

Mapping Issues in Labor Economics: An Islamic Perspective for Research and Policy Development

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ABSTRACT. This study has been set out to map the literature on labor economics from an Islamic perspective to identify the concentration of research, gaps in the literature, major obstacles to the development of the field, and how Islamic principles can guide policymaking in this area. The literature survey revealed three key themes in the mapping of issues in labor economics from an Islamic perspective: religious or cultural, behavioral, and systemic aspects. The religious aspect involves the direct interpretation and/or implementation of Islamic principles, rulings and behavioral norms derived from the divine texts in labor economics. The role of culture (*'urf*) may have an effect on how religious texts are interpreted, which in turn shapes religious views. The behavioral aspect is concerned with the role of individual behavior, ethics, and morality in shaping labor market outcomes. The systemic aspect is about the shortcomings or loopholes in the economic system that cause problems in the labor market, such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality. In general, the study found that research in labor economics from an Islamic perspective is limited compared to other fields like Islamic banking and finance. Published articles on the topic is relatively scanty, especially in providing deep insights into the theoretical, empirical and policy related perspective. The study identified three main directions of research in labor economics from an Islamic perspective: (i) Islamic work ethics, (ii) Islamic labor markets, and (iii) Islamic labor policies. Most of the literature are mainly concentrated on addressing the Islamic work ethics.

KEYWORDS: Labor economics, Islamic perspective, literature survey, policy implications, religious aspect, behavioral aspect, systemic aspect

JEL CLASSIFICATION: J0, J4, J5, J7, Z19

KAUJIE CLASSIFICATION: A4, B3, G1, G43, H54

1. Introduction

Under the capitalist economic system, most of the working class always has to struggle to make ends meet. There is an inherent advantage for the capitalist class in the system (Piketty, 2014). When wealth is circulated systematically only to the rich (Stiglitz, 2013), this systemic issue continues to further exacerbate the hardships faced by the workers. In this situation, high economic growth and full employment may not translate into improved well-being for the struggling majority of workers in the economy. Understanding the economics of the working class, therefore, is essential for policymakers if they are serious about improving the well-being of everyone in the economy.

Islamic economics has been promoted as the economic system that will ensure a fair and just distribution of income and wealth. Various areas under the discipline, especially Islamic banking and finance, have been explored in efforts to realize the goals of Islamic economics (Iskandar, 2023). Yet, the labor side of Islamic economics remains an area that receives less attention from researchers, where the extant literature on Islamic labor economics is relatively shallow in terms of theories and policies as compared to Islamic banking and finance. Based on these observations, the polemic between the capital and working classes appears to be less explored in Islamic economics. With this awareness in mind, the purpose of this study is to investigate the progress made in labor economics from an Islamic perspective, especially in advancing policies that can improve the well-being of workers.

According to Syed and Ali (2010) and Zulfiqar (2006), more thorough research should be undertaken to integrate the teachings of Islam with labor policy. They believe that Islam provides a philosophical foundation for the provisions of universal labor code, and scholars need to understand its principles and juristic discourses to guide any new formulation to further advance the discipline. Hijriah and Adiba (2019) argued that Islamic wage policy goes beyond basic supply-and-demand dynamics and emphasized the importance of developing theoretical and empirical models to guide policy making specific to Islamic labor economics. Basically, these studies call for more impactful research related to labor economics from an Islamic perspective.

Despite its potential to provide a distinctive and significant perspective on labor issues, labor economics from an Islamic perspective has been slow in terms of its theoretical, empirical and policy development. There is a fragmented theoretical framework and scant empirical analysis to support clear policy directions on labor issues. This realization motivates this study, where a literature mapping is needed to guide future research direction for the field to make a significant impact. To properly understand the extent of research in labor economics from an Islamic perspective, there is a need to map the directions of research in the area. This exercise will help to identify the concentration of research as well as the stumbling blocks that may impede further progress in the field.

With the above awareness in mind, this study embarks upon the following research questions:

1. What are the main directions of research in labor economics from an Islamic perspective, and what are the gaps in the extant literature?
2. What are the major stumbling blocks that hinder the development of labor economics from an Islamic perspective?
3. How do Islamic principles guide our understanding of issues related to workers and the working class, and how can they be incorporated into policy-making in this area?

This study, therefore, aims to synthesize the extant literature on Islamic labor economics from an Islamic perspective. The objective is to produce a thematic map of the current status of the discipline, emphasizing major areas, and directions that have arisen over time. In the next section, the overall structure of labor economics is presented. Then, the methodology of the study is described. The discussions on the identified themes of the extant literature followed after that. Some concluding remarks are provided in the last section.

2, Structure of Discussions in Labor Economics

The term "labor" has undergone significant changes over time. The term is often associated with low-skill jobs, such as those in manufacturing or construction sites. This association is likely related to the history

of labor in Europe, especially during the Industrial Revolution. Many people, including children and women, were forced to work hard for long hours in poor working conditions in the emerging modern industries of Europe during the period (Osberg and McNulty 1982). During that time, the term "labor" was synonymous with manual labor. Then, over time, as the economy evolved, the term "workers" became more prominent, implying a different connotation of the nature of people and work, even though it is still primarily associated with manual labor. After World War II, the term "workers" further evolved into white-collar and blue-collar workers. The distinction reflects the manufacturing-based economies of the era, where there were those who toiled with the tools and those who worked in the office, or "the management" (Joyce, 2011). Today, as many economies have shifted towards the service sector, the terminologies to describe the roles of the workforce continue to evolve from "laborers, workers," and now "talents". This term 'talents' underscores the progress of the economy, which is increasingly hunting for highly skilled individuals (the knowledge workers).

The concept of labor prior to modern economics was dominated by slavery. In the context of Europe, for example, the landlords would coerce the slaves under his ownership to work in his lands (Brink, 2021; Filip, 2020 and Barker, 2019). Today, there exists so-called modern slavery. The term slaves, in general, refers to those individuals who were forcibly made to work without compensation. They were basically provided with basic necessities such as shelter and food (Allain & Bales, 2012). The point to note here is that the evolution of the term used to describe the workforce is a direct reflection of the progress of the economies. As we move towards the post-normal period, it is important to continue to reflect upon the changing nature of work and its impact on the labor market.

Given the evolutionary development of the word labor, the discussion in the standard labor economics textbooks (Borjas, 2020) can be divided into the micro- and macro-aspects. The micro-aspect focuses on the individual units of the labor market, such as how an individual worker decides whether to work or not. Or the discussion may involve the decision on how many workers to hire. On the other hand, the

macro-aspect takes a broader view of the labor market as a whole. The discussions cover topics such as unemployment, income inequality and migration. Note that labor economics is about the study of input market, where labor is one of the factors of production. In the input market, individuals offer their skills and knowledge in the job market, while firms hire them and pay them wages for their productive contributions to produce goods and services. This relationship forms the labor market, which is a specialized area of study.

The standard labor economics textbook usually mentions that there are three main actors in the labor market, namely, the firms, workers, and the government. This position actually has neglected the role of the third sector in the discussion. The role of non-government organizations (NGOs) such as the various forms of labor union and any associations that cares for worker's welfare should be considered as another actor in the labor market. Understanding their behavior of these four actors is crucial to unfold the issues surrounding the labor market. Workers, as individuals or households, supply their skills and knowledge to the market. Firms would demand labor, and make decisions on how many and whom to hire the workers and how much to pay them. The government plays a crucial role in setting the rules of the game in the labor market. These rules, such as the minimum wage law, the legal age to work, and safety regulations at the workplace are some of the examples that can have a significant impact on the functioning of the labor market. In a pure market ideology, often it is argued that government intervention can lead to inefficiencies. However, the reality is that the government has a responsibility to ensure the entire economy runs smoothly by regulating and supervising actors in the labor market to follow the ethics, law and regulations of the system.

The NGOs play various functions as the "third" force (after the private sector, public sector) in the labor market (Sundar, 2007). They serve as a voice for workers to advocate their rights and welfare. For example, some of these organizations provide education and training programs to help workers improve their skills and knowledge to remain relevance in the job market. Some NGOs monitor compliance with labor laws and regulations, ensuring that workers are protected and treated fairly. In fact,

some NGOs offer social protection and support services to vulnerable workers, such as low-wage workers, migrants, and workers with disabilities. By playing their unique positions as a watchdog, NGOs can contribute to the development of a fair and inclusive labor market.

In the field of labor economics, it is important to consider both the micro and macro aspects, as each level presents its own set of complications and challenges. The task of addressing these issues requires a combination of guidance from the Qur'ān and *sunnah*, as well as practical wisdom in applying policies set by companies or governments. This is because human behavior and the human aspect of labor exchange often play a significant role, and can be influenced by both individual and systemic factors.

3. Methodology

This study is based on a literature survey. The survey considers published journal articles, books, book chapters, and conference proceedings addressing topics related to labor economics from an Islamic perspective. To find the relevant articles, searches on scholarly databases, such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and EBSCOhost have been conducted. Keywords such as "Islamic labor economics," "Islamic labor markets," "Islamic work ethics," "Islamic labor policies" and other relevant terms to the topic have been used in the search process. The research materials were read, and grouped into common themes and topics.

From the surveyed articles, information such as author(s), publication year, title, research aim, research questions, research methodology, key findings, and limitations have been extracted, compiled, and analyzed. A qualitative synthesis of the extracted data is performed to identify thematic similarities according to research directions. A mind map is then constructed to illustrate the concentration of the existing literature according to the identified themes. The thematic analysis also considers gaps in the literature, major obstacles to the development of the field, and how Islamic principles can guide policy makers in this area. The discussion in the next section details the major directions of research in labor economics from an Islamic perspective according to three major themes identified; religious/cultural,

behavioral, and systemic aspects. The identification of the themes as well as the sub-topics in the mind map was based on semantic analysis of the research materials. Each publication had been analyzed for the central ideas, key topics and concepts that emerged from the materials, ensuring a coherent structure and relationship.

4. Findings: Major Themes in the Literature Mapping

The modern discourse on Islamic perspectives on labor economics builds on a rich classical theoretical foundation established by early Muslim scholars. Foundational treatises on this subject were penned centuries ago by eminent thinkers like Abu Yusuf (732-798 CE), the author of *Kitab al-Kharāj*, and Abu Ubayd al-Qasim bin Sallam (770-838 CE), the author of *Kitab al-Amwal* (Shatzmiller, 1994). From these two classical books, the emphasis on various forms of taxes, especially, land or agricultural-based taxes such as *kharāj* and *ushr*, besides *zakāt*, indicate the active roles of the state in monitoring productive economic activities of the masses. The emphasis on fairness on taxes so as to avoid burdening or unjustly taking away their rights from hard earned labor has always been central in these works, indicating the sensitivity of Islamic rulings to ensuring the protection of property rights.

Al-Ghazali's (1058-1111 CE) *Kitāb Ādāb Al-Kasb Wal-ma'āsh* emphasizes the essential role of various crafts and trades in sustaining livelihoods and maintaining societal order. He argues that each individual's engagement in different professions is vital for the overall functioning of society. Neglecting this diversity in occupations, he suggests, would lead to the collapse of essential services and, consequently, societal deterioration. Al-Ghazali's insights contribute significantly to the understanding of economic activities not just as means of individual sustenance but as crucial components of collective prosperity (Setia, 2016). In economics, this concept was later popularized by David Ricardo as the gains or surplus from trades or exchanges.

In analyzing the work of Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani (750-805 CE), *Kitab al-Kasb*, Makin (1999) highlighted the significance of the contribution towards the Islamic perspective on labor and earning. Core to Shaybani's discourse is the

concept of *kasb*, or earning through labor, which Al-Shaybani positions as a crucial obligation for every Muslim to fulfill one's own needs and dependents. This assertion, founded on Qur'anic and *hadith* texts, underscores labor's importance not just for sustenance but as a vital aspect of religious life. Shaybani emphasizes that lawful earnings enable fulfilling other duties like charity and supporting family, thereby sustaining societal order. However, he cautions that in pursuing livelihoods, one's primary focus should remain on spiritual endeavors, postulating a hierarchy where religious commitments supersede economic ones. He warns against over devotion to work for wealth accumulation that distracts from religious obligations. Shaybani advocates earning to meet basic needs and duties like debts and family support, promoting moderation over excess (Makin, 1999).

Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406 CE) is widely recognized for his groundbreaking work, *Muqaddimah*, which was ahead of its time in developing economic theory. His conception of labor as a fundamental source of value in economic systems was established centuries earlier than Adam Smith's 1776 work, "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations." Ibn Khaldun's insights into the division of labor emphasize its critical role in enhancing economic efficiency and productivity. He recognized that specialization in various skills and trades not only improves the quality of goods and services but also contributes to the overall economic well-being of a society. This remarkable foresight suggests that Adam Smith may have been influenced by Ibn Khaldun's earlier works, as there are notable parallels in their economic theories. (Mc Caffrey, 2014).

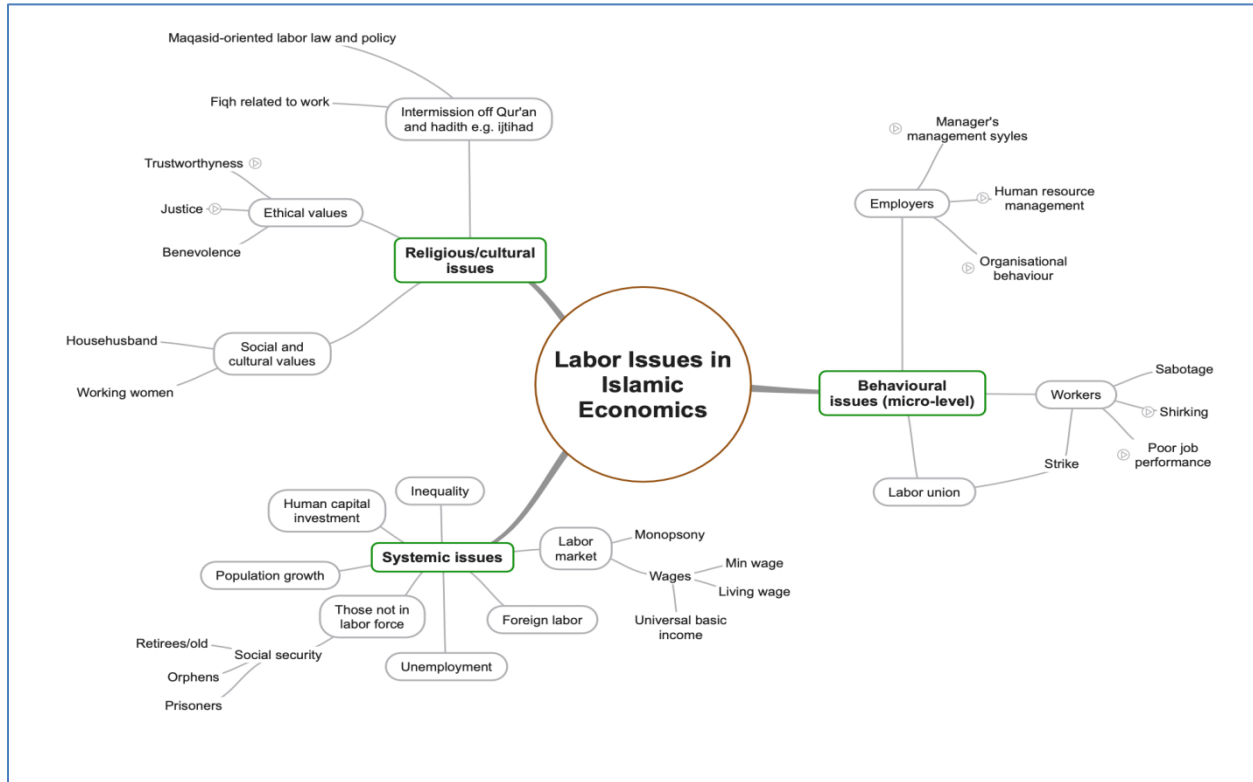
Moreover, Ibn Khaldun also established the concepts of economic surplus and taxation. He advocated for the equitable distribution of economic surplus, asserting its importance in ensuring societal welfare. His views on taxation were intuitive, where he postulated that excessive taxation could diminish labor incentives, thereby reducing overall productivity and, consequently, state revenues. This relationship between taxation levels and tax revenue

was later known as the Laffer curve, named after an economist Arthur Laffer. Ibn Khaldun also discussed the theory on wage determination and market equilibrium, emphasizing on the need to ensure fair and just wage to worker. In linking the quality and quantity of labor to the rise and fall of civilizations, Ibn Khaldun presented a holistic view of economic processes, asserting that a strong work ethic and efficient labor are vital for the prosperity and longevity of a civilization. These economic ideas later are part of the discourse in population economics, health economics and labor economics (Weiss, 1995; Boulakia, 1971).

The corpus of medieval Islamic scholarship is rich with contributions to economic thought. For example, Al-Biruni (973-1048 CE), provided an early study of the socioeconomic culture of the Indian subcontinent in *Kitab al-Hind*. Al-Jahiz (776-869 CE), Al-Shafi'i (767-820 CE), Ibn Hazm (994-1069 CE), Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328 CE), Ibn Al-Qayyim (1292-1350 CE) and many other earlier Muslim scholars had set forth many foundational Islamic jurisprudence, directly and indirectly influencing the economic thoughts and practices of the Muslim communities (Kizilkaya and Azid (2017) . Top of Form Bottom of Form Though some of the labor economic thoughts of the medieval scholars can be considered rudimentary by today's labor theory, their pioneering discoveries and intuitions remains relevant to be explored and studied further. Their ground-breaking observations regarding labor and value, coupled with ethical imperatives advocating for justice and societal welfare, underscore the inextricable fundamentals of the Islamic teachings. Appreciating and contextualizing their works to the contemporary analysis are therefore, crucial for meaningful progress to modern Islamic labor economics.

With the awareness of the significant contributions of the earlier scholars in mind, the study now proceeds to mind-map the surveyed contemporary literature. The discussion that follows will be based on the three main themes identified: religion/ culture, behavior, and systemic aspects, as mapped in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Literature Map



4.1 Religious and Cultural Aspects

For many Muslims, many of the difficult issues in the job market have religious or cultural roots. Often, it is challenging to discern between these problems since they are frequently entangled. A good example is the ongoing argument over whether the issue of working women is one of religion or culture (Sarwar & Imran, 2019; Alfarran et al., 2018); Shatzmiller, 1997). Religious issues can

arise as the job market changes, requiring the opinion of scholars or a *fatwa*. It is acknowledged that the works of earlier Muslim scholars continue to be a valid reference for developing modern *fatwa*. However, due to the significant changes in today's work life compared to the agricultural or trade-based work of centuries past, there is a pressing need to revise existing *fatwa* or create new ones. Examining the existing literature on the religious dimension, Figure 1 reveals a consistent emphasis on five central themes:

- I. the interpretation of the Qur'an and *hadith*,
- II. the infusion of Islamic values,
- III. the application of Islamic rulings in the realm of work (*fiqh*),
- IV. the overarching objectives of Sharī'ah (*maqāṣid ash-sharī'ah*) in resolving labor conflicts.
- V. reconciling cultural differences in the quest to understand the original text.

It is important to note here that all the five points above are interrelated in the process of interpreting the divine texts. They are components of methodology in understanding the revelations. Here, academics are expected to have a thorough understanding of fiqh methodology (*usul al-fiqh*), *fiqh* knowledge, and labor economics. Attempts to incorporate the Qur'an and *hadith* into current labor issues from an Islamic perspective appear to have made little headway, which may be attributable to the limited number of experts covering diverse disciplines of knowledge and considered an authority in various

areas of knowledge. Therefore, in the survey of the literature conducted, the efforts to 'Islamize' labor economics often only addresses the surface of the interpretation such as by discussing the normative behaviour of workers and employers at the workplace (Azid, 2016; Syed & Ali, 2010).

As stated above, the common approach to 'Islamize' labor economics, as found in the majority of literature, is to draw on specific verses from the Qur'an and *hadith* and connect them to the labor context. This approach has resulted in concentration of discussions on the behavioral norms prescribed by Islam (Syed & Ali, 2010), such as the prohibition of exploitation, the obligation to pay fair wages, and the right of workers to reasonable working conditions (Azid, 2005, 2016; Azid et al., 2007, 2013, 2021). Given the nature of the discussions, they are more suitable to be put under the subjects such as Organizational Behavior, Human Resource Management, Leadership, and Management (Beekun & Badawi, 2005; Rokhman, 2010), but with an Islamic perspective. The literature, in general, incorporates topics such as the Islamic work ethic, Islamic management principles, and Islamic human resource management (Rahman, et al., 2013; Azid et al., 2007).

Admittedly, the attitudes and behaviors of both employers and employees play a crucial role in shaping the workplace and could lead to tensions if conflict are not addressed properly. Studies in fields such as organizational behavior, human resource management, strategic management, and leadership are dedicated to effectively managing and leading people in the workplace, and are crucial in addressing behavioral issues. With an Islamic perspective, these disciplines could be further enhanced. In this paper, the extant literature with this nature has been categorized under the second theme, which is the behavioral aspect, which will be discussed in the next section.

The religious aspect also covers issues related to the *fiqh* rulings. From the survey of the extant literature, there are three concerns that should be noted. First, in relation to rulings arising from *ijtihad*. These rulings can have significant impacts on the job market and economy, but there have been limited studies to understand their implications.

We are not referring to rulings that are based on definitive texts (*qaṭ'ī* or *muḥkamāt*). Rather, the concern here is related to *fiqh* rulings that deal with ambiguous texts (*ẓannī* or *mutashābihāt*). In the literature, there are various examples of such rulings, such as the claims that "Islam permits labor unions," "Islam prohibits child labor," "Islam supports the minimum wage," "Islam supports the living wage, and many others. It is important to exercise caution in this context before attributing claims to "Islam" because such claims have divinity attributions in them. Is it Islam or the Islamic economist? The debate would be different for example when the scholar state, "Islamic economics disagree with child labor," "Islamic economics/ economists support the minimum wage" etc. Unless there is a definitive text that commanded the prohibition of certain aspect of labor activities, then only attributing it to "Islam" is justified. Therefore, there is a need to differentiate between the scholar's understanding and interpretation of Islamic rulings vis-a-vis definitive rulings of the divine texts.

Second, some of the rulings and economic understanding mentioned in the literature are far from current economic realities as they are based on past interpretations (e.g. quoting the classical scholars' view) and the issues were based on economic realities of past times (e.g. medieval Islamic period). Of course, present scholars can benefit from such studies. At the same time, the reality of labor economics deals with current issues, necessitating contemporary understanding and solutions.

The third point in relation to *fiqh* at the workplace is about the consideration of local culture (*'urf*). The most pertinent issue is in connection to female labor force participation (Moustafa, 2013; Foley, 2004; Shatzmiller, 1997)). Countries such as Saudi Arabia (Al-Rasheed, 2013), Iran (Mir-Hosseini, 2006), Afghanistan and many Middle Eastern countries (Moghadam, 2005), for example, have more stringent view on female labor participation relative to Malaysia and Indonesia. The interplay between religious and cultural values can impact the treatment of gender in the workplace, making it a critical area of consideration in promoting justice and well-being in the labor market. At the same time, since this issue involve local culture and norm, an outsider's assessment on local issue may not reflect

deep understanding or due respect towards the local culture. Nonetheless, there may still be barriers and biases that hinder progress towards female labor participation that can be addressed. It is, therefore, crucial to find solutions that are respectful and in line with local customs and beliefs to reconcile such issue.

Given the three points of concern above, here are two emerging trends that are worth pondering as examples.

- The rise of female labor force participation has been significant in many countries, especially after the end of World War II. As a consequence, many studies found in the literature focused on the issue of women at the workplace. There is a shift in traditional gender roles, with more men taking on the role of househusbands. This is often because the wife is a highly successful professional, earning a significant income. While this may be socially accepted in many Western societies, it is still frowned upon in Muslim societies. From an Islamic perspective, this is a matter that requires examination and resolution by religious scholars and Islamic economists.
- The next example is the issue of *halal* and *haram*. One instance is on the permissibility of working in conventional banks, and this is still a topic of discussion among Islamic scholars. Some argue that working within these institutions can be justified through the concept of *maqāṣid*, which seeks to protect the wealth of the Muslim community. It is important to note that this issue is an on-going debate and that no definitive answers have been reached.

In the literature, there is a paucity of research investigating the relationship between *maqāṣid ash-sharī'ah* (the objectives of Sharī'ah) and the welfare of workers (Azmi et al., 2021). *Maqāṣid* is generally seen as having a broad scope, with economic justice, welfare, and human dignity being among the most important objectives. Labor issues are often discussed in light of how to realize these objectives, such as by ensuring the welfare of workers is protected, for example, by providing fair wages (Mustafa, 2023; Azid, 2016), a conducive workplace environment, social security, and work-life balance (Azid & Rewashedah, 2018). While the Sharī'ah provides the

overarching guidance and principles of life, it also has strong codes of ethics for the economic agents in the labor market to adhere to. This theme is further discussed in the next section.

4.2 Behavioral Aspect

As stated in the previous section, most studies on labor from an Islamic perspective would discuss the ethical and normative behavior aspects of the employer-employee relationship. At the micro level, the behavior of economic agents such as the workers, employers (firms), the government, and also non-government organizations (the worker's union) are of particular interest to the discussion in this section. The connection between Islam and behavior is evident in many verses of al-Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, as the teachings provide guidance for how each economic agent should behave in various situations. Often, many studies would focus on the Islamic ethics at the workplace either from the employer's or employee's side.

The Islamic approach to addressing behavioral issues in the workplace requires an understanding of the Islamic worldview. This entails a thorough understanding of the Islamic perspective on God, man, his purpose in life, the role of the universe, and the importance of knowledge in the process of developing man's character. In Islamic economics, the assumption about 'Islamic man' (Sholihin et al., 2023) as economic agents postulates the holistic ideal of man to achieve balance in life as well as success in this world and the hereafter. All these concepts come from the main sources of knowledge in Islam: the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*. Often, critiques of Islamic economics, or more specifically, Islamic men, point to the lack of such an ideal human being. At the same time, the conditions and characters of certain Muslims today seem to not project the true image of Islam, making integration efforts and the promotion of Islam much more challenging. The teachings of Islam must be practiced, and many studies covering the literature on the behavioral aspect basically call for this action, at least at the workplace. Only then can changes in attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors be expected. For this to happen, solutions through education, training, leadership by example, monitoring, supervision, and regulation need to be formulated. Promoting ethical behavior also requires collaboration from various parties in society.

Even in the context of secular society, the issue of ethics is crucial in ensuring system harmony. For example, in Western education, the work of Lewis (2006) has rekindled the issue of education devoid of spiritual and ethical enlightenment, particularly in the prestigious American universities. According to him, the focus on academic achievement has resulted in a lack of attention to ethical and moral development among students. The consequence of this is the alarming problems of business frauds and corporate scandals. In order to address these problems, Lewis (2006) suggests that universities must prioritize the development of ethical and moral character in their students. This point demonstrates the importance of ethics and morality in the development of human capital. Nonetheless, Lewis (2006) does not go further to discuss the kind of ethical and moral models to be taught in the development process of human capital (Ali, 2023).

In Islam, the conduct and behavior of each economic agent are guided by the religious principles and values, derived from al-Qur'ān and the *sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad SAW. The code of ethics and morality as found in the divine texts covers all aspects of life, including at the workplace. While the surveyed articles on this subject have continuously emphasized about this point, most of them fall short to provide modules on character building (*tarbiyyah*) at the workplace. For this purpose, the work by Altalib (1991) to certain extent, provides training guidelines for *tarbiyyah* programmes in organizations. The author discusses topics such as planning and recruiting, training, compliance with religious discrimination laws, and volunteer programs, among others. Values such as justice, fairness, trust, honesty, commitment, and the preservation of human dignity, through the spirit of cooperation and social solidarity, have been emphasized as the core elements in building the 'Islamic workers'.

The behavior of employers and workers in the workplace can have a significant impact on the workplace environment. Issues related to management style and poor behavior from managers can cause difficulties for workers. For example, some managers may have an authoritarian management style that can be perceived as oppressive, while others may be overly demanding and prone to shouting. From an Islamic perspective, it is expected

that they show good conduct and behavior, serving as positive examples in the workplace. Likewise, the behavior of workers can also significantly affect the performance of an organization. Unethical behaviors such as shirking (e.g., tardiness, unauthorized absence, leaving work early, misuse of office facilities), poor job performance (e.g., missed deadlines, low productivity), job sabotage, and striking are some examples of harmful workers' behaviors.

It is important to note here that the nature of the discussions in the surveyed articles lacks economic insights such as theory, concept, and empirical analysis. While these behavioral issues may not be the primary discussion in labor economics (i.e. economic agents are assumed to behave rationally), they are crucial to consider as they can affect the overall productivity, well-being, and performance of the organization and the entire economy as a whole. Given the nature of the discussions in majority of the surveyed articles, I would rather consider most of the discussion more suitable to be classified under the fields of human resource management, organizational behaviour, business ethics, leadership, and management from an Islamic perspective. Of course, by developing the theories, models, and applications in those respective fields, we could promote best-practice behaviors in organisations and provide a foundation for tackling challenges as well as improving workplace conditions for all stakeholders.

The assimilation of values is crucial in the job market, such as in the employer-employee relationship. Najma et al. (2020) presented a conflict resolution strategy based on game theory, which allows both parties to identify strategies that will maximize their individual utility while also taking into consideration the interests of the other party. According to the authors, this strategy can be enhanced by incorporating Islamic ethical values into the model, such as the principles of brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), justice (*'adl*), and goodness (*ihsan*). These values emphasize the importance of taking care of one another and taking responsibility for the whole welfare, which can help to resolve conflicts in ways that prioritize mutual benefits. One unique aspect of this paper, as compared to other studies on the behavioral aspect, is the incorporation of game theory in analyzing the effect of value in conflict resolutions. Attempts to use economic tools to

discuss values from an Islamic perspective, such as in this paper, are rare. More research should therefore be geared in this direction.

To be more specific in emphasizing the need for more economic analysis related to the behavioral study of labor, let's consider verse 26 in Surah al-Qasas:

“One of the two daughters suggested, “O my dear father! Hire him. The best man for employment is definitely the strong and trustworthy one.”

Many studies, when discussing labor from an Islamic perspective, quote the above verse of the Qur'ān. As stated in the verse, the two qualities sought after by employers in a worker are strength and trustworthiness. Most of the discussion then lingers on the normative behavioral aspect of such qualities without fresh attempts to theorize or model them. Therefore, the following are some suggestions for future research to undertake this agenda with more economic insights as an objective:

- While values such as trustworthiness and reliability are crucial for a productive workplace, measuring these qualities can be difficult. Research could explore new methods for evaluating employee values and character traits.
- The hypothesis is that companies that prioritize value-driven workplaces may enjoy increased employee engagement and satisfaction, leading to higher retention rates. To promote such value, theories and empirical research on the long-term economic benefits of investing in employee values and character development are therefore crucial. Research on the impact assessment of the economic benefits of promoting ethical values in the workplace should therefore be considered.
- To be more specific to the above point, the spirits of cooperation (*taawun*) and brotherhood are essential foundation values in Islamic economics. The role of values in team building and collaboration, such as teamwork, respect, and communication, can be key factors in building successful teams in the workplace. Research could explore the economic benefits

of creating a culture that prioritizes these values and how they contribute to greater collaboration and productivity.

- Research on the economic implications of unethical behavior in the workplace should also be emphasized. The consequences of unethical behavior can be severe for companies, including legal and financial penalties, damage to reputation, and loss of trust from customers and investors. Here, research could explore the economic costs of unethical behavior.
- The challenge of identifying and addressing value conflicts in the workplace: Different employees may hold different values, and conflicts can arise when these values clash. Research could explore effective strategies for addressing value conflicts in the workplace and minimizing their negative impact on employee morale and productivity.

Realize that the above research agenda may only reflect the material cost and benefit of the study of values in labor economics. Also, be mindful that, in the Islamic faith, all intentions and actions in this world have consequences in life after death in terms of rewards and punishments. Human knowledge as a whole and, what is more, economic tools are limited in their ability to explore this dimension of knowledge. Nonetheless, behavioral research related to labor from an Islamic perspective should still move into the theoretical and empirical sides of the analysis. This research direction is crucial to reducing the gap between the normative behavioral aspect and the lack of theoretical and empirical aspects of the study (as I have found in the literature survey). Therefore, there is huge potential and need for behavioral research in Islamic economics for this agenda.

Nonetheless, there is one crucial point to note here from the literature survey conducted. There were actually some studies that pointed to the mistreatment of workers in Muslim societies (Kizilkaya & Azid, 2017). Those studies highlighted issues facing workers such as income disparity, labor rights violations, and insufficient social protection (see examples of studies by Islam and Zahid, 2012; Sohn, 2015; Halabi, 2008). Interestingly, studies like this seem disconnected from the discussion from an Islamic perspective. The studies purely focus on the

empirical research, point out the issues based on the evidence, and call for policy actions to address them without explicitly relating the discussions to an Islamic perspective. Again, searching the database by using terms such as "Islamic labor" or "labor from an Islamic perspective" would not yield search results for papers of this nature.

4.3 Systemic Aspect

The systemic aspect of the labor market refers to the underlying institutions, structures, and procedures that influence the labor market's operation (Tul, 2019). A systemic problem in the labor market occurs, for example, when there are imbalances, inefficiencies, or barriers that prevent workers or employers from progressing further from the current state of the economy. Problems such as structural unemployment, skill mismatch, income inequality, an aging population, child labor, forced labor, workplace discrimination, social security, technology-related job insecurity, brain drain, and informal employment are some signs pointing to the possibility of systemic problems in the labor market. In addressing issues due to the systemic problem, holistic and long-term considerations should be given in revamping the economic structure by considering the supply and demand for labor, working conditions, labor laws and regulations, technology, economic policies, and societal norms and values. This requires a systemic reform that address the root causes of the problems, rather than just treating the symptoms. The tasks can be difficult and time-consuming since they require a holistic approach.

The literature in labor economics from an Islamic perspective discussing the approach to systemic reform is limited in numbers. The book by Azid et al., (2021), for example, is one vital attempt to lay down a more standardized and systematic theoretical and empirical ventures into the subject. The challenge here is that many relevant studies that propose to address systemic issues, without claiming to be Islamic, may fall outside the scope of the discussion. For example, studies on policies for women's empowerment that are inconformity with Islamic principles may be overlooked in the database search when the author does not explicitly relate the discussion to Islamic perspective.

Another example is the implementation of a minimum wage policy. This policy is commonly argued as an approach to fulfilling basic needs and reducing income inequality for low-skill workers. If the policy is deemed Islamic, should Islamic economists consider these policies to be inherently Islamic or make that claim explicitly? The pitfall is that without claiming or relating the discussion "from an Islamic perspective", the study would be excluded from the Islamic categorization. Realize that there are actually many studies on labor economics with welfare considerations that are Shari'ah-compliant but written in a neutral style. Such studies are therefore 'inherently Islamic' and can easily be overlooked when searching the database for Islamic labor economics.

Table (1): Criteria for Islamic Policy Design

Policy Criteria	Description
Establishing social justice	The policy should promote fairness, equity, and inclusivity.
Adhering to ethical governance that is consistent with Islamic principles and values	The policy implementation must adhere to Islamic principles of governance and ethics, such as transparency, accountability, compassionate, and free from unethical conducts i.e. corruption.
Promoting public interest and eliminating harm in the society (e.g. <i>maqāṣid ash-sharī'ah</i>)	The policy should benefit the public interest and promote social welfare as well as eliminating harm in the society.
Prioritizing effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation	The policy should be evaluated based on its effectiveness in achieving the intended goals. The implementation also should be efficient especially in utilizing public provisions (e.g. Zero-leakage target).

The question of whether certain policies can be considered "Islamic" is a complex one that requires careful consideration. Many systemic issues can be addressed more effectively by employers and policymakers through creative and prudent decision making. For that purpose, certain key criteria need to be fulfilled. In Table 1, key criteria for labor policy with an Islamic perspective has been outlined. The criteria have been identified as a recurring point from the surveyed articles on labor economics from an Islamic perspective.

To address the systemic issues in the labor market, the design of a policy should consider all the given criteria, as presented in Table 1. First, the policy should promote fairness, equity, and inclusivity to all members of the society. In realizing that, the target should be set to achieve maximum benefits to the public and eliminate harm from society. This is the essence of the *maqāṣid ash-sharī'ah*. With this in mind, policy design should pursue Pareto improvement in any step taken. Careful assessment should be made on the impact the policy may have on the entire public so as to avoid discrimination and injustice to some groups in the society. This may include concerns over social justice, economic justice, and legal justice from the start to the final overall outcomes of the policy. At

the same time, the policy implementation must adhere to Islamic ethics, morality, and values in terms of governance and implementation. Apart from justice, the policy should emphasize compassion, tolerance, humaneness, transparency, and accountability, just to mention a few. At the same time, vice and unethical conduct such as corruption, oppression, and favoritism in the implementation of the policy must be avoided. In addition, policies must be evaluated based on their effectiveness and efficiency in achieving their intended goals. The outputs and outcomes of the policy should meet the objective. In the process, the allocation of resources for the policy's implementation should be utilized efficiently. Leakage and wastage of public funds must be avoided.

Based on the given criteria, policymakers and Islamic economists can evaluate various policies with an emphasis on Islamic perspectives in mind. In the context of labor economics, the criteria can be used to assess various policies, such as programs to reduce income inequality, the minimum wage, flexible working arrangements, employment subsidies, universal basic income, universal employment guarantee, and many other policies that have impacts on society. By doing so, they can ensure that policies are not only in line with Islamic teachings but also contribute to the betterment of society.

5. Conclusion

Research on labor economics from an Islamic perspective has the potential to drive further progress and impact in the field. In order to realize this potential, the approach taken in this study is to systematically map the existing literature and align it according to the Islamization or integration discourse within the field. This systematic mapping serves as a tool for synthesizing the current state of knowledge on the subject. It helps to identify gaps and guide future research inquiries to advance the discipline further.

Three key themes have been identified from the surveyed papers on labor economics from an Islamic perspective: religious or cultural, behavioral, and systemic aspects. The majority of the papers are mainly concentrated on the behavioral aspect (Islamic work ethics), with less emphasis on developing theories related to Islamic labor markets and labor policies. The study identified several gaps in the literature, which are limited theoretical development, lack of empirical studies and limited policy development. These gaps need to be addressed because they hinder the incorporation of Islamic principles into mainstream labor economic theory and practice.

Apart from the three themes, the intersection of these themes also offers rich ground for future research. For example, there is a need to understand how the systemic aspects are influenced by the behavioral traits shaped by religion or culture. Unfolding those interactions can clarify the complexities of labor market outcomes. This understanding, in turn, can shape regulatory frameworks to enhance labor market dynamics.

There are several limitations to this study. The literature surveyed only considered published journal articles and therefore excluded other relevant studies in the field, such as books and conference proceedings. The identified papers were also limited to the keywords used. Papers that are inherently Islamic but do not explicitly have the keywords emphasizing the Islamic nature of the study (e.g., Islamic labor) have been overlooked and excluded from this study. Despite these limitations, this paper has provided valuable insights into the current state of research in labor economics from an Islamic perspective and has emphasized the need for more impactful research to advance the discipline.

The study has revealed several gaps in the literature. There is a lack of theoretical development, empirical analysis, and policy recommendations from an Islamic perspective. Most of the literature is conceptual, focusing on normative behavioral aspects of the economic agents in the job market without depth of theoretical support. Empirical evidence is scarce, making it difficult to fully understand many labor issues to guide policy making. Future research, therefore, should focus on bridging the identified gaps by developing theoretical frameworks, conducting empirical studies, and formulating policy recommendations that are grounded in Islamic principles. Interdisciplinary research involving experts from different disciplines such as economists, sociologists, and theologians should also be considered. This could further enrich the understanding of labor economics from an Islamic perspective.

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رسم خريطة طريق لقضايا في اقتصاديات العمل: المنظور الإسلامي للبحث وتطوير السياسات

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الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا

المستخلص. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى رسم خريطة الأدبيات حول اقتصاديات العمل من منظور إسلامي لتحديد تركيز البحث، والفجوات في الأدبيات، والعقبات الرئيسية أمام تطوير المجال، وكيف يمكن للمبادئ الإسلامية أن توجه صنع السياسات في هذا الحقل. كشف مسح الأدبيات عن ثلاث موضوعات رئيسية في رسم خريطة قضايا اقتصاديات العمل من منظور إسلامي وهي: الجوانب الدينية أو الثقافية، والسلوكية، والنظامية. يتعلق الجانب الديني بالتفسير المباشر و/أو تطبيق المبادئ الإسلامية، والأحكام والقواعد السلوكية المستخلصة من النصوص الإلهية في اقتصاديات العمل. قد يكون لدور الثقافة (العرف) تأثير على كيفية تفسير النصوص الدينية، والذي بدوره يشكل وجهات النظر الدينية. يتعلق الجانب السلوكي بدور السلوك الفردي والأخلاق والمعنويات في تشكيل نواتج سوق العمل. بالنسبة للجانب النظامي فهو يتعلق بالقصور أو الثغرات في النظام الاقتصادي التي تسبب مشاكل في سوق العمل مثل الفقر، والبطالة، وعدم المساواة. بشكل عام، وجدت الدراسة أن البحث في اقتصاديات العمل من منظور إسلامي محدود مقارنة بمجالات أخرى مثل البنوك الإسلامية والتمويل. كما أن المقالات المنشورة حول الموضوع نادرة نسبيًا، خاصة في تقديم رؤى عميقة حول المنظور النظري والتجريبي والسياسات ذات الصلة. حددت الدراسة ثلاث اتجاهات رئيسية للبحث في اقتصاديات العمل من منظور إسلامي: (أ) أخلاقيات العمل الإسلامية (ب) أسواق العمل الإسلامية و(ج) سياسات العمل الإسلامية. تركز معظم الأدبيات بشكل رئيسي على معالجة أخلاقيات العمل الإسلامية.

الكلمات الدالة: اقتصاد العمل، المنظور الإسلامي، استعراض الأدب الموضوع، التداعيات السياسية، الجانب الديني، الجانب السلوكي، الجانب المنهجي

تصنيف JEL: J0, J4, J5, J7, Z19

تصنيف KAUJIE: A4, B3, G1, G43, H54