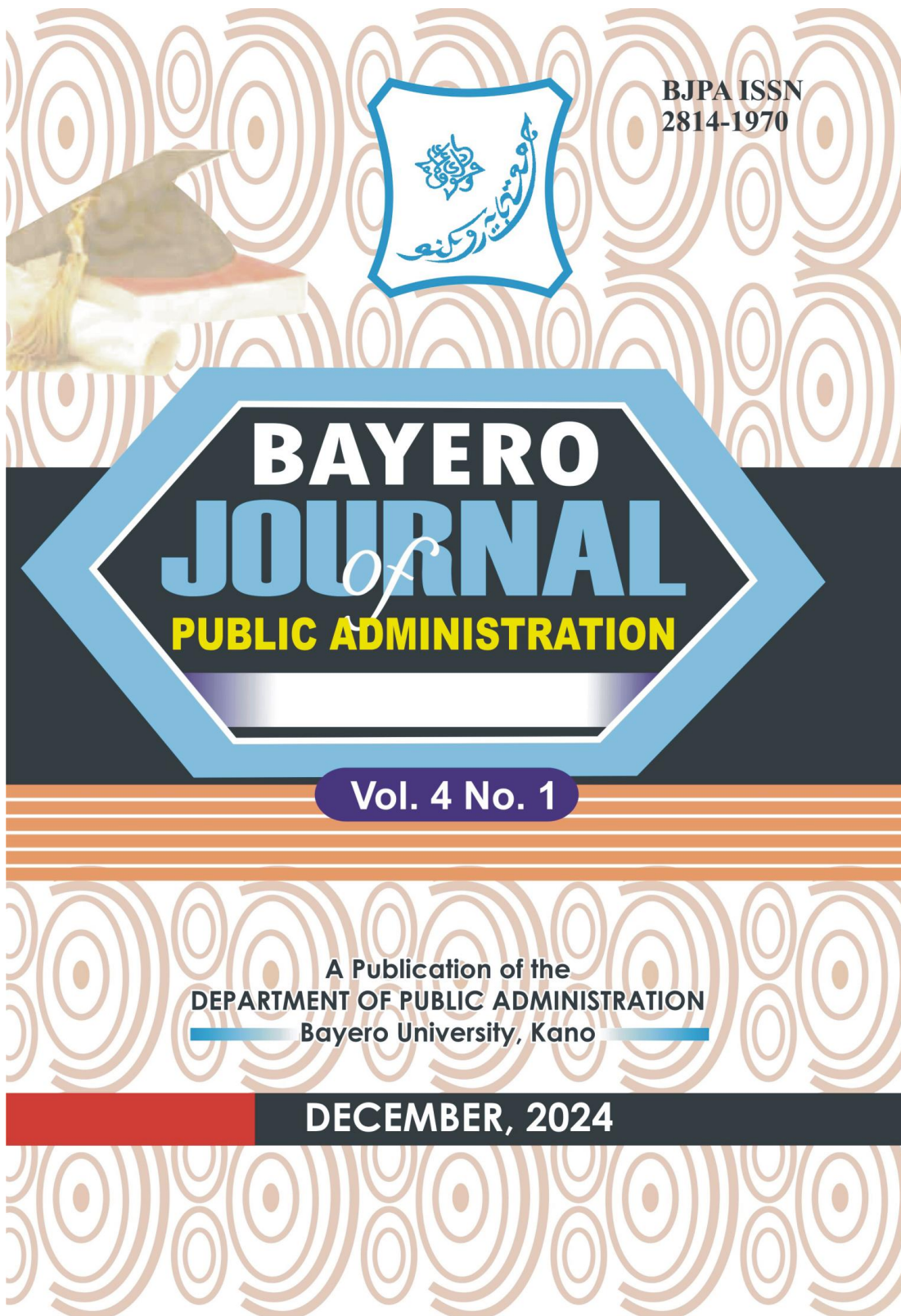


DOI: <https://doi.org/10.67894/bjpa.2024.g1l51f83>

*Bayero Journal of Public Administration Volume 4, Number 1, Dec. 2024*



## **ASSESSMENT OF ETHICAL PRACTICES ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK IN AN ORGANIZATION; AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE.**

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### **Abstract**

*Organizational ethics is very crucial in every aspect of Human Resource Management. This study delves into the ethical practices on the management of human resources in Organizations from the Islamic Perspective. Studies have shown limited literatures in relation to the Islamic aspect of human resource management which is a major gap in the field of study as a result most organizations are guided by the western principles and ethics of most Organization. Human resource management deals with the management of people in an Organization who are responsible for day to day activities, which entails training, recruitment as well as employment. The study examines the ethical conduct of Human Resource Management from the Islamic theology and principles. The study identified lack of good consultation as part of the major problems, unjust attitudes from top management in relation to recruitment and also non-implementation of ethical conducts. Findings have shown that most Organizations have failed to integrate both the Quran and Sunnah principles when it comes to the practices of Human Resource Management rather focusing more on the secular principles. The study intends to assess the performance of Human Resource Management by providing a model to address this Management to proffer solutions.*

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**Key words:** Human Resource Management, Islamic Principles, Ethics and Ethical Practices

### **1.0 Introduction**

The modern day organizations are cognizant of the value and vitality of human resources as one of the greatest factors that contribute towards the overall success of organizations as well as about the role of human resource (HR) towards the achievement of organizational goals. Human resource management is a fundamental organizational function which is the process of acquiring, managing, compensating, developing and deploying the staff in organizations to achieve strategic objectives and attain success in a mutually beneficial working relationship. Some of the studies attempted to express the nature and contents of the management in Islamic countries but scant attention has been paid to the practice of HRM from an Islamic point of view. The limited literature available is revealing the gap between the theory/models and practice of management in Islam. While one finds the wider literature on western management, it has been a bit difficult to lay hands on Islamic literature of HRM which is the focus of our study. Human resource management is the strategic approach to the effective and efficient management of people in a company or organization such that they help their business gain a competitive advantage. It is design to maximize employee performance in service of an employer's strategic objectives. People management and learning have always existed within organizations in one form or another. The application of human effort to the achievement of business objectives means that people able to undertake particular tasks need to be found and encouraged to contribute to their best ability. In most large organizations, human resource management (HRM) specialists support line managers through the development of appropriate policies and practices. (Torrington, 2014; cited in John Martin and Martin Fellenz 2017).

Within an organizational setting, learning most frequently finds expression in the form of training and development. Organizations are faced with constant changes to technology, trading and economic conditions all requiring new skills and flexible workers. Therefore, it becomes essential to train and retrain employees as part of the human resource activity in order to retain organizational viability. The opportunities for personal and professional development are important 'weapon' as part of HRM activity in management attempts to attract and retain good staff, as well as the means of enhancing organizational performance. There are also benefits to be garnered in terms of improved levels of control (achieved through socialization) that management gains from the effective use of training and development method as part of the overall HRM framework. As the time passed, the philosophy of human resources management grew expansive and the emphasis of thinkers, theorists, scholars and authors shifted from the foundational aspects to the contemporary issues pertinent to human resource in order to deliberate, delineate, and discuss the rapidly changing dynamics of human resource management and ancillary practices in the managerial context especially in relation to the strategic objectives and achievement of organizational goals (Amos et al., 2009).

There is a need for understanding the fundamentals of Islamic human resource management system derived from the primary source of Islam i.e. The Holy Quran and the Hadith's of the Prophet (SAW). Literature from Islamic perspective is very limited in the English language as compared to the literature described by Muslim scholars in Arabic at large. It is often claimed that religion plays a direct and major role on human behavior, including social communication and social associations. (Abuznaid, 2006). There is very little research on HRM from Islamic Perspective available as what we find in the Middle Eastern and Arab region concerning HRM is based on the western based HRM function. (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2006). The element of humans in the HRM is what makes the concept of utmost significance, however Inkson (2008) asserted that instead of using the term 'human resource management', we must use the phrase 'human partnership management' to encourage a less depersonalized and dehumanized view of employment relations.

Human resource management involves certain key factors such as salary and compensation, recruitment and employment process, hiring and selection, placement and training as well as performance evaluation. The employees represent the highest category of assets that any organization has and demands the highest degree of importance in order to secure the strategic organizational goals in a win-win scenario wherein both the organization as well as its employees collectively attain tangible and non-tangible benefits and gains without denting each other's motives and without compromising on the best practices, value system and ethical conduct (Fryer, 2018)

The bases of ethics and administration at work in Islam have been drawn from the Quran and the saying of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Several verses of the Quran address the Ummah and directed them to do justice and be honest in trade, also be courteous and fair in relationships. Further it encourages human beings to acquire new skills and endeavor to do noble work which would be beneficial for not only to the individual but for the community as a whole. Hence Islam teaches and stresses for cooperation in work and made it compulsory to have consultation while making any decision. (Abuznaid, 2006). The issue of justice and fairness is another key important problem faced by most organizations. When it comes to decisions regarding employees, the one who has meet the criteria and competent for the job is not the one given employment as a result of favoritism or biasness and high influence by western culture. This is against the Islamic rulings which states in Quran 4:135 "meaning justice is for all. Everyone

should put justice first, even before their family. If anyone does evil or wrongs his own soul, but afterwards seeks God's forgiveness, he will find Him most forgiving and merciful".

For organization to prosper and flourish to achieve desired goals, it needs to ensure that staffs' are trained on regular basis; this will make employees vast and competent in their skills. In present days, even those that are newly employed are not trained but rather are left on their own to carry out or exercise their duties effectively and efficiently which in most cases becomes impossible. This in return begins to kill the organization slowly which in the end might lead to closure of the company. For example, institutions and universities employ academic staff which are incapable of delivering lectures adequately due to lack of training or orientation of the newly employed, as a result the students are the ones to suffer the consequences and at the end the university end up producing half-baked graduate to the nation which is now a trending problem. And these are the same set of people that seek to rule or become a leader in our society which I consider very worrisome.

Other key factors which are hampering on the success of the organizations include lack of cooperation among employees, hypocrisy, disunity, dishonesty, lack of trust among management members. These are some of the fundamental issues in which the study is trying to address and also to ensure the secular principle of Human Resources Management is integrated with the Islamic ethical knowledge and principle.

With the involvement of ethical underpinnings and embracing of certain standards of morality with reference to organizational aspects, processes and practices as well as the social role of enterprises in context of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, the facet of ethics and religion also intertwined with the domain of human resource management (Greenwood, 2013). Understandably, as the ideals of ethical conduct and moral values being applied and attached to the discipline of HRM, the religious perspective also is essentially applicable to the subject matter, practices and processes of HRM in this frame of reference. This paper will observe the major impact of religion i.e. Islam on work performance and human Resource management model, policies and practices as this aspect has received unsatisfactory consideration from scholars as well as researchers in the past. (Bourma G, 2003). This study aim to access the doctrines and ethical conducts provided in relation to human resource management in an organization with regards to recruitment exercise and also to find out if the recruitment process is conducted based on merit, competence, fairness and just.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Concept of Human Resources Management Islamic View**

Islam is a comprehensive code and a complete framework for all mankind encompassing all matters of human life. Islamic ideological principles are much expansive and broader in scope that they cover all aspects of individual and collective life (Aqib, 2012). This is an astounding fact that Islam offers guidance in all spheres including legal, political, social and economic facets of individual and social life. The principles and tenets regarding human resources management issues are gleaned from the two cardinal sources of Islamic framework which includes the Holy Quran and the Sunnah (saying and actions) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). The rulings of Islam are broadly categorized under two major jurisprudential divisions; the first category covers the aspects of belief and worship while the second one covers the daily life affairs of humans. The latter category of Islamic jurisprudential framework offers guidance regarding HRM processes and practices as well.

The concept of Islamic human resource management simply entails that HRM actions and aspects are conducted in line with the guidelines of Islam (Razimi et al., 2014). The tendency to perform and manage HRM procedures in accordance to the Islamic doctrine is the plainest elucidation of Islamic human resource management. Islam holds a pristine value in terms of everything for the life of mankind, and Islam offers an inclusion of a proper decorum when it comes to its teachings. Human Resource Management especially in this modern era is an extremely inevitable organizational necessity and the teachings of Islam paves a clear path for many Muslims around the world and most of that these teachings are totally applicable and understandable for non- Muslims as well (Mellahi & Budhwar, 2010).

Islamic human resource management (IHRM) refers to the conformity of HR process, practices and aspects to Islamic principles and tenets in order to attain wellbeing of both employees and organizations. Islamic framework governs all matters of human life being a complete system and a way of life which is complete in moral, intellectual, private, social, economic, corporate and in political affairs (Kalwar, 2020). Islam teaches humans the self-management through its five chief pillars, either it's having firm faith through Tawheed (Oneness of God), either discipline through Namâz (Praying), either sharing your valuables or giving alms in order to help indigent people through Zakât (Charitable Tax), either having patience and abstaining from forbidden deeds through Saôm (Fasting), and either equality through Hajj (Pilgrimage). Therefore, by the assistance from self-management taught by Islam also helps in the management of human resources. The emphasis of Human Resource Management had been unprecedented through-out decades and especially under the evolving dynamics of 21st century, HRM is one of the most crucial elements, and an essential function in all contemporary organizations, and thus, Human Resource Management is paramount to on-going strategies in modern systems (Aslam et al., 2013). HRM possesses various vital procedures according to the organizational needs and in all of that it also concludes of certain ethical behaviors to which Islamic teachings are utterly adhered such as objectivity, integrity and professionalism (Chowdhury et al., 2019)

## **2.2 Doctrines and tenets of an Islamic ethical conduct in management system**

The bases of ethics and administration at work in Islam have been drawn from the Quran and the saying of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Several verses of the Quran address the Ummah and directed them to do justice and be honest in trade, also be courteous and fair in relationships. Further it encourages human beings to acquire new skills and endeavor to do noble work which would be beneficial for not only to the individual but for the community as a whole. Hence Islam teaches and stresses for cooperation in work and made it compulsory to have consultation while making any decision. (Abuznaid, 2006).

In Islam the management plays a crucial role and it is obligatory to have leader in most situation of life. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "When there are three people on a journey then they must employ one amongst them as a leader. Islam made it obligatory to engage in economic activities. (Yousef, 2001). For example, it is narrated in Hadith (SAW) that "the food eaten by a person is best that which he earn from his own work." Similarly at one event while noticed the beggar he said that "it would be better if you collect some wood and sell them rather than ask people who may give you or might not". It is to be noted that human beings are vicegerent and trustees on earth and all their actions are considered acts of worship: therefore work is also an act of worship. The most important aspect of the work is to enjoy and utilize the bounties of Allah not an individual basis but to benefit the community as a whole (Zineldin, 2002; Wilson, 2006).

Hence in Islam, work ethics are associated to struggle for excellence, to seek rewards in life and hereafter, and exercise efforts without being excessive (Al-Buraey, 1988). Every task in the life of the Muslim is carried out having intention to seek pleasure of Allah by earning halal (permissible) income and leading a respectable life by following the command of Allah i.e. to promote good and stop evil. It is in the consonance of the doctrine that all humans are trustees of Allah on this earth which employee relations are based and administration is accomplished in Islam. Regarding HRM practice, Islam set several ideals and norms which managers should practice such as honesty, sincerity, responsibility, trustworthiness, dedication, discipline, diligence, co-operation, hygiene, collaboration, good conduct, appreciation and self-control lead the doctrine through which human resources are dealt with. These principles are mentioned in detail with references from the verses of the Quran and the Sunnah (SAW).

Some of the basic principles and doctrine of an Islamic management system worthy to note and in connotation for the HRM to follow are discussed below. This in regard does not discard the secular aspect of ethical principles by the westerns but rather relevant and important principles which are in line with Islam are considered as well.

1. **Justice:** IHRM stresses the value of being fair and just in HR managerial practices and governs the attitude and behavior in this regard and also guides on how this behavior can be balanced in the organizational context. The element of objectivity in work places is getting rarer and according to organizational study, not being fair or favoring someone else continuously over another who is equally capable and talented creates a 'Glass Ceiling effect' which simply means a barrier that prevents working people from reaching to a senior or an undisputable positions including discrimination of women (Taparia & Lenka, 2022). Managing of Human Resources carries conspicuous contributions in terms of sustaining organizations and so as Islam's teachings on justice and being fair is the advent to fruitfulness in relations between a manager and employee. The most important feature in HRM is justice which every person irrespective of their job position should develop (Wilson, 2006). It is laid down in the Quran: "O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah as witnesses to fair dealing and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to Piety: among those who are holding managerial positions. Justice demands the equal rewards and wherein and fear Allah for Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do." (Quran, 5:8). Justice leads and promotes equality and to maintain an institute or organization there should be a sense of humility, modesty and humbleness the justice prevails the employees automatically follow the rules, policies, regulations and procedures and can be implemented effectively by the managers.
2. **Trust:** Islam is a religion which highly acknowledges truthfulness and trustworthiness and in accordance with HRM criteria, an employee has to be trustable who do not create any kind of laborious situations in future. The core value to govern social relationships is the key concept of the trust as every individual is held responsible and accountable for his/her deeds in the community as a whole. This is vital as trust leads to delegation of authority as well as consultation to employee (Tayeb, 1997). The manager (leader) in Islam is a trustee, who is obliged to value the trust bestowed on him/her by their employee or superiors and also the subordinates as an organization is a trust of not only those who own it but also who work in it. As stated in a reference from one of a chapter of Holy Quran, 'Surah Al-Qasas (28:26); "O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy". A brief background on this verse explains the one of life events in the story of Hazrat Musa (Moses AS). Moreover, a tradition

reported by Holy Prophet (PBUH) as; “A hypocrite is known by three traits: When he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he reneges, when he is entrusted, he embezzles” (Saheeh Al-Bokhari & Saheeh Muslim). This can be implemented in our minds much clearly in terms of recruiting a person for a job, and it alerts us that how to spot hypocrisy in work places. Talking about hiring and recruitment, which is the initial step according to the context of Human Resource Management and hiring people with certitudes should never get compromised. In addition, when ethics are being discussed, communication is the most concerned determinant both in the fields of HRM and Islam too, as in a tradition reportedly said. In another tradition it is said regarding both communicative and physical interaction: “Whoever can guarantee for me (that he will guard) what is between his jaws (tongue) and what is between his legs, I will guarantee for him Paradise.” (At-Tirmidhee). Further elaborating the Islamic based recruitment includes hiring of someone who is capable of their assigned responsibilities, who do justice with their duties, and in particular, it is highly commanded in Islam that to hire someone totally based on merit and proficiency because recruiting someone merely due to a blood relation, due to someone’s highly famed personality, or someone who is favored upon the basis of nepotism or favoritism is completely prohibited (Balla et al., 2016).

3. **Fulfillment of promise:** It is moral obligation of every Muslim to keep promises (Abuznaid, 2006). Breaking promises or not to meet one’s promise intentionally is a sin and considered hypocrites in Islam. Allah calls upon the believers in Quran, “O ye who believe! Fulfil (all) obligations.” (Quran 5:1). This infuses confidence and trust in an organization and generates the culture of cooperation and trustfulness between employer and employees.
4. **Shura (consultation):** It is ordained in the Quran for Muslim leader as well as Muslims in general to seek advice and consultation from others before taking up any step or making decisions. The key leadership value in Islam is to take part in discussion and contribute suggestions. It is mentioned in the Quran “Those who hearken to their Lord and establish regular prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance” (Quran 42: 38). The main purpose and principle of Shura (consultation) is to teach Muslim managers to treat their assistants as their contemporaries and to be modest and humble in their dealings with other persons. (Abuznaid, 2006). It is expected from managers to take advice and seek advice from their subordinates before taking any decision. The managerial paradigms set by Islam are poised in a way that they bring benefits over mundane elements in organization such as Prophet’s (PBUH) initiative on consultation (Shūra) in Medina, as they believed in consulting other Muslim members before making or implementing any decision (Branine & Pollard, 2010). Most importantly, consulting or getting advised before making decisions is not supported by western regulations and it is widely considered to allot powers in concerned departments so as everyone becomes either a king or choose to become a leader in different sectors of working, which most of the times lead to nullification of decisions, or denying manager’s decisions insinuates a rude behavior (Wiryanto, 2019)

### **3.0 Methodology of the Study**

This study adopted qualitative research design. The source of data is basically secondary data which include the use of documented materials related to the study. This paper tries to explore the main themes of Islam in HRM. The paper applies a narrative review method by searching for relevant literature, categorizing and putting the arguments in a neat order to form the narrations of issues surrounding the topic.

Overall, this paper makes some contributions to the literature. First, to point out the essential issues surrounding HRM from an Islamic point. The point is particularly significant as religious diversity at work has been an increasingly important matter, and one way to promote religious diversity at work is to understand the preferences and sensitivities of religious ideology (Hambler, 2016; Messarra, 2014; Syed et al., 2017). Second, to bridge the understanding of modern management practices and management practices from Islamic perspectives and also to adopt a model suitable for the study. This point is vital as Islamic perspectives on work and management are relatively unknown to non-Islamic communities (Branine & Pollard, 2010). Lastly, to put suggestions for further research agendas to trigger the researchers to examine HRM in the workplace topic.

#### **4.0 Model for the Study**

This study adopts two models to accommodate both aspect of secular and Islamic Human Resource Management. The first model adopted for this study originates from researchers at Warwick Business School (Hendry et al., 1989) cited in John and Martin (2017). This model unlike other models which originated in the USA, this one is based on experience in Britain and explores the subject in terms of the culture, managerial practice and organizational arrangements specific to that context. The model proposes five main interlinked elements which determine the appropriate HRM approach for an organization:

1. *Outer context.* This represent the broader social, economic, industry and cultural forces impacting on any organization
2. *Inner context.* This represent factors including culture, structure, technology and management style that could be expected to impact on organizational functioning.
3. *Business strategy context.* This represent the business strategy followed.
4. *Human resource management context.* Reflecting the underlying philosophy underpinning how people are expected to function within an organization.
5. *Human resource management context.* Reflecting people management practice within the organization in reward, employee relations and work arrangements, etc.

This model likewise demonstrates clearly the complexity of the HRM environment. The interacting elements reflect the active forces which creates a dynamic situation that is difficult to manage a perspective more than apparent in the sustainable HRM perspective. This supports the Boxall and Purcell (2015) cited in John and Martin (2017) view when they suggest that HRM does not 'belong' to specialists because line managers are responsible for their team's activities and outcomes within the dynamic organizational context. In their view, the human resource specialist should 'sell' their technical expertise to those who have need of that support.

Looking at the model closely, one can see how it has able to ponder and cover all aspects of human resource management where it has made provision for employee welfare, reward system in the organization, goals to be achieved, social and cultural aspect both within and outside the organization, technology as well as business like which is the basic objective of every organization. It also explain how employees are dynamic and can change due to certain factors that affects HRM. As a result, it will enable workers or employees develop ethical conducts within themselves and be able to carry out activities accordingly as required of them in the organization and achieve the said goals and objectives. Islamically, every company and organization is expected to have ethical conduct guiding them for every employee to follow, which will reduce injustice and unfairness, as well as also to look out for their employee welfare

and not just to exploit them which is what this model focuses on. This will help reduce misconduct among workers and increase organizational productivity.

The second model which is AF model meaning Adl and Falah. The postulated HRM model entails an Islamic version of understanding the various HRM processes and practices from the viewpoint of Islamic ideology. The model contains the chief processes and aspects which are the subject matter of HRM philosophy as well as the application and involvement of Islamic concepts to offer a holistic understanding to the domain of Islamic Human Resource Management to present a comprehensive approach to HRM in Islamic context. The proposed model asserts the concepts of *Adl* (justice/equity) and *Falah* (wellbeing/success) as cardinal elements to understand and execute all HRM processes. The model provides a fortified approach towards implementation and application of Islamic values as well as to perform the HR processes which include both the achievement of goals from worldly aspects addressing the interests of both employees as well as organization on one end, and fulfils the agenda of ultimate success transcending beyond this world in the Islamic perspective, on the other end. The model is named AF Islamic HRM Model based on the aspects of Adl and Falah in the Islamic background. The AF Islamic HRM Model is pinned upon the element of Adl to be ensured in all HRM practices ranging from HR planning, various phases of recruitment, hiring and selection, employee orientation, training and developmental activities, performance evaluation and appraisals, compensation and benefits, reward programs, employee retention strategies, career development paths and progression schemes, in all aspects of employee termination and retirement incentive programs as well as in all other HR policies and procedures. The conception of Adl is the manifestation and application of principles of fairness, equity, objectivity and just conduct in all HR actions and aspects to ensure that there is no injustice or unfair treatment meted out by the stakeholders towards each other including the HR department, management of the organization or the staff and employees. The proposed model further incorporates the idea of attainment of objectives of concerned parties including the HR

department, the overall organization as well as the employees. The pertinent HRM function and the ancillary practices contribute towards the achievement of these diverse objectives directly and indirectly whereas the element of ensuring Adl leads to accomplishment of success and reward in the next world. The principle of ensuring justice is among the very fundamental commandments of Allah as stated in the Holy Quran as mentioned in Surah Al-Maidah: “O believers! Stand firm for Allah and bear true testimony. Do not let the hatred of a people lead you to injustice. Be just! That is closer to righteousness. And be mindful of Allah. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do (5:8).” The consolidated success of this world and the ‘next-world’ is consolidated and aggregated in the concept of Falah which is manifestation of ultimate reward and wellbeing of stakeholders in both worldly and next-world perspectives (Aqib, 2024). As per Islamic creed, this is referred to as the domains of *deen* and *dunya* for which Falah represents a unified reward that encompasses the success and goodness of both domains.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

The paper elaborates human resource management (HRM) philosophy in the background of Islamic values and principles to give a varied perspective to the study and understanding of Islamic HRM as a distinct domain of literature. The paper also explicated various HRM models and subsequently proposes an Islamic HRM model named The AF Islamic HRM Model which is based on the premise of ensuring Adl (justice and fairness) in all HR processes and practices in

order to attain the maximum success for all concerned stakeholders including the employees, HR department and the organization. Furthermore, the model suggests a holistic approach towards the understanding of Islamic HRM by drawing references from the fundamental sources of Islamic knowledge i.e. The Holy Quran and Ahadith (sayings) of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to present the Islamic outlook towards the HR theory and practice. The model postulates that upholding of Adl in HRM actions and procedures which warrants a dual accomplishment in terms of attaining wellbeing of employees by maintaining integrity, and safeguarding merit and fairness which leads to

motivated and loyal staff whereas in terms of next-worldly motive, the aspect of Adl helps to secure the pleasure of Allah by guaranteeing the rights of people termed Haqooq-al-Ibaad (Aqib and Khalid, 2024) in Islamic context which eventually culminates towards realization of absolute success or Falah. The model contributes towards the Islamic Human Resource Management (IHRM) theory by proposing a comprehensive framework which entails the diverse dimensions of HRM, stakeholders' objectives, varied facets of success and wellbeing in both religious and worldly contexts to present a holistic viewpoint to fortify the knowledge-base of IHRM.

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