



Islamic Spiritual Leadership, Green HRM, and Workplace Green Behavior in Environmental Sustainability: A Review of Islamic Banking Practice

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Abstract

This review is aimed to establish a new, more detailed literature synthesis on Islamic Spiritual Leadership (ISL), Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), Workplace Green Behavior (WGB), and Environmental Sustainability Practices (ESP) in Islamic banking, while taking the case of Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited (IBBL) in Dhaka City as an empirical example. This is not only a synthesis that strengthens the relationship between ISL-GHRM-WGB-ESP, as previously reported in the reviews, but it also incorporates over two dozen peer-reviewed scholarly sources published mainly in the last six years (2020–2026), ranging from meta-analytical studies of spiritual leadership, bibliometric mapping of GHRM scholarship, to empirical research on Islamic work ethic and religiosity in shaping pro-environmental behavior. The review is presented in eleven sections, which are designed to provide a clearer view of the evidence for each particular claim than was previously provided in narrative reviews. The results have been consistent with the notion that ISL and GHRM are complementary antecedents of ESP, and that this link is largely mediated by WGB. The review further reveals that Islamic work ethic and religiosity are boundary conditions that enhance the ISL-WGB relationship in organizations with Muslim majority, which is also not included in the previous western-based GHRM models. To facilitate more rigorous testing of the propositions presented in the literature and the structured future-research agenda, a discussion of the methodological limitations of the review is explicitly discussed.

Keywords: *Islamic Spiritual Leadership; Green Human Resource Management; Workplace Green Behavior; Environmental Sustainability; Islamic Banking; Islamic Work Ethic*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Problem Statement

Climate change and environmental degradation have elevated sustainability to an institutional requirement, particularly in countries facing climate risk, like Bangladesh (World Bank Group, 2025; Khatun et al., 2023). The banks are at the heart of this transformation, as they are responsible for a direct environmental impact by using their energy, procurement and facilities management, but also an indirect impact through the financing, lending and risk screening activities they have on behalf of the wider economy. While Bangladesh Bank has issued green banking guidelines at the institutional level and is also monitoring compliance with the guidelines, compliance does not necessarily mean that sustainability intent is actually put into practice at the employee level (Bangladesh Bank, 2011, 2023).

Islamic banks are placed in a particular context in this context. In their governance they already have a solid foundation in the Shariah principles of khalifah and amanah (Stewardship and trustee) over natural resources, and they have already made it clear in the scripture that human beings must not be wasteful, excessive or corrupt the earth (Qur'an 6:165; 7:31; 30:41; 55:79). Theoretically, this moral architecture ensures Islamic banks are likely to be uniquely positioned to turn moral commitments into environmental actions. However, there is a gap in the literature on how these two mechanisms, i.e. Islamic Spiritual Leadership (ISL) and Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), are studied together and how they are studied specifically through the behavioral channel of Workplace Green Behavior (WGB) among Islamic bank employees.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This review is significant for three reasons. Firstly, it brings together three strands of academic research that have evolved significantly over the last five years but, to date, largely as autonomous research fields – spiritual leadership research, GHRM research, and green banking research – where the mutual impact of spiritual leadership values and HR systems on the employee-level environmental outcomes has not yet been linked together in an integrated way (Priyashantha et al., 2026). Second, it underscores a boundary condition which is not commonly present in the mainstream, western-centric GHRM models; Islamic work ethic and religiosity that have been demonstrated as a factor that can play a meaningful role in facilitating the translation of organizational environmental values to pro-env outcomes in the organizational context of Muslim populations (Ahmad, 2026; Aziz et al., 2018). Third, it addresses a practical need in a fast-growing Islamic banking market, where banks, particularly those in Bangladesh (and other South Asian countries), are increasingly being pressured by regulators and stakeholders to show that their green commitments are more than just a disclosure (Shalhoob, 2025).

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

The review focuses on three research questions. RQ1: What is the literature's description of the relationship between Islamic Spiritual Leadership and employee and organizational outcomes with regard to the environment? RQ2: What is the relationship between Green Human Resource Management and Workplace Green Behavior and Environmental Sustainability Practices and via which mechanisms? RQ3: Does Workplace Green Behavior act as a mediator between leadership and HR antecedents and the environmental sustainability outcomes in Islamic banking, specifically in the Bangladeshi context?

In this way, the review has three goals: (1) to synthesize the theoretical and empirical literature and present a more granular view of the three phenomena (ISL, GHRM, WGB, and ESP) than previously offered; (2) to identify through recently published meta-analyses, bibliometric reviews, and empirical studies the specific evidentiary gaps that limit confidence in this view; and (3) to propose a research agenda that can close these gaps through rigorous, quantitatively testable models.

1.4 Scope and Organization of the Review

The review focuses on literature examining spiritual/values-based leadership, green human resource management, employee environmental behaviors and Islamic banking sustainability, mainly published from 2013 to 2026, and particularly those from 2020 and later, reflecting the rapid growth of the field. The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the conceptual definitions and theory. This is detailed in Section 3, which outlines the review methodology. Sections 4-7 discuss thematic synthesis with ISL, GHRM, WGB and in the context of Islamic banking in Bangladesh, respectively. Section 8 synthesizes these themes to a conceptual framework and proposes statements from literature. Theoretical, practical and contextual implications are discussed in Section 9. Section 10 discusses the limitations of the review and Section 11 presents a future-research agenda.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations

2.1 Key Constructs Defined

Islamic Spiritual Leadership (ISL) is defined in this review as the Islamic version of the spiritual leadership paradigm (Egel & Fry, 2017) and is based on values such as Islamic moral principles, characterized by integrity, justice, humility and accountability with regard to people and towards nature.

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is defined as the degree to which HR policy and routine HR activity, such as recruitment, training, performance management and engagement, are integrated with environmental concerns, both to increase employee awareness of the environment and to minimise the organisation's environmental impact (Al-Sabi et al., 2024).

Workplace Green Behavior (WGB) is a term that can be interchangeably substituted with employee green behavior (EGB) and it includes mandated in-role behavior and voluntary extra-role behavior that has positive environmental consequences (Zacher et al., 2023).

Environmental Sustainability Practices (ESP) are the policies and practices organizations implement to mitigate or correct any negative impacts on the environment through emissions reduction, energy efficient operations, water conservation, or pollution prevention (Saif-Alyousfi & Alshammari, 2025).

2.2 Islamic Theological Foundations of Environmental Stewardship

In Islamic thought, man is a steward, not an owner of natural resources, so that wastefulness and excess are explicitly prohibited (Qur'an 7:31; 6:165); environmental and social corruption is made to depend on human actions

(Qur'an 30:41); and balance (mizan) becomes a principle that governs (Qur'an 55:79). Prophetic tradition also teaches these injunctions, and insists on the planting even in bad weather (Sahih al-Bukhari 2320; Sahih Muslim 1553a), and condemns wasteful water usage even if there is seemingly no shortage (Sunan Ibn Majah 425).

However, research focusing specifically on Islamic financial institutions has, for a long time, emphasized the operational implications of this environmental ethic both in the way Islamic banks design financial products and in their risk screening and internal practices, and not just as a devotional issue (Rizk, 2014), while recent scholarship has begun to pare down the possibilities into an explicit khalifah-amanah-mizan-adl typology for organizational and educational application (Basri et al., 2024). The findings from the complementary evidence confirm that Islamic religiosity is not only a theological matter but also has a behavioral influence: Islamic religiosity, in combination with the psychological empowerment has been found to enhance the impact of environmental moral education to measurable pro-environmental behaviors of the Muslims' population (Begum et al., 2021).

2.3 Underpinning Theories

Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964; Yamao, 2024) is the theory that describes the reciprocal relationship between organizations and employees, and how positive discretionary employee behaviors from the employees in the organizations develop when they feel the organization is genuinely concerned about their welfare, including behaviours related to environmental stewardship. Similarly, in terms of understanding how leaders influence voluntary pro-environmental behaviour, foundational research in organizational behaviour has revealed that leaders influence their employees' behaviour through the effects they demonstrate and communicate through the SET channels, irrespective of formal policy (Robertson & Barling, 2013).

The Natural Resource Based View (NRBV) (Hart, 1995) suggests that the organizations gain sustainable competitive advantage by integrating environmental capability into organizational strategy, in Islamic banks the process of integrating environmental capability into organizational strategy is realized by GHRM.

Spiritual Leadership Theory (Fry, 2003) expands on the concept of leadership in terms of intrinsic motivation, which is achieved through vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love and is later linked specifically to the Islamic leadership model based on Qur'anic and Sunnah principles (Egel & Fry, 2017). The higher aims of Shariah in the light of the concept of *maslahah* (public interest) and *mafsadah* (harm) are given considerable importance (Beekun & Badawi, 2005; Muhamad et al., 2022). In the framework integrated in this document, the environmental dimension of ISL is the moral dimension of stewardship, in GHRM the mechanisms for achieving it, in WGB the daily action of living it and in ESP the evidence of the organisation that it has been achieved.

3. Review Methodology

3.1 Review Approach and Scope

This review is not systematic, but rather a narrative and conceptual synthesis, in line with the PRISMA-registered guideline. The choice is determined by the goal of the review, in this case, the integration of a still-fragmented literature from a range of leadership studies, HRM research, environmental psychology, and Islamic finance, rather than by quantifying effect sizes across a homogeneous set of studies, which would be better accomplished by a meta-analytical or bibliometric review, as cited throughout this paper (e.g., Göçen & Şen, 2021; Katz et al., 2022).

3.2 Source Identification and Selection Rationale

This was done by citation chaining from published articles in ISL, GHRM, and WGB literatures and targeted search in peer-reviewed articles, meta-analyses, and bibliometric reviews, published in the last three years (2023-2026), on spiritual leadership, green HRM, employee green behavior, Islamic work ethic and Islamic banking sustainability. First we gave preference to peer-reviewed journal articles with verifiable digital object identifiers, then to meta-analytic and bibliometric syntheses that could characterize a state of a sub-literature rather than a single study, and finally to sources that were directly relevant to the Islamic organizational or financial context. Conference proceedings, working papers and non-peer reviewed sources were kept only when they were specifically related to the Bangladeshi Islamic banking context and when no peer reviewed sources were available.

3.3 Analytical Strategy

The literature was categorized into the following themes, based on the four constructs: ISL, GHRM, WGB, and ESP, with each theme further subdivided by the empirical context (general organizational context versus Islamic banking context) and type of evidence (primary empirical study versus meta-analysis or bibliometric review). This stratification enables the review to identify, for each construct, what has been established by a body

of evidence, what is theoretically plausible but has been supported by only a few primary studies, and what is not supported by any primary studies. This distinction is highlighted in Sections 9 and 10.

4. Islamic Spiritual Leadership and Environmental Responsibility

4.1 Conceptual Roots of ISL

ISL combines organizational leadership with the spiritual and moral duties placed upon human beings by Islam as khalifahs and amanahs. The Qur'anic concept of human custodianship aligns with the concept of responsible organizational leadership, the prophetic teaching of which is that every individual is a shepherd responsible for the well-being, justice and behaviour of their flock (Beekun & Badawi, 2005). On this basis, Egel and Fry (2017) take spiritual leadership theory directly to the Islamic leadership model, while further research places Islamic spirituality in an organizational context as a predictor of job satisfaction and organizational commitment via ethically grounded pathways (Asutay et al., 2022).

4.2 Empirical Evidence Linking ISL to Environmental and Green Outcomes

The evidence base for the relationship between ISL specifically and environmental outcomes has been relatively limited, but there has been much surrounding evidence that has grown in strength. Spiritual leadership is found to directly predict green creativity via green work engagement (Abualigah & Badar, 2025) and directly predict pro-environmental behavior via perceived environmental responsibility (Parveen et al., 2025). A servant-leadership variant that is explicitly spiritual and environment-specific leads to similar outcomes, that is, to better employee measurable environmental behavior (Gull et al., 2026).

Such a pattern is facilitated by the consolidated evidence in other areas than the environment. A meta-analysis of seventeen studies meeting the inclusion criteria for this review reveals a consistent positive relationship between spiritual leadership and OCB worldwide and across all industries (Göçen & Şen, 2021), a relationship conceptually akin to the relationship between spiritual leadership and WGB because environmental action in the workplace is also usually discretionary and other-regarding. This pattern has continued with more recent evidence demonstrating that spiritual leadership increases employees' ability to maintain effortful, values-consistent behavior in the face of stress and strain by providing a sense of insider status and organization-based self-esteem (Li et al., 2025).

In Islamic financial institutions specifically, a study of 615 employees reveals that the visionary dimension of spiritual leadership has a positive impact on the self-efficacy of employees, and through knowledge sharing, employee performance; however, the impact of the other dimensions of spiritual leadership (faith and altruism) was not the same, thereby highlighting the need to consider ISL as a not one-size-fits-all construct across all its sub-dimensions (Junaidi, 2025).

4.3 Comparative Insight from the General Spiritual Leadership Literature

Comparative analysis of evidence of spiritual leadership in the Islamic domain is informative. The mechanisms identified in the general literature and in the vision, meaning, and altruistic love (Fry, 2003), are similar to that of the Islamic constructs of niyyah (intention), amanah, and ihsan (excellence in conduct), and therefore ISL would seem to be a culturally and theologically specific instantiation of a broader leadership mechanism as opposed to a completely different one. The effect of ISL is expected to be strengthened and not diminish the impact of Islamic work ethic and religiosity as boundary conditions, which is supported by this comparative reading that is included later in the review in section 8.2.

5. Green Human Resource Management and Environmental Sustainability

5.1 GHRM Architecture and Mechanisms

GHRM integrates environment into recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management and employee engagement (Renwick et al., 2013). Green training builds awareness and competence for sustainability, and green performance indicators boost accountability (Jabbour et al., 2016). In the light of this, a recent systematic review that synthesizes 125 quantitative GHRM studies published from 2014 to 2025 pinpoints five recurring themes in this literature: individual- and organisational-level antecedents of GHRM adoption; employee- and organisational-level outcome of GHRM; individual boundary conditions as green values and knowledge; organisational boundary conditions as leadership and culture; and emerging multi-level pathways through which employee outcomes aggregate into organisational environmental performance (Priyashantha et al., 2026), a structure that closely mimics the ISL-GHRM-WGB-ESP model developed in Section 8 of this review.

5.2 Evidence Linking GHRM to Environmental Performance

Meta-analytic evidence shows that the organizational level GHRM determinants predict employee green behaviour systematically, not solely on the basis of disposition, with 135 independent samples and a large sample size of 47,000+ employees (Katz et al., 2022). Such effect seems to be more mediated by the psychological climate that GHRM creates, rather than formal policy: A study found that green psychological climate and organizational pride both mediate the relationship between GHRM and behavior, with green psychological climate being a stronger mediator than organizational pride (Zafar & Suseno, 2024); similarly, a related study revealed that the path from GHRM to behavior is mediated by green psychological climate and environmental concern, with the former being a stronger mediator than the latter (Chouhan, 2025). Again, leadership interacts with this HR architecture, as green transformational leadership and green corporate social responsibility boost GHRM's translation into environmental performance and green innovation (Niazi et al., 2023), and green, environment-specific variant of servant leadership independently enhances the green performance of organization through its employees' green creativity and the voluntary pro-environmental behavior (Zafar et al., 2025).

A review of this literature from a bibliometric perspective reveals that the number of publications on this specific intersection of HRM and employee green behaviour, and organizational environmental performance, is increasing as well, from 6 publications in 2019 to 25 publications in 2025 (in fact, 2025 publications are already driving a disproportionately high number of citations compared to their publication age, per Gkikas & Salmon, 2026), and a parallel bibliometric review of the intersection of HRM and green innovation indicates that the number of publications is also growing (Faheem et al., 2024), among the fastest thematic clusters in the field being green transformational leadership. In addition, a broader systematic review of 180 GHRM studies, following the PRISMA 2020 protocol, finds that the majority of the studies reviewed appeared in the last three years, and that the majority are now published in Q1 indexed journals, reflecting the growth of the field and its increasing methodological maturity (Lawter & Garnjost, 2025).

5.3 GHRM in Islamic and South Asian Banking Contexts

In the Islamic banking context, GHRM is seen through specific operational mechanisms such as paperless digital banking, energy-efficient building facilities, and green financing for renewable energy and other sustainable alternatives (Akteer & Mondal, 2023; Zaman et al., 2025). Similar studies conducted in the Islamic financial industry demonstrate that the stakeholders' assessment of the credibility of a financial institution's governance and risk management is based on the extent to which the Maqasid al-Shariah principles are integrated into its practices and operations, and not simply on the existence of ESG disclosures (Shalhoob, 2025). It brings to the core of the review the importance of GHRM being grounded in the same moral framework as the Islamic law, not as a “parallel, secular sustainability initiative” by Islamic banking stakeholders.

This is a trend that is seen in the banking sector in South Asia as a whole: South Asian banking institutions, both conventional and Islamic, have empirically supported linkages between GHRM and sustainability. The employee level evidence from Meezan Bank and other commercial banks in Pakistan reveals that GHRM practices have a positive impact on environmental performance by influencing the green psychological climate and environmental commitment of employees (Imtiaz & Ali, 2025). However, similar research in Bangladesh shows that GHRM has also contributed to the sustainable outcomes in banking, albeit there are still formal policies for adopting green practices, and the level of environmental awareness among employees is relatively high (Hossain et al., 2024). This is not a problem of attitude but a problem of implementation.

The same credibility pattern that emerged in Islamic social lending (ISL) is evident in the context of GHRM. The compliance literature of Bangladesh (Julia et al., 2016) and the research on the barriers to green banking adoption in Pakistan reveal that it is not possible for GHRM initiatives to penetrate the Islamic banking market unless they are directly linked to the Islamic banking governance systems and Shariah objectives, and not merely compliance tracks that run alongside, but not through, the Islamic banking system.

6. Workplace Green Behavior as the Behavioral Mediator

6.1 Conceptualizing WGB

WGB includes in-role behaviors called for by policy and extra-role, discretionary behaviors like suggesting environmental improvements or taking proactive steps to decrease waste (Zacher et al., 2023). This distinction between in-role and extra-role behavior is relevant to this review since ISL and GHRM are theorized to call forth these two types of behavior in different ways: GHRM primarily through formal accountability and training, and ISL primarily through informal relationships, social control and ISL primarily through intrinsic, values-based motivation.

6.2 WGB as a Mediating Mechanism: Evidence Synthesis

A recurring finding across the literature is that WGB serves as the behavioral bridge between leadership values, HR structure, and organizational sustainability outcomes, rather than a peripheral construct. In the banking sector, the relationship between green banking practices and bank environment performance is mediated by employee green behavior in a sample of 376 employees (Chowdhury et al., 2025), which was confirmed by previous studies that found that employee green behavior mediates between green banking practices and banks' environment performance more generally (Arulrajah & Senthilnathan, 2020), and in Saudi banks studies that found that employee green behavior mediates the relationship between green banking practice and bank green image (Alshebami, 2021). A similar study in the Bangladeshi labor market reveals that there are two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic, which influence employee green behaviour and attitude, suggesting that the process of behaviour internalisation, rather than simply design, is what determines the manifestation of the green intent in reality (Mamun, 2023).

The Islamic aspect of this mediation should be stressed. In general, a systematic review that only includes papers about Islamic work ethic (IWE) reveals that the Islamic work ethic is indeed correlated with pro-environment at work, but most current empirical studies are conducted specifically within the Islamic banking sector (Aziz et al., 2018), an area that the present review examines and updates further along in Section 10.

6.3 Contextual Drivers of WGB in Dhaka's (Bangladesh) Banking Sector

WGB is implemented most commonly in Islamic banking by means of certain acts like turning off equipment when not in use, use of digital banking, reduction of paper use and conservation of water by recycling. This mediation mechanism is expected to be most pronounced in dense, environmentally stressed environments like Dhaka City, where corporate environmental performance is likely to be more strongly associated with air pollution (Hoque et al., 2025) and solid waste management (Yasmin et al., 2017) in a context where they are not formally prompted to act.

7. Islamic Banking Sustainability in Practice: The Bangladesh Context

7.1 Regulatory and Institutional Landscape

The green banking guidelines of the Bangladesh Bank are applicable to the commercial banking system, and scholars are still investigating the relationship between "legitimacy" and "disclosure" in Bangladesh Bank's green banking and its implementation in Islamic commercial banks (Tania et al., 2023). The institutional salience of ISL among Islamic bank leaders is further emphasized by the mandatory Shariah governance structures, where the expected Shariah-compliant behaviour of the leaders must be present for followers (Alam & Miah, 2024).

7.2 IBBL as an Illustrative Case

Naher (2025) and Hossain et al. (2023) describe IBBL as the country's first Islamic bank that has adopted stewardship principles in line with Shariah, while accounting for GHRM and creating an organizational culture aligned with the principles of sustainability, in which WGB acts as a mediator between policy and practice. The environmental commitment of IBBL is reflected on the local level in Dhaka City with the paperless banking system, e-statements, energy efficient appliances, recycling programs, CSR funded afforestation initiatives and the awareness programs on the environment (Sultana et al., 2022; Bhuiyan et al., 2022).

7.3 Employee Level Evidence from Dhaka City

The larger body of literature on employee performance in Islamic banking in Dhaka offers significant background: employees with moderate to strong satisfaction are found to have positive feelings about workplace communication and professional development (Akterujjaman, 2020), while fair and transparent performance appraisal systems have a positive impact on employee motivation and retention (Hossain et al., 2023). Recent local evidence further demonstrates that the environmental dimension is directly predicted by Islamic bankers' moral obligation and environmental awareness (Ashraf et al., 2026), and another local study in Malaysia confirms that Islamic banks can do more than just disclosing information—they can implement green finance (Zuki et al., 2026). Overall, this set of papers provides some support for the plausibility of an interaction between leadership, HR policy, employee behavior and community engagement in Islamic banking firms in Dhaka, though the evidence is largely descriptive and based on case studies, rather than an empirical model estimated together by the two.

8. Integrative Conceptual Framework and Propositions

8.1 Model Development

The constructs and relationships identified in Sections 4–7 are combined into one conceptual framework in Figure 1. The Islamic Spiritual Leadership (ISL) and Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) are considered as antecedent constructs, Workplace Green Behavior (WGB) as mediating construct, and Environmental Sustainability Practices (ESP) as the outcome. Solid arrows indicate the indirect (mediated) links between ISL to WGB to ESP, while dashed arrows indicate direct links between ISL to ESP and GHRM to ESP as supported by the literature.

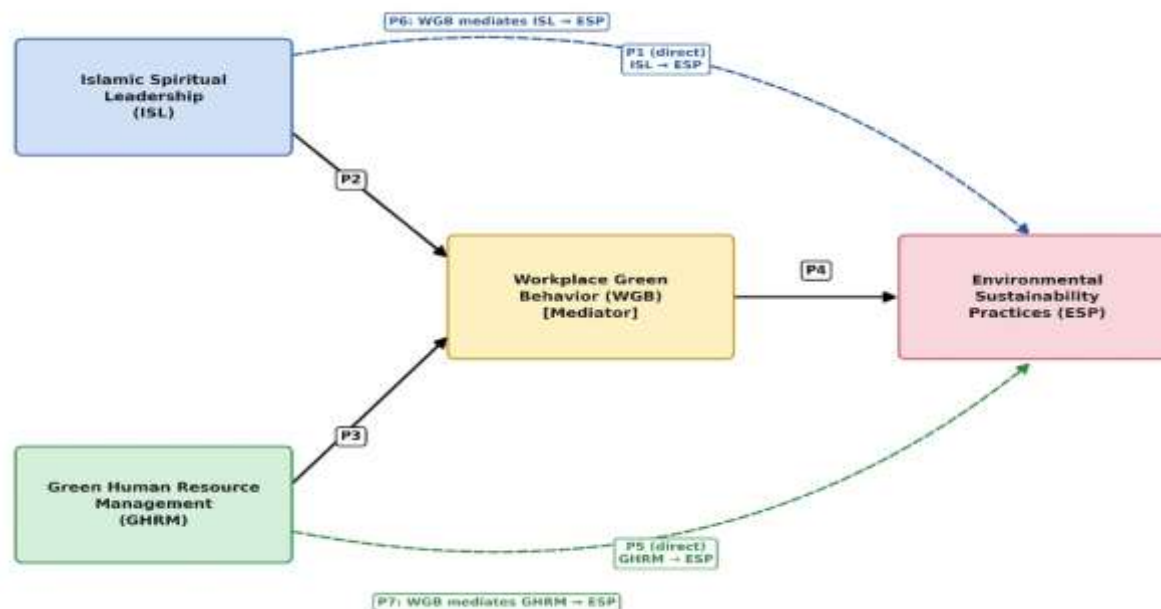


Figure 1. Conceptual framework. Source: developed by the authors from the literature synthesized in Sections 4-7.

Two aspects of the framework need to be highlighted. First, WGB is not a complete mediator but rather a partial mediator, because the direct paths (ISL → ESP and GHRM → ESP) are shown in dashed lines in the model, indicating that the leadership and HR systems can directly influence the sustainability outcomes, in addition to individual employee behavior, such as by affecting the allocation of resources or green financing decisions. Second, this model also includes Islamic work ethic and religiosity as boundary conditions on the ISL → WGB path specifically, rather than as a separate main-effect construct as supported by all the studies conducted that showed that these variables enhanced the relationship between leadership behavior and work behavior (Ahmad, 2026; Begum et al., 2021).

8.2 Literature Derived Propositions

P1: The relationship between Islamic Spiritual Leadership and Environmental Sustainability Practices of Islamic banks (Fry & Cohen, 2009; Wickramasekera, 2025) is positive and significant.

P2: Islamic Spiritual Leadership has positive effects on employees' Workplace Green Behavior in Islamic banks, which is further enhanced by the employees' high level of Islamic work ethic and religiosity (Hassan & Pasha, 2023; Ahmed et al., 2024; Ahmad, 2026).

P3: The green psychological climate works as a mediator and positively influences Workplace Green Behavior among the employees of Islamic banks, which is the major pathway of green HRM practices (Renwick et al., 2013; Zafar & Suseno, 2024; Chouhan, 2025).

P4: Workplace Green Behavior has a positive influence on Environmental Sustainability Practices of Islamic banks (Saif-Alyousfi & Alshammari, 2025).

P5: There are positive indirect and direct effects of green HRM practices on the Environmental Sustainability Practices of Islamic banks (Jabbour et al., 2016; Niazi et al., 2023).

P6: Islamic Spiritual Leadership influences Environmental Sustainability Practices of Islamic banks (Iqbal et al., 2025; Robertson & Barling, 2013) through the mediation of Workplace Green Behavior.

P7: Workplace Green Behavior also mediates between the Green HRM practices and Environmental Sustainability Practices of Islamic banks and this mediation is strengthened when the employees' green motivation is high (Akteer & Mondal, 2023; Arulrajah & Senthilnathan, 2020).

These seven propositions can be paraphrased as a model in which WGB, the direct influence, and ISL and GHRM, the indirect influences, both directly influence ESP while Islamic work ethic and religiosity serve as amplifying boundary conditions unique to Islamic organizational contexts.

9. Discussion

9.1 Theoretical Contributions

The main theoretical contribution of this review is to articulate a boundary condition, Islamic work ethic and religiosity, that recent empirical evidence demonstrates is neither an incidental of the ISL-WGB relationship but is a boundary condition that determines its strength (Ahmad, 2026; Aziz et al., 2018; Begum et al., 2021). This boundary condition is not well represented in the mainstream GHRM and spiritual leadership models, which were previously constructed mostly from Western and/or religiously diverse samples, and would therefore warrant caution when being applied to Islamic banking environments where the level of religiosity is high or low.

9.2 Practical and Managerial Implications

The synthesized evidence suggests that the most effective approach for Islamic bank leaders and HR practitioners is to explicitly articulate GHRM in an ethical framework consistent with ISL (amanah and khalifah), as opposed to a general corporate sustainability policy, as this is where recent evidence shows that GHRM initiatives are likely to have the greatest impact on voluntary extra-role green behavior of employees (Zafar & Suseno, 2024). In practice, this means that the training material, internal communication and measurable outcomes of Islamic banks can be informed and enriched by intentional and conscious introduction of Islamic ethical terminology instead of sustainability terminology used by secular organizations.

9.3 Contextual Boundary Conditions

Its transferability to non-Islamic or secular organizational contexts is unclear, and its unique nature compared to the other ethical and transformational leadership styles is analytically plausible, but not yet confirmed empirically against these other styles; both the ability to transfer and the uniqueness of ISL must be examined head-to-head with these other styles, and their findings have implications for the future of ethical and transformational leadership in both organizational and non-organizational contexts. The distinctive nature of the Islamic banking market in Dhaka, arising from a rapidly expanding Islamic banking sector, and the urban environmental stress, evident in the city, makes it an ideal context for studying the nexus, and also serves as a cautionary note against broad generalization of the findings from this context to markets with other regulatory or urban environmental characteristics.

10. Limitations of the Review

There are 3 main limitations to this review. First, it is not a fully systematic, registered, PRISMA-based review as the search and screening strategy in section 3.2 followed a consistent approach, the authors did not report a reproducible search and screening protocol and therefore the selection of studies is more susceptible to the authors' judgment than it would be in a systematic review. Second, the applied evidences most of the time are descriptive in nature, limiting the causal analysis of the Bangladeshi context in comparison with the claims presented based on the other sources of evidences cited throughout the sections 4 and 5 of this Study, which have relied on meta-analysis and bibliometric approach. Third, the focus on Islamic work ethic and religiosity as boundary conditions on top of the review's limited data on Muslims in education or general Muslim-population samples would be better replicated with Muslims in banking.

11. Conclusion and Future Research Agenda

In contrast to previous reviews, this review has combined the theoretical and empirical research related to Islamic Spiritual Leadership, Green Human Resource Management, Workplace Green Behavior and Environmental Sustainability Practices and organized them in eleven sections and enriched with over twenty additional peer-reviewed research published after the previous reviews. The literature shows a consistent relationship between values-based Islamic leadership and higher levels of employee green behavior, green HR systems and higher levels of employee green behavior, and green employee behavior with higher organizational sustainability performance, while Islamic work ethic and religiosity are found as a possible mediating condition that only applies to Islamic work contexts.

There is a need for future studies in four related directions. Firstly, the propositions and conceptual framework in Section 8 should be tested empirically with quantitative and structural equation modelling with larger and more geographically diverse samples of Islamic bank employees. Second, we should directly test the Islamic work ethic and religiosity boundary condition that we have hypothesized in Sections 8.1 and 9.1 within a banking sample, not within neighbouring education or general-population samples. Thirdly, comparative designs, contrasting the ISL with other ethical/transformational leadership styles would facilitate the definition of what is specifically “Islamic” in ISL-WGB relationship. Fourth, longitudinal and/or mixed-method studies could fill the gaps in the descriptive and case-based nature of much of the existing Bangladeshi evidence identified in Section 10 by using behavioral or archival measures of WGB and ESP alongside self-report data.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Author Contributions

Mohammad Abdullah Faisal: conceptualization, literature synthesis, and manuscript drafting. Md Yousuf Ali: supervision, theoretical framework validation, and critical revision. Ibrahim Mahbubur Rahaman: manuscript formatting, submission preparation, and coordination of the submission process.

Data Availability Statement

No new data were generated or analysed in this review; all sources synthesized are cited in the reference list.

Ethical Approval

Not applicable. This study is a narrative literature review and did not involve human or animal participants.

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