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CROSS-CULTURAL HR MANAGEMENT IN ISLAMIC AND NON-ISLAMIC CONTEXTS: LEVERAGING CLOUD COMPUTING FOR GLOBAL WORKFORCE INTEGRATION

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Abstract

Aim

This study explores cross-cultural HRM environments in Islamic and non-Islamic countries, emphasising the impact of institutional environments, cloud computing and culture over HRM strategies. This research questions are: Is ethical HRM valued more or less than the performance-oriented models by Islamic organizations, does using cloud HRM increase the integration of the workforce and does cultural difference affect technology acceptance by implementing HRM.

Design/Methodology/Approach

The study utilizes a quantitative research method and linear regression analysis of a sample of 203 respondents drawn from institutions to test the hypotheses on institutional influences of HRM, cloud HRM adoption, and cultural acceptance of the technology. The survey focuses on a number of items including; regulatory compliance, ethical labour policies, security concerns, perceived usefulness of cloud HRM regarding policy adaptation and digital workforce integration.

Findings

It was, therefore, found that regulatory compliance has a positive effect on the policy of adaptation of Islamic organizations on HRM but that strict ethical labour may hinder HR flexibility. The results of the study identified several factors that can be associated with the lack of expected efficiency gains based on the adoption of cloud HRM; The analysis of perceived benefits that influenced workforce integration was negative, which can be attributed to the probable technological resistance and lack of training. Moreover, cultural adaptation had a negative correlation with the adoption of cloud HRM, supporting the idea that Islamic workers consider clouds as user-unfriendly because of ethical and legal issues.

Practical Implications

These insights would be useful for MNCs, HR managers, and policymakers in instituting cloud-based HRM strategies in different cultural contexts. The HRM policies of organisations entail the recognition of ethical labour standards and efficient HRM solutions that are flexible and require technology. To overcome the issue of employee resistance, there must be a need for training and change management when implementing cloud HRM systems.

Social Implications

This paper also looks at the cultural and ethical implications of designing HR digital transformation for organisations in the Islamic economies. This way, it

is possible to advance the concept of adaptive HRM, which utilises technology at work while maintaining cultural sensitivity. The study also reveals that policies that demonstrate corporate social responsibility are an essential aspect of the well-being of employees.

Originality/Value

This research adds to the slender body of knowledge on Islamic HRM and cloud computing adoption by controlling the institutional environment, technological drivers, and cultural imperatives that underpin them. The research findings raise doubts about stiff beliefs prevalent in the literature that cloud HRM is efficient across multi-cultural contexts; the data has revealed that perceived technological acceptance varies within culture.

INTRODUCTION

The globalization of businesses has led to the evolution of elaborate strategies for handling cross-cultural human management for the purpose of managing diverse workforces in distinct cultural and legal systems (Gutterman, 2023; Thakur et al., 2025). The role of HRM has moved from a domestic function coordination to a complex global function that assists MNCs to compete effectively in different countries (Singh, 2024). With the growing globalization and expansion of companies to different countries, cultural issues, ethical issues and technological issues have become core determinants of workforce productivity (Mahadevan, 2025). Another area of change affecting HRM is the increased use and dependence on cloud computing and digital solutions in managing the workforce across borders; through recruitment, training, performance appraisals, and engagement systems (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025). However, in doing so, they also bring with them problems of how to secure data, adhere to compliance rules and standards, and the risk of depersonalization of the human resource processes (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025).

In this context, cultural and religious influences play a crucial role in determining workforce management within the broader institution of HRM. There are noticeable differences in the approaches to HRM in Islamic and non-Islamic regions because of the differences in legal, ethical, and social systems (Gano et al., 2024). In Islamic countries, the practices of HRM are aligned with Sharia law, which emphasizes the legal fundamentals of ethical business conduct, fair treatment of employees, and policies that operate to address welfare concerns (Basit et al., 2024). In contrast, non-Islamic environments that are aligned with Western HRM systems focus more on outcomes, legal requirements, and shareholder interests, which may result in quite different managerial attitudes (Gano et al., 2024). This presents a challenge in the context of both Islamic and non-Islamic markets for MNCs to maintain culturally appropriate HRM strategy with the strategic directions of the company (Thakur et al., 2025). The global population is rapidly diversifying, and cultural and religious factors are particularly determinants in human resource management. It is projected that over 50% of professionals in global organizations will come from different cultural and/or religious backgrounds by 2025, so there is a great need for the development of appropriate strategies in managing human resources (ILO, 2023) cited in Gutterman, 2023). Cross-cultural HRM hence helps companies enhance the performance of employees without compromising cultural and ethical diversity (Singh, 2024). The debate that has emerged in the literature has been on whether there should be culture-specific models of HRM or culture-free models of HRM. The rationale for culture-specific perspectives is that HRM needs to be adapted to the cultural context of a particular country (Gutterman, 2023). This is especially the case in Islamic HRM, in which issues of business ethics are almost parallel to religious beliefs and practices like equal remuneration for all, prohibition of charging usury in financial transactions, and the welfare of employees (Amin and Goodwin, 2022). In contrast, culture-free HRM supports the development of cultural models that prescribe similar human resource management for all geographic regions in order to improve

organization performance (Gutterman, 2023). However, the use of technology and more so cloud computing in human resource management has combined or made it difficult to distinguish between these two approaches through managing HR functions across cultures (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025).

Cloud computing has influenced the change of HRM by enabling remote working, storage of data as well as automation most HR activities (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025). Current estimates have shown the global HR software market to attain a value of more than $40 billion by 2026, where HR leaders are embracing AI solutions for effective and workforce integration (Thakur et al., 2025). These advancements come with opportunities though similarly come with a number of challenges mostly ethical compliance in the Islamic economies in as much as privacy of data and rights of employees are guided by Islamic laws (Basit et al., 2024). Therefore, the synergy between HRM, cloud technology, and cultural diversity forms an important though intricate research domain that calls for further analysis of viable approaches to workforce integration while sticking to ethical-cultural best practices (Mahadevan, 2025).

Although globalization has greatly enhanced the need and emphasis for cross-cultural HRM, the literature brings into focus developed frameworks of cultural HRM only (Gutterman, 2023; Singh, 2024) or a technological angle in HRM (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025). Currently, there is a lack of literature on the implementation of cloud computing in relation to HRM in both Islamic and non-Islamic countries. While Islamic HRM focuses on ethically managing individuals and their compliance to Islamic standards, non-Islamic HRM centres on the management of people with an emphasis on corporations' benefits (Gano et al., 2024). The main takeaway that stays here is that these various models of HRM can be incorporated using ICT and still have to obey cultural, ethical, and legal constraints (Basit et al., 2024). Moreover, the issues that are related to the use of cloud environments – from data privacy to employees' monitoring – have not been sufficiently studied in relation to cultural differences in the workplace (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025).

In addition, the existing literature provides information on opportunities for the use of cloud technologies in HRM. Still, research pays little attention to the differences in the customization of these technologies to raise the spirits of Islamicists while meeting global standards within the HRM domain (Thakur et al., 2025). The Research Questions for this research includes,

RQ1-How can cloud computing be leveraged to enhance cross-cultural HRM practices in Islamic and non-Islamic contexts while maintaining compliance with cultural and ethical standards?

RQ2- What are the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating cloud-based HRM solutions in culturally diverse workplaces, particularly in Islamic economies?

This research will seek to meet these research gaps by analysing how cloud technology enhances the integration of the global workforce while considering the ethical, cultural, and regulatory issues that arise. The research will aim at filling the gap of knowledge on how to effectively and efficiently implement MNC HRM strategies amid cultural differences, thus enhancing the academic research as well as providing useful information in managing human resources in MNCs.

Contextual Background

The phenomenon of globalization poses significant challenges to Human Resource Management as it requires a proper understanding of cultural differences and the application of new technologies for effective control of the workforce. Multinational corporations face cross-cultural issues in human resource management as they extend their operations and reach in different cultural and economic realms while integrating cloud computing efficiently improves the global workforce (Gutterman, 2023; Thakur et al., 2025). HRM is noticeably different in Islamic countries as opposed to other countries because of cultural, legal, and religious factors that define and call for some specific approaches to managing staff and regulating workplaces (Gano et al., 2024). With the advancement in technology like cloud computing, introducing new dimensions on how different cultural employees can be dealt with in organizations in

terms of efficiency, legal and cultural consideration (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025). This research focuses on cross-cultural issues in HRM and cloud, assessing the methods by which MNEs can effectively deploy HR across Islamic and other areas while also being efficient and ethical.

Multicultural HRM is one of the most important and popular topics currently, as global organisations aim to improve interactions, employee satisfaction, and managers' effectiveness in culturally diverse environments (Singh, 2024). As noted by Gutterman (2023), the effects of globalisation mean that firms have had to come up with HR policies that consider differences in communication, power, problem-solving methods and attitude to risk. Culture-specific versus culture-free is one of the critical controversies on the concept of cross-cultural workforce management. The culture-specific HRM model assumes that employment practices should be tailored to the cultural and institutional environment of each country with regard to preserving and valuing employees' cultural beliefs and expectations (Gutterman, 2023; Singh, 2024). On the other hand, the proponents of the culture-free HRM insist on the use of standardized policies worldwide to reduce complexity and inconsistencies in the organization as it continues to expand its multinational operations (Thakur et al., 2025). The task in this case, for organizations that have established centres of operations in both Islamic and non-Islamic countries, is to create effective models of HRM that will conform to both local and global requirements by integrating the policy and standards of the two regions in their policies and strategies (Gano et al., 2024).

Islamic employment policies: The advent of Human resource management in the Islamic economy is closely linked with religious and ethical standards. The Islamic HRM frameworks suggest justice, equity and HRM policies that reflect organizational practices that are in accordance with Islamic rules and values of trust, respect and corporate social responsibility (Gano et al., 2024). These principles influence major HR functional areas such as recruitment, performance management, remuneration, and employee well-being to align organizational processes and practices with Islamic ethical standards (Basit et al., 2024). In contrast to mainstream HRM systems, which focus on performance and compliance with legal and contractual requirements, Islamic HRM encompasses moral and ethical concerns, including employee welfare and spirituality, as crucial to organizational success (Gano et al., 2024). Local cultures of Islamic economies and employment practices in the organization have to align with Islamic laws and principles to conform to the Sharia law while at the same time ensuring that conflict of culture, religion or workplace policies is minimized (Gano et al., 2024; Basit et al., 2024).

On the other hand, the HRM in the non-Islamic economy is more systems-oriented and legalistic, with no spiritual values concentrating more on productivity, profitability and shareholder value (Thakur et al., 2025). Organizational HRM models originating from non-Islamic traditions are therefore influenced by economic and legal frameworks that focus on efficiency, competition, and meritocracy when managing people at the place of work (Singh, 2024). While the Islamic-HRM system takes into account ethical and religious principles when it comes to employment practices, non-Islamic HRM models are more focused on tangible results, performance incentives, and legal standards (Thakur et al., 2025). According to Singh (2024), it is important to have an appreciation of these differences when implementing cross-cultural Human Resource Management in MNEs to match the strategy for workforce management to the firm's local and global goals. Thus, the task for HR practitioners is to come up with policies that can allow for the implementation of these divergent approaches while at the same time aligning them with the corporate agenda to conform to cultural differences yet remain able to compete at the international level (Gutterman, 2023; Singh, 2024).

Cloud computing has emerged as a revolution that has helped in remodelling the HRM by providing suitable technological platforms that lead to workflow advancement of the business entities and global integration of HR (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025). These applications in particular offer shared environments for the recruitment, engagement, payroll processing,

and performance appraisal functions and are particularly suitable for multinational corporations so as to standardize their processes worldwide (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025; Thakur et al., 2025). These have assumed significant roles in enhancing communication, data storage, and compliance, which enable HR professionals to manage multicultural and dispersed teams (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025). Many organizations have embraced cloud technology in the delivery of their human resource management services in recent years with the global human resource software market experiencing a growth trend to reach over $40 billion by 2026 (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025). This trend continues the focus on utilising technology in delivering the rapidly becoming complex functions of HR while being capable of satisfying the needs of a geographically dispersed workforce (Thakur et al., 2025).

However, the adoption of cloud computing in HRM has some challenges especially in implementing the system in the Islamic and non-Islamic workforce practices. Another issue that may hamper AI development is data privacy and ethical issues which are an essential consideration, especially in Islamic economies since, in the area of labour and business, religious consideration is considered (Gano et al., 2024). In this regard, it is essential to implement the cloud-based HR systems in a way that respects cloud employee data and complies with Islamic ethics and internationally recognised regulations (Ahmad et al., 2024). Moreover, this study highlighted that the implementation of AI in HR solutions also poses a threat of dehumanization of workforce management where machine learning is applied in decision-making processes without compliance with cultural and/or ethical factors (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025). This issue is especially important in Islamic HRM, which emphasizes principles of fairness, ethical recruitment, and employee well-being that must be followed at the HR level (Gano et al., 2024).

One of the common issues of cross-cultural employees is how best to manage policies within the organization to account for the cultural differences and, at the same time, achieve the best results. Since multinationals continue to extend their operations into different cultural zones, Islamic and non-Islamic human resource management in its functioning poses challenges concerning policy implementation concerning both the corporate goals and objectives as well as the local cultural norms (Thakur et al., 2025). For instance, Islamic HRM focuses on the welfare of the entire community, leadership, and responsibilities, while non-Islamic HRM entails self-actualization, remuneration based on achievement, and obligations (Basit et al., 2024). The dilemma for organizations is how to design their HR practices, which contain both the approaches from those outlined above, so that they are effective in developing mutually beneficial organizational cultures and practices that respect cultural differences while at the same time driving business performance (Singh, 2024).

According to Singh (2024), key aspects that help to address culturally diverse employees and groups are cultural intelligence, adaptive leadership, and cross-cultural communication. The promotion of cross-cultural training and leadership development makes organizations fully prepared to deal with the hurdles of workforce integration, hence strengthening the competitive position of HRM arrangements to be culturally sound globally (Thakur et al., 2025). Ethical frameworks in AI can also be applied to HRM and can help to fill the gap between Islamic and non-Islamic inspired HRM to enhance the compatibility of digital HR solutions for the culture and ethical issues (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025). Technologized decision-making for staff incorporation as well as fair, genuinely safe, and ethical practices can make a proper use of artificial intelligence in organizations and preserve cultural values (Gutterman, 2023).

Prior Empirical Research

Cross-cultural HRM has also received quite a measure of theoretical focus, particularly with regard to MNCs managing employees from different parts of the world. Scholars have paid considerable attention to the effects of cultural values on the practices of HRM, especially within Islamic countries and countries that have integrated the Islamic culture as part of their culture. Moreover, other aspects have also been impacted by technology, especially in

cloud computing solutions that enhance the management of the global workforce in the organization. However, the combination of cross-cultural HRM with Islamic values and cloud computing has been analysed as a topic that deserves further empirical study. This section discusses prior studies that were conducted in these areas and finds out what research has been done and which areas need more research.

The seminal work in the cross-cultural HRM is done by Gutterman (2023) where the author discusses how companies have shifted towards admiring the impact of societal culture due to globalization. In his work, he demonstrates that communication practices, structures, and decision-making methods dependent on cultures affect HR practices. These findings echo Singh (2024), who states that MNCs need to effectively manage cultural differences and implement international human resource management policies that achieve global standardization while being sensitive to the local context. As Gutterman (2023) and Singh (2024) have pointed out, the integration of HRM calls for organizations to respect different cultures as opposed to absolute conformity.

Building on this argument, Thakur et al. (2025) further discuss some challenges of the global HRM, stating that MNCs have to consider culture, rules, and the changing workforce pattern across nations. It has been analyzed that implementing cultural diversity into the models of HRM leads to increased employee engagement, productivity, and organizational resilience(Thakur et al., 2025; Mahadevan, 2025). Mahadevan (2025) elaborates upon this with the cross-cultural management triangle, illustrating how implementing global HR policies requires an understanding of the functionalist, interpretive, and critical approaches. Altogether, these studies reveal revealed that cross-cultural communication capacity is a significant component of working multinational [employees and managers] (Gutterman, 2023; Singh, 2024; Thakur et al., 2025; Mahadevan, 2025).

Islamic HRM and its impact on managing the workforce has emerged as an important research topic because it focuses on how Sharia guides overall HRM strategies. In their review, Gano et al. (2024) shed more light on how Islamic HRM focuses on the aspects of fairness, justice, and ethical method of handling employees with dignity. According to their research, there are four areas that should be in sync with religious values of Islamic economies in order to establish a good HRM practice: the following are ethical recruitment, fair wages, and corporate social responsibility. These findings are consistent with Basit et al. (2024) study on HRM in Islamic educational institutions where the authors conclude that Islamic values and ethical consideration feature prominently in the management of human capital. These studies support the need to incorporate the Islamic values of adl (justice), ta'awun (cooperation), and shura (mutual consultation) to enhance the HR practices and organizational culture and employees' ethical behaviour (Gano et al., 2024; Basit et al., 2024).

A related literature is provided by Mushthafa, Yuniarto, and Sururi (2025) in realizing the framework for executing Sharia compliant HRM practices. Their study suggests that Islamic organizations agree with strategies of HRM that focus on community interest, ethical leadership, and workforce optimization because worker interest is a priority. They also mention, however, that the adoption of digital HRM solutions must be done in a manner that is compliant with the ethics of Islam and the best practices of Shariah law regulating the use of employees' data or the rights of the workforce. This is supported by Gupta and Agarwal (2025), who expound on the impact of cloud computing and AI in workforce management through efficient recruitment, engagement of employees, and compliance. However, they note that data privacy issues as well as dehumanization are still major impediments (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025; Mushthafa et al., 2025).

Cloud computing has become a revolutionary innovation to the worldwide HRM as it assists companies with the administration of their workforce in different cultural regions. Sanguineti and Maran (2024) offer a relevant examination of cultural antecedents in relation to the acceptance and implementation of technology-based solutions, with a focus on the case of cloud-based HRM. They argue that cultural variables like individualism,

uncertainty avoidance, and perceived usefulness can influence recipients' action in the acceptance of cloud-based HR solutions. These findings support the findings of Gupta and Agarwal in their 2025 study when they noted that any organizational information and communication technologies, especially those that support cloud computing, must integrate cultural and ethical considerations.

Subsequently, Nyathani (2023) conducted a qualitative study to examine how organizational equality, diversity and inclusion could be advanced through the use of cloud HR software. Organizations are increasingly embracing cloud-based solutions for HRM because they help eliminate cultural differences in areas such as recruitment, performance appraisal, and employee training to offer fair opportunities to all. However, the research also reveals that biases present in hiring, performance appraisal and other processes that use AI have to be curbed through strict ethical measures meant to avoid discrimination in workforce management. The above findings support the contentions made by Gupta and Agarwal (2025) about the need to incorporate ethical AI frameworks within the cloud-based HRM systems to reduce discrimination (Nyathani, 2023; Gupta and Agarwal, 2025).

In line with practicality, Salsabilah et al. (2024) explore the issues regarding the Islamic HRM framework in relation to the current system of personnel management. Employing semi-structured interviews and document analysis, their research outlines some of the challenges that range from cultural enmity, lack of awareness among practitioners in HR and unequal willingness to change hard-coded HR policies. However, they have discovered that organizations that have been able to adopt SHRM practices based on Islamic principles report higher levels of employee motivation, organizational commitment and ethical standards within their organizations. Likewise, Basalamah (2024) also explain the link between the concepts of Islamic work ethic and HRM where the author highlighted that the organizations with a focus on fairness, ethical leadership, and social responsibility of organizations have a stronger employee engagement and organizational trust (Salsabilah et al., 2024; Basalamah, 2024).

However, despite the insights of these studies that address the phenomenon of Cloud-based HRM and the integration of the Islamic workforce, there is a research gap. Previous literature mainly targets cultural HRM models or the technological advancement of HRM, but there is limited research on how the facility of cloud computing can be adapted to embrace Islamic labor laws. Moreover, the current body of literature lacks attention to primary research regarding long-term effects of cloud-based HRM on employee engagement, ethical treatment of employees, and cultural integration of a workforce (Gutterman, 2023; Gupta and Agarwal, 2025; Gano et al., 2024).

Thus, a review of the prior empirical studies of cross-cultural HRM revealed that cultural differences, religious beliefs, and technologies comprise the principal drivers affecting global talent acquisition. Literature by Gutterman (2023), Singh (2024) and Thakur et al. (2025) reveal that cultural intelligence is a key aspect in the field of HRM. Other works of literature by Gupta and Agarwal (2025) and Sanguineti and Maran (2024) present how cloud computing is a major factor that is changing current HRM processes. According to Gano et al. (2024), Basit et al. (2024), and Mushthafa et al. (2025) the Islamic HRM practices determine fairness and ethical business conduct. However, there is a need for more qualitative and quantitative studies of these views, especially in light of assessing the prospects of the application of cloud computing towards the creation of an ethical workforce in the Islamic economy. This will help to fill the said research gap and support the subsequent advanced formation of a techno-cultural-ethical hybrid model of HRM to promote sustainable and inclusive processes and practices of the management of the global workforce in the twenty-first-century digital environment.

Hypothesis Development

Firstly, a suitable theoretical framework for this study is Institutional Theory whereby the organizations function under conditions of legal, cultural and social requirements. According to Scott (2005), organizations are influenced by three specific institutional pressures, which include regulative, normative, and cognitive pressures. The regulative aspect

concerns formal rules, laws and policies governing organizational behaviour including but not limited to labour laws and regulation, compliance regulation and data protection regulation. This involves regulatory framework and the expectations that surrounds the Human Resource Management profession. The cognitive aspect refers to the social understanding, assumptions, and expectations employees and organizations take while making decisions.

When examining the differences in HRM practices between Islamic and non-Islamic economies, therefore, the institutional theory offers a sound paradigm based on the explanations posited by the earlier theories. Islamic HRM has its foundation in the Islamic Shariah which entails ethical, and socially responsible treatment of people notably employees. Companies in Islamic settings have to adhere to religious employment laws and standards, affecting staffing, remuneration, and employee's well-being (Gano et al., 2024; Basit et al., 2024). In non-Islamic countries, on the other hand, HRM has been motivated by corporate objectives in terms of efficiency, corporate profits, and legal standards without considering Islamic principles and values that emphasize performance rather than morality. The concept of Institutional Theory assist in understanding how these external pressures influence the development of HRM strategies in diverse cultures.

There is the need for a new kind of framework when thinking about the adoption of some like cloud computing in HRM. The second internal driver also applies pressure to organizational adoption of new technology since organizations must conform to regulatory policies as well as advance ethical best practices and culture (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025). In Islamic economies, cloud HRM solutions need to be Islamic ethical hindrances exist due to concerns over security, privacy, and accepting automation instead of human discretion (Mushthafa et al., 2025). On the other hand, in non-Islamic cultures, cloud computing is seen as an enabler to efficiency and optimisation of the workforce, which increases the organisational performance (Sanguineti and Maran, 2024). Therefore, applying Institutional Theory facilitates a study of these pressures regarding their impact on the adoption of cloud computing under various culturally different HRM systems.

Therefore, applying Institutional Theory to this research made it possible to examine structural factors of global workforce integration and the relationship between Islamic and non-Islamic HRM within the context of institutions. This offers a glimpse of how MNCs address institutional pressures, achieve a balance between global uniformity and local customization, and incorporate appropriate cloud computing solutions to meet ethical and legal standards. Thus, this research can use the insights derived from a proper understanding of how institutions influence the main decisions in HRM to establish the optimal ways to properly harness cloud computing to meet the cultural requirements and organizational goals in the global business environment.

The hypotheses in this study can be clustered under three broad categories: external factors influencing HRM, cloud computing and its effects on HRM, and organizational culture on technology acceptance.

Group 1: Institutional Influences on HRM

Regulatory, ethical and social factors play an important role in the adoption and practice of HRM strategies in multinational organizations, especially where institutions differ across countries. According to Institutional Theory, one cannot ignore the external requirements and expectations like regulations, culture, and ethics to which organisations have to adhere (Scott, 2005). In Islamic regions, HRM is closely linked to Sharia laws, that require justice, fairness and ethically sound treatment of workers (Ali et al., 2024). These areas of operation require that organisations respond to religious labour laws in their HR management policies and Islamic precepts of employment and remuneration, employee well-being and CSR (Basit et al., 2024). Unlike the HRM of Islamic economy, the HRM in non-Islamic economy is motivated by such factors as the efficiency of the economy and legal

Research evidences shows that institutional pressures play a crucial role in shaping the extent and nature of HRM implementation in both settings. According to Gutterman (2023), the imperative and referent pressures engender

high levels of ethical practises in the organisations in Islamic context, but the same is not true for the non-Islamic firms, which tends to focus more on efficiency and profitability. This fact highlights the necessity of developing a mixed model of HRM which will include both ethical treatment of employees and performance-oriented approaches (Mahadevan, 2025). Additionally, the study reveals that compliance with local institutional expectations by adjusting HRM policies remains low since it triggers resistance from the employees and the regulatory bodies (Mushthafa et al., 2025). Given these institutional influences, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a: Islamic organizations prioritize ethical and religious HRM policies more than non-Islamic organizations.

H1b: Non-Islamic organizations focus more on performance-based HRM than ethical labour considerations.

Group 2: Impact of Cloud Computing on HRM

Cloud computing has revolutionized the field of HRM through workforce integration, enhancement of the processes carried out by the HRM and boosting of operational performance. Data shows that the implementation of cloud technology in HRM facilitates recruitment, employee relations, and compliance, especially for organizations that operate cross-border within different cultures (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025). Cloud technology is particularly crucial in the management of the workforce since it provides HR with a central hub for data storage, performance review and management, and enhanced global communication (Thakur et al., 2025). However, the widespread implementation of cloud-based HRM differs from culture to culture and from institution to institution because of data security and privacy issues and ethical issues (Sanguineti and Maran, 2024).

Cloud adoption in Islamic HRM environments is still a challenge because it touches on non-Shariah-compliant labour laws and data privacy laws (Gano et al., 2024). As found from the literature, factors such as blurred employee monitoring, ethical issues in AI, and the use of third-party backups limit cloud adoption of HRM in such economies (Mushthafa et al., 2025). On the other hand, non-Islamic HRM frameworks consider cloud computing as an efficiency-enhancing tool that promotes the reduction in the levels of paperwork thereby enhancing the adoption of cloud computing (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025). The difference in acceptance of cloud HRM also shows that organizations need technology solutions that adhere to regulations and are acceptable ethically in different cultures (Nyathani, 2023). Given these insights, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2a: Cloud-based HRM improves workforce integration and operational efficiency.

H2b: Data privacy and ethical concerns reduce cloud HRM adoption in Islamic contexts.

Group 3: Cultural Factors and Technology Acceptance

Culture also has a significant impact on the reception and incorporation of new technologies in the HRM field. According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), perceptions of usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) determine cloud computing adoption rates (Davis, 1989). Sanguineti and Maran (2024) established normative beliefs, regulatory concerns and institutional expectations to determine employees' perceptions towards cloud-based HRM systems in culturally diverse environment. In Islamic HRM environments, the technology is considered less convenient due to constraints such as legal compliance, security risks, and ethical issues regarding the use of artificial intelligence in decision-making (Gano and McLean, 2024). Results indicate that employees in such environments like human-centred processes of HRM, which are compatible with Islamic principles of justice and openness (Basit et al., 2024).

On the other hand, in non-religious environments, cloud-based HRM is considered as a positive development that aids in increasing organizational performance, making HR processes more efficient, and enriching the employee experience (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025). It is postulated that when the employees are able to understand and see the benefits such as better access to HR and faster recruitment, the cloud-based HRM will be adopted even under different cultures (Thakur

et al., 2025). Furthermore, from the literature, it was evident that cultural awareness training, coupled with ethical frameworks for AI can reduce resistance towards the adoption of cloud HRM in Islamic organizations (Nyathani, 2023). Based on these cultural differences, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3a: Islamic employees perceive cloud HRM as less user-friendly due to ethical and regulatory concerns.

H3b: Perceived usefulness positively influences cloud HRM adoption in all cultural settings.

Research Methodology

This research focuses on examining the cross-cultural approach to HRM for Islamic and non-Islamic nations and the possibility of harnessing cloud computing in international workforce integration. As with prior research, this study uses a combination of both quantitative (survey) and qualitative (existing literature) data collection techniques to examine HRM practices and cloud computing across various cultural and institutional contexts. In particular, the research focuses on how institutional environment, culture, and technology influence the development of HRM approaches in Islamic and other economies.

In the case of HRM, policies at the institutional level are influenced by legal provisions, ethics, and culture. Islamic HRM is therefore presented under the Sharia labour laws, which propound justice, equity and social responsibility (Gano et al., 2024; Basit et al., 2024). On the other hand, non-Islamic HRM is anchored on legal systems, managerial approaches with a focus on the workforce output, and policies that enhance efficiency. As such, the study seeks to establish how these institutions have balanced the implementation of HRM strategies influenced by institutional forces and the adoption of cloud HR solutions.

Building on previous works that addressed global HRM and technology adoption (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025; Sanguineti and Maran, 2024), this study employs survey data, organizational reports, and extant literature to measure stakeholders' perceptions on HRM integration and cloud computing. The populations under study are individual organizations and human resource management professionals within Islamic and non-Islamic countries. It differentiates stakeholders by industry, jurisdiction and institution, thus addressing the differences in the geographical context and permitting comparisons of HRM across cultures.

Data Collection and Sampling

The study uses both primary and secondary research methods to evaluate HRM practices and the adoption of cloud computing. The quantitative data regarding the priorities of HRM, acceptance of the technology and institutional requirements and benchmarks are collected with the help of the survey. Secondary data is gathered through the company's annual reports, the HRM's policies, and the industry journals and articles. These sources contain surveys on HRM best practices, compliance practices, and cloud computing adoption in Islamic and other non-Islamic countries. It also uses secondary data sources in investigating adoption rates of cloud services, trends in HRM, and organisational performance improvement data to support the study results.

The sampling technique uses purposive and strata-bound random sampling to capture heads from different sectors and cultural backgrounds. The studied organizations are chosen according to industrial sector, geographic location and chosen HRM framework so as to x compare the Islamic and non-Islamic HRM models.

Stakeholder Classification and Variable Measurement

In this study, HRM actors are categorized according to their level of involvement in decision-making processes. In line with earlier work, the following stakeholder clusters are distinguished:

Employing Organisations, It consists of business firms, banks and insurance companies that are involved in the implementation of the Human Resource Management policies.

HR Managers and Consultants: Organizations and human resources management consulting firms legally mandated to implement the intended HRM policies and practices that will facilitate cloud computing infrastructure adoption.

Labour unions: Those actively involved in managing human capital and those who are involved in the formulation of policies.
Employees and managers: They understand aspects of legal systems in cross-cultural human resource management models and the organizational use of technological innovation.
Employees and End-users: Individuals who are victims of the outcomes of the HRM implementation as well as the consequences of the digital change management in the organisations.
To investigate the hypotheses, the variables chosen are operationalized as follows:
Institutional Influence on HRM: Measured by regulatory compliance, HRM framework (Islamic vs. non-Islamic), and ethical labor policies (Gano et al., 2024).
Cloud Computing Adoption: Measured on the degree of implementing cloud HRM, perceived usefulness and perceived risk, (Gupta and Agarwal, 2025).
A study that measures the cultural factors concerning the perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) of cloud HRM through the technology acceptance model (Sanguineti and Maran, 2024).

Measurement of Participation and Data Analysis

Stakeholder relative participation indexes are calculated in terms of the frequency and intensity of the HRM policy involvement and technology adoption. The number of organizations and the number of HR professionals engaged in cross-cultural HRM are used to measure the frequency, while the level of engagement of cloud HRM and employee participation in HRM change initiatives establish the intensity.
The data analysis methodology involves the use of measures like Chi-square tests, descriptive, regression, random and fixed effect and correlation to test for relationship between the key determinants of institutional influence, HRM priorities and cloud computing adoption. Content analysis is also used in the study to analyse the qualitative secondary data regarding the issues of the HRM challenges that a multinational organization faces, local regulations and organizational culture.
To ensure robustness, the study controls for potential biases by:
Cross-validating survey data with organizational reports and industry statistics.
Comparing cloud HRM adoption rates across different cultural and regulatory settings.
Eliminating inconsistencies in data reporting through rigorous data cleaning techniques.
This methodological approach guarantees that the results of the research are scientifically grounded and describe how the application of cross-cultural HRM strategies and cloud computing supports the effective integration of the global workforce.

Result and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics
The demographic data from the survey – table 1 is as follows and it helps in understanding the characteristics of the respondents, which is very important for cross–cultural HRM for Islamic and non–Islamic countries and the adoption of cloud computing in integrating the workforce. It has a total of 203 entries and has 6 specific demography components: Age, Gender, Education Qualification, Job Position, Industry sector, and Experience. The use of mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values of every variable helps in evaluating the nature of the sampled population and the relationship with the particular research area of concern.

Age Distribution

For the Age variable, which measures the age of one of the owners, the mean is equal to 2.872, the standard deviation is equal to 1.373, and the values range from 1 to 5. This implies that most of the respondents exist within the middle age bracket of 25 to 44 years. This age group is considered suitable for this research, mainly because middle-aged professionals already bring certain experience in the field of HRM practices and are in a position to consider new approaches like cloud computing, although taking into account cultural factors in their strategies (Al Smadi et al., 2022). Thus, while the younger candidates may be more accepting of cloud-based solutions for HRM, they may not necessarily have the power to determine various policies and strategies. Another factor is the presence of older employees which is

especially important in Islamic HRM settings due to the focus on seniority and traditional values (Mekhdiev and Chistyakov, 2020).

Gender Diversity

The mean of the Gender variable is 1.837 = 2 and the standard deviation is 0.776 the minimum value is 1 and the maximum value is 3. This is because 1 signifies male while 2 symbolises female; therefore, the mean indicates a higher representation of male participants in the survey. This resonates with earlier demonstrated scarcity of female leadership representatives in HR departments and overall male domination of leadership positions in Islamic countries where fairy sex-segregated employment patterns are stronger (Al Smadi et al., 2022). However, the recent trends in the field of HRM state for the inclusion of gender in the teams, as it is found that culturally MG teams are more effective in implementing the multicultural HR policies and the technological advancements such as cloud-based HRM (BOCHAROVA and YAROVYI, 2024).

Education Qualification

This study shows that the Education Qualification variable has an average of 2.882 with a standard deviation 1.458 with a minimum of 1 and maximum of 5. This clearly indicates that the majority of the respondents are educated with at least a bachelor's or master's degree. The level of education affects the efficiency of HRM and the willingness to implement cloud computing solutions (Thakur et al., 2025). In the context of Islamic HRM, education is also used in ethical decision-making and appropriate compliance of HRM frameworks with the Shariah-compliant labour laws (E et al., 2024). In addition, the highly educated HR professionals mainly endorse the global HRM strategic initiatives and cross cultural workforce management, which is important for the multinational corporations (Rathee and Dagar, 2024).

Job Role

The Job Role variable has been found to have a mean of 2.468, a standard deviation of 1.149 and ranges between 1 and 4. This distribution may indicate that the respondents were mostly HR personnel, IT professionals or business owners/ managers. This is important because decision makers of HRM and IT professionals are on the front line in implementing cloud computing. Prior studies show that HR leaders have a major responsibility for integrating cloud-based HRM tools into the organizational strategy and for being sensitive to cultural and legal requirements (BOCHAROVA and YAROVYI, 2024). Moreover, they are also involved in the implementation and management of the cloud-based HRM solutions in compliance with cultures and institutions (Thakur et al., 2025).

Industry

The Industry Type variable, as with the other variables, also has a relatively normal distribution with a mean of 2.567, standard deviation of 1.16, and minimum and maximum values of 1 and 4, respectively. This opens up the door to various fields, in sectors of banking, manufacturing or factories, healthcare, schools, and governments among others. The acceptance and implementation of cloud HRM and multicultural HRM are not equal in all industries. As stated by E et al., (2024), the banking and finance industry has often been found to adopt the cloud-based HRM early due to the compliance needed for the business and workforce integration across many countries. On the other hand, government institutions and the education sector may exhibit a slow rate of cloud HRM adoption because of issues allied to bureaucracy and change management (Mekhdiev and Chistyakov, 2020).

Experience

The Experience variable has 3.128 as a mean score, 1.457 as the standard deviation, and spans from 1 to 5. This means that most of the respondents had moderate to extensive practice in HRM practice in the range of 4-12 years. Previous research evidence indicates that HR professionals with longer tenure have a higher degree of awareness regarding the advantages of cloud-based HRM while bearing in mind the cultural and institutional constraints to its implementation (Thakur et al., 2025). However, while less experience in the practice may make them more receptive to business

change through the implementation of technology, they may not be able to make decisions regarding the HR policymaking in Islamic organizations (Al Smadi et al., 2022).

Hypothesis Testing

In this section, the results of the regression analysis will be discussed in more detail in terms of how the hypotheses were supported or not supported by the statistical outcomes and how these findings relate to prior studies. The hypotheses are then either accepted or rejected based on the results of the analysis with references to previous works.

Group 1: Institutional Influences on HRM

These issues of institutional influence in relation to HRM relate to regulatory compliance, the differences between the framework of Islamic and non-Islamic organizations, and ethical labour policies and the impact of such on the adaptation of HRM policies. The coefficient for regulatory compliance turns out to be positive and is significant at 0.0077 which throws up a powerful correlation between following labour laws and the ability and necessity of HRM policy adaptation. This statement supports the assertion made by Gano et al. (2024) regarding the importance of sharia-based employment policies in Islamic organizations that aim to achieve justice and fairness in employment policies and practices and that adhere to ethical standards. Moreover, Khaled et al. (2023) posit that following the law in Islamic HRM results in organizational structures and a well-regulated labour force, which makes it easier for Islamic HRM to adapt. However, the test result with respect to the ethical labour policies is negative and statistically significant at the 5% level (p=0.00326), thereby confirming that the overemphasis on ethical labour policies decreases the flexibility of HRM. This is in agreement with Ali et al. (2024), who proposed that ethical orthodoxy may hinder HR managers from executing performance-oriented HRM strategies.

H1a: Islamic organizations prioritize ethical and religious HRM policies more than non-Islamic organizations.

H1a, which postulates that Islamic organizations will hold greater ethical and religious importance to HRM policies than non-Islamic organizations, receives partial support. In the aspects of regulatory compliance, although legal requirements are beneficial in influencing the adaptation of HRM, ethical labour policies seem to limit flexibility in terms of HRM implementation. These findings affirm with Mushthafa et al. (2025) who state that Islamic labour regulations provide a structural approach to the management of human resources, which is less flexible when compared to the global trends in HRM. Furthermore, in relation to the controversy of ethics and efficiency, Basalamah (2024) opines that it is imperative to find a balance between the ethical approach and performance-driven model to support an Islamic economy HRM strategy.

H1b: Non-Islamic organizations focus more on performance-based HRM than ethical labour considerations.

H1a, which postulates that Islamic organizations will hold greater ethical and religious importance to HRM policies than non-Islamic organizations, receives partial support. In the aspects of regulatory compliance, although legal requirements are beneficial in influencing the adaptation of HRM, ethical labour policies seem to limit flexibility in terms of HRM implementation. These findings affirm with Mushthafa et al. (2025), who state that Islamic labour regulations provide a structural approach to the management of human resources, which is less flexible when compared to the global trends in HRM. Furthermore, in relation to the controversy of ethics and efficiency, Basalamah (2024) opines that it is imperative to find a balance between the ethical approach and performance-driven model to support an Islamic economy HRM strategy.

Group 2: Impact of Cloud Computing on HRM

The regression analysis on adopting cloud computing in HRM assesses the impact of security factors, perceived benefits, and cloud

HRM in workforce integration and operational effectiveness. The analyses in table 3 reveal that perceived benefits exerted convulsive effects (d=-0.451, p=0.006), but a negative impact on cloud HRM utilization as expected by improving the integration and efficiency of workforce. This implies that employees and HR professionals may not find cloud HRM solutions as useful in real-world applications or may portray a resistance to the cloud solutions because of usability concerns or resistance to change. These observations stand in contrast with the opinion of Mushthafa et al. (2025), who assert that cloud-based HRM solutions enhance efficiency through the automation of clerical work and enhance communication among employees. Further, De Cieri and Sanders (2024) state that the latest insights show that cloud HRM provides value by strengthening HR analytics and decision-making, especially regarding talent management across geographies.

H2a: Cloud-based HRM improves workforce integration and operational efficiency.

Thus, the hypothesis H2a, which posited that cloud-based HRM enhance workforce integration and operations efficiency, is not supported. The negative coefficient of perceived benefits implies that cloud HRM has not necessarily led to better efficiency as there could be issues such as technological resistance, lack of training or even cultural issues that hinder the adoption of digital solutions in HR management. Baroun (2023) highlighted that cultural and organizational barriers are some of the challenges that multinational organizations experience in implementing the cloud HRM in a traditional working environment. In addition, Kudriavtseva and Blyzniuk (2024) have also stressed the point that while implementing the concept of cloud adoption in HRM, it is crucial to focus on change management mechanisms to gain optimum benefits out of it.

H2b: Data privacy and ethical concerns reduce cloud HRM adoption in Islamic contexts.

Therefore, H2b which postulates that data privacy and ethical concerns deter cloud HRM adoption in Islamic contexts is also not supported. The security concerns work does not attain a statistically significant F-test (F = 2.517, p=0.00749), so it can be argued that privacy concerns do not play a decisive role in the non-adoption of cloud HRM in Islamic organizations. This is in contrast to the findings of Salsabilah, Hasanah, and Zainol in 2024 which highlighted Islamic HRM as being significantly aware of data privacy and protection for employees being opposed to any digitization of workforce solutions for ethical breach and surveillance status. On the same note, Vandy (2023) notes that dependence on sovereignty over Islamic economies' data prompts scepticism towards cloud HRM solutions such as data storage in the cloud. The non-significant results of this study signify the fact that through modern cloud security, privacy issues are less of a concern as organizations adopt the cloud-based HRM solutions than was previously estimated.

Group 3: Cultural Factors and Technology Acceptance

H3a: Islamic employees perceive cloud HRM as less user-friendly due to ethical and regulatory concerns.

The regression analysis for cultural factors and technology acceptance investigates the relationship between cultural adaptation, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and the willingness to adopt cloud HRM. As shown in Table 4, the hypothesis is supported based on the findings that cultural adaptation has an inverse relationship and is significant at 0.00263 level with cloud HRM adoption. This is similar to the study by Toumi and Su (2022), according to which, Islamic employees seem to refuse to use cloud-based HRM because of ethical and conventional structures at work. According to Dhanabagiyam et al. (2024), there is a considerable cross-cultural impact on the acceptation of HR technology, resulting in HRM practices by multinational organisations not being standardized around the world.

H3b: Perceived usefulness positively influences cloud HRM adoption in all cultural settings

The third hypothesis: People's perception of the usefulness of cloud HRM has a direct positive impact on the likelihood of adoption in all culture subtypes and is therefore rejected.

The perceived usefulness has been statistically insignificant (p=0.00939), hence rejecting the hypothesis that employees adopt cloud HRM due to its perceived usefulness. This is different from De Cieri and Sanders (2024)'s assertion that usefulness is essential in the adoption of HR technology where the user stands to gain tangible benefits, including time saving and efficiency gains. The insignificance could mean that other factors like regulatory factors and culture challenge the benefits of cloud HRM, thus stopping its implementation in specific organizations.

Conclusion

This study sought to analyse cross cultural effects on human resource management between the Islamic and non-Islamic countries besides analysing the effects of cloud computing in assimilating the global workforce. The research concerned the factors that impact the HRM policies and practices, including the issue of compliance, ethical practices, and the use of advanced technologies such as cloud-based systems. The study aimed at ascertaining whether Islamic organisations apply ethical HRM than non-Islamic organisations and whether cloud HRM improves organizational workforce performance, whether cultural factors influences willingness to adopt cloud based HRM systems. The main purpose of the cross-sectional study was to understand antecedents and outcomes of cloud HRM across different cultures and institutions to guide multinational organizations with culturally-sensitive HRM strategies.

The first hypothesis (H1a proposed that Islamic organizations pay more attention on ethical and religious HRM policies as compared to non-Islamic organizations. This hypothesis was only partly supported by the results, suggesting that regulation enhances the Islamic organization's HRM adaptability, although ethical limitations discourage flexibility in human capital. This is in line with Gano et al. (2024), who pointed out that though Sharia-based HRM is fair, it hinders flexibility in implementing international HR practices. The second hypothesis (H1b) was that non-Islamic organizations are more concerned with performance rather than ethicality of labour exploitation concerns, which was not supported by the results. This result implies that the differences between HRM models in Islamic and non-Islamic organisations are narrowing down because of globalisation, as pointed out by Gutterman (2023).

The second set of hypotheses were developed to test the relationship between cloud computing and HRM. The first hypothesis (H2a) posited that the perceived benefits of cloud HRM are positively related to workforce integration and operational efficiency, but no significant relationship was established as seen in previous studies. This means that in the context of this research study, technological resistance, lack of training, or the absence of effective change management might cap the possible enhancements in cloud HRM. The second hypothesis (H2b) examined the moderating role of data privacy and ethical concerns in cloud HRM adoption in Islamic contexts; however, the study failed to find any significant impact, perhaps because of technological advancements that address the aforementioned concerns. This is in contrast with the earlier study conducted by Salsabilah et al. (2024) where they suggested that Islamic organisations refrain from Digital Workforce solutions because of privacy issues.

The third set of hypotheses therefore focused on cultural factors and technology acceptance. The findings of this study supported the first hypothesis named H3 a, which stated that Islamic employees would find cloud based HRM as use friendly because of ethical and regulatory issues. The findings further vindicated the research hypothesis that the degree of cultural adaptation bears a negative relationship with the adoption of cloud HRM, as H2 suggested that most employees intensely resist the adoption of digital HR solutions in their line of work due to their Islamic culture. The second hypothesis advanced here was H3b: perceived usefulness has a positive and significant effect on the adoption of cloud HRM across all cultural values, which the findings did not support. The non-significance of the findings means that the perceived benefits of CHRM may be trumped by issues such as governance and culture that supports the arguments made by Dhanabagiyam et al. (2024) regarding the need for country-specific CHRM models.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite the comprehensiveness of this study, the following limitations should be noted. Firstly, the data was assimilated with confines to only 203 observations this could be limiting for correspondingly portraying a broader business cross section of the various industries with the world's culturally diverse regions. Further research should be conducted with a larger sample in order to generalize the results. Second, the study was based on the quantitative method, whereby the findings represented statistical evidence of the relationships as distinctive from gaining an in-depth understanding of HR managers' decision-making processes. Consideration could be given to interviews with practitioners in other industries or case studies which would highlight areas of catalysts for both HRM adoptions and cloud computing adoption in the future.

Another weakness is that non-Muslim HRM and Islamic HRM were measured as two extremes without considering regional differences within the Islamic economy. A more detailed analysis concerning this aspect could be necessary in the future as the HRM policies implemented in countries of the Gulf, Southeast Asia, and North Africa may not be entirely similar. However, this study located cultural and institutional factors influencing cloud HRM practices but failed to delve into technological factors like lack of infrastructure, low technological competence, and prohibitive costs. Thus, future research should examine the impact of economic and technological perspectives on the digital transformation of HRM, especially in emerging Islamic economies.

This study highlighted the role of HR professionals and organizational decision-makers, but the employees' standpoint was not studied in detail. Therefore, future studies should investigate how the workforce has responded to this concept, which areas of the human resource management employees are more comfortable with using technology, and how differences in generations may affect the acceptance rate of cloud HRM. Accordingly, future research can enhance the understanding of cross-cultural HRM and provide insightful suggestions for MNCs, trying to achieve the appropriate balance between the standardization and adaptation of the HRM paradigm while operating in different country contexts.

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