Examining the Role of Islamic Communication Ethics, Digital Literacy, and Cross-Cultural Communication Competence in Shaping Global Talent Development in the Digital Era

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Abstract
Global talent development has become a critical challenge in the digital era, especially in emerging economies such as Nigeria and Malaysia, where rapid digital transformation intersects with multicultural workforce demands. This study examines the influence of Islamic Communication Ethics, Digital Literacy, and Cross-Cultural Communication Competence on Global Talent Development. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected from 500 respondents using a structured questionnaire. SmartPLS was used for data analysis. The results demonstrated that Cross-Cultural Communication Competence had a strong and significant positive effect on Global Talent Development ($\beta = 0.849$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the importance of cultural adaptability in preparing individuals for success in a globalised workforce. Digital Literacy showed a significant but negative relationship ($\beta = -0.099$, $p = 0.009$), suggesting that digital literacy alone does not automatically translate into enhanced talent development, suggesting the need for a more integrated skill set beyond digital competence. Islamic Communication Ethics had a positive but statistically insignificant effect ($\beta = 0.082$, $p = 0.106$), indicating that its influence may be more indirect or context-dependent. The results clearly indicate that among the three variables examined, only Cross-Cultural Communication Competence demonstrated a significant and positive influence on Global Talent Development. Digital Literacy showed a significant but negative effect, while Islamic Communication Ethics was positive but statistically insignificant.

Keywords
Islamic Communication Ethics, Digital Literacy, Global Talent Development, Nigeria, Malaysia

Mengkaji Peranan Etika Komunikasi Islam, Literasi Digital, dan Kompetensi Komunikasi Silang Budaya dalam Membentuk Pembangunan Bakat Global dalam Era Digital

Abstrak
Pembangunan bakat global telah menjadi cabaran kritikal dalam era digital, terutamanya dalam ekonomi sedang membangun seperti Nigeria dan Malaysia, apabila transformasi digital yang pesat bersilang dengan permintaan tenaga kerja pelbagai budaya. Kajian ini mengkaji pengaruh Etika Komunikasi Islam, Literasi Digital, dan Kompetensi Komunikasi Silang Budaya terhadap Pembangunan Bakat Global. Reka bentuk penyelidikan kuantitatif telah digunakan, dan data dikumpulkan daripada 500 orang responden menggunakan soal selidik berstruktur. SmartPLS telah digunakan untuk analisis data. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa Kompetensi Komunikasi Silang Budaya mempunyai kesan positif yang kuat dan signifikan terhadap Pembangunan Bakat Global ($\beta = 0.849$, $p < 0.001$), sekali gus menekankan kepentingan kebolehsesuaian budaya dalam mempersiapkan individu untuk mencapai kejayaan dalam tenaga kerja global. Literasi Digital pula menunjukkan hubungan yang signifikan tetapi negatif ($\beta = -0.099$, $p = 0.009$), mencadangkan bahawa literasi digital semata-mata tidak diterjemahkan secara automatik kepada peningkatan pembangunan bakat, justeru menunjukkan keperluan bagi set kemahiran yang lebih bersepadu melangkaui kompetensi digital. Etika Komunikasi Islam mempunyai kesan positif tetapi tidak signifikan secara statistik ($\beta = 0.082$, $p = 0.106$), menandakan bahawa pengaruhnya mungkin lebih bersifat tidak langsung atau bergantung kepada konteks. Dapatan kajian dengan jelas menunjukkan bahawa antara tiga pemboleh ubah yang dikaji, hanya Kompetensi Komunikasi Silang Budaya membuktikan pengaruh yang

signifikan dan positif terhadap Pembangunan Bakat Global. Literasi Digital menunjukkan kesan yang signifikan tetapi negatif, manakala Etika Komunikasi Islam pula adalah positif namun tidak signifikan secara statistik.

Kata kunci
Etika Komunikasi Islam, Literasi Digital, Pembangunan Bakat Global, Nigeria, Malaysia

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Introduction

Talent development is becoming one of the most important drivers of economic development, innovation, and international competitiveness in the dynamic environment of technological advancements in the 21st century, which is also characterised by the process of globalisation (Leikuma-Rimicane et al., 2021). Organisations and countries are coming to appreciate the importance of becoming a skilled, adaptable, and internationally-minded workforce. The digital era is marked by extensive application of the digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and virtual communication tools, which have reordered the competencies and skills needed to succeed in the global labour market (Shan & Wang, 2024) The talent that can only score high in technical expertise is no longer enough; people need to exhibit fluency in digital skills, cultural understanding, and a sense of ethical duty. Therefore, the transformation to multidimensional skills, such as digital literacy, cross-cultural communication competence, and ethical grounding, should now become part of global talent development to satisfy the requirements of the modern digital workplace.

Increasing focus on international teamwork and remote working has made intercultural communication one of the centrepieces of the workforce (Singh & Bhaskar, 2025). Professionals are increasingly asked to work with colleagues, clients, and partners with various linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds (Currier et al., 2023). The ability to enter the world of intercultural communication with respect and an effective approach has become a fundamental talent development skill in such a context. The level of cross-cultural communication competence that refers to understanding culture, its resilience, empathy, and knowledge of cultural norms is crucial in working in an international setting (Shliakhovchuk, 2021). It helps to achieve the goal of collaboration, reduce misunderstandings, and promote fruitful results. This competence is no longer just desirable as global mobility and virtual teams become a standard.

In line with intercultural fluency, the role of digital literacy has become very critical. Digital literacy is not merely a basic set of skills for using digital tools; but an act of thinking, data literacy, information assessment, cybersecurity literacy, and the ability to subscribe to new technologies (Piliouras et al., 2025). Workers are supposed to upgrade and retrain themselves in the digital age to compete in the global employment sector. Digital media has become the main structure for learning, collaborating, knowledge-sharing, and problem-

solving. This has made digital literacy a major pillar in developing global talents, gaining access to opportunities, and allowing fair play in the digital economy.

In Nigeria, global talent development is impacted by a youthful population, limited digital infrastructure, and ongoing national policies such as the National Digital Economy Policy (NDEPS 2020–2030). Conversely, Malaysia operates a structured talent ecosystem supported by initiatives such as the MyDigital Blueprint (2021) and TalentCorp, which emphasise digital upskilling and global competitiveness. These contrasting national contexts make it important to examine how cultural, ethical, and digital competencies shape talent development across both countries.

The Islamic Communication Ethics is rich and deeply rooted in truthfulness (*sidq*), trust (*amanah*), respect for others (*ikram*), justice (*adl*) and avoiding harmful speech (*ghibah*) as a principle (Hasan, 2024). Based on these values retrieved in the Quran and Hadith, the ideals of communicators are grounded on the moral obligation of the communicator and puts huge emphasis on inheritance, integrity and empathetic concern. Regarding the global development of talents, Islamic communication ethics may be incorporated into forming ethical behaviour, intercultural collaboration based on trust, and reasonable digital interaction (Abdulrohim et al., 2025). The global principles that were developed in Islamic ethics resonate well with the digital era of moral issues, including the spread of misinformation, cyberbullying, and misappropriation of digital platforms.

This study evaluates the impact of Islamic communication ethics, digital literacy, and cross-cultural communication competence on developing global talents in the digital era. The study is guided by key research objectives, including: to examine the extent to which Islamic communication ethics influences global talent development; to evaluate the role of digital literacy in preparing talent for global digital engagement; and to assess how cross-cultural communication competence enhances global employability and collaboration.

Literature Review

Global Talent Development in the Digital Era

The issue of global talent development (GTD) has become a strategic concern among organisations and countries interested in retainability in the digital world. Talent management is the notion of organised initiatives to find, develop, and keep people who can participate in the worldwide economy (Rožman et al., 2023). With the onset of the digital era, emerging technologies, virtual communication, and knowledge-based economies have pushed the borders of the organisations and countries. Malik et al. (2021) noted that GTD was not only a way of improving employee performance or encouraging leadership, innovation and global responsiveness in various settings; it was also a strategy to change employees to bring the best out of them.

The aspect of digitalisation has changed the competencies that people need to thrive in contemporary economies. Old-fashioned talents like machinery expertise and formulaic recollection are no longer sufficient. Rather, the stress is on higher-order skills, such as critical thinking, adaptability, emotional intelligence and cultural fluency. With the increasing popularity of virtual teams, digital platforms, and global supply chain amid people, individuals will be required to have the necessities to labour across time zones, cultural cases and digital platforms (Singh & Bhaskar, 2025). This change was also amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic in that it demonstrated the importance of talent capable of performing in the virtual, digital-first world.

The world has set a new standard of skills as the global talent is expected to be more digitally inclined, culturally conscious and ethically sound. Nevertheless, many organisations cannot incorporate these dimensions into comprehensive talent development strategies. This empirical study addresses that gap through three selected enablers: Islamic communication ethics, digital literacy and cross-cultural communication competence, which are critical in producing globally competitive talent. Recent reports show that Nigeria's talent landscape is characterised by a high youth unemployment rate (33%) and a fast-growing digital workforce, while Malaysia demonstrates a more advanced digital readiness index and stronger adoption of education-to-employment pathways (World Bank, 2023; MDEC, 2024).

Islamic Communication Ethics

Islamic Communication Ethics (ICE) provides a religiously inspired ethical guideline based on the divine teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. It contrasts with secular ethical systems that can be context-specific or culture-specific or can be re-interpreted institutionally (Munajat et al., 2024). Rather, ICE resides on transcendent values and principles that are invariant, general, and concerned with holistic human development. Properties of communication in Islam start with the bare bones of Islamic ethics, including *sidq* (truthfulness), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *adl* (justice), *ikram* (dignity and respect), *sabr* (patience), and the forbidding of *ghibah* (backbiting or slander). These are both religious requirements; simultaneously, they are functional aspects of interpersonal and professional success (Al-Rawi, 2024).

In the digital landscape that is rapidly becoming more closely integrated, what is more essential and more complex is ethical communication. Ethical issues like digital manipulation, online harassment, misrepresentation, and violation of privacy may arise because of the abundance of information and the speed of communication (Zamri et al., 2023). In such less obvious cases, Islamic communication ethics is the guide to the good. Grounding communication with sincerity (*sidq*), accountability (*amanah*) and mutual respect (*ikram*), ICE has created an environment in which truth, empathy and justice matter more to communication than self-interest.

This ethical clarity is particularly relevant in the context of global talent development. With organisations

becoming more multinational and multicultural, the ability to communicate with integrity and sensitivity is essential. ICE contributes to this by encouraging behaviours that build trust and enhance relationships across cultural and religious boundaries. For instance, the emphasis on fairness (*adl*) and patience (*sabr*) promotes inclusivity and tolerance in diverse teams, which are critical for innovation and collaboration in global projects. Kusuma et al. (2025) observe that Islamic communication ethics enhances team cohesion by reducing unethical behaviours such as gossip, favouritism, and dishonesty that often erode workplace morale and productivity.

Moreover, ICE pays much attention to such values as humility, sincerity, and respect, which are consistent with the current objectives of human resources, including emotional intelligence, cultural competence, and ethical leadership. The set of ethical proficiencies in societies such as Nigeria and Malaysia, where Islamic values have a high influence on social and professional aspects, can be used as the framework of training programmes, organisational code of conduct and talent development programmes. Notably, as Islamic in origin, it is another reason to work with these values since they have universal values that can be utilised even in secular or non-Muslim environments as long as they are applied with an inclination to cultural sensitivity and inclusivity.

Furthermore, digital communication code is enforced with Islamic ethics, which is a requisite for the development of talents in the world of digital revolution. With the growing popularity of online learning, web-based teamwork, and socialisation, it is becoming increasingly important to comply with ethical standards as young professionals. In a bid to be responsible and cautious with online communication, ICE discourages malicious practices such as misconceptions, plagiarism, and cyberbullying, which may impact career growth and corporate culture.

Thus, Islamic Communication Ethics plays a critical role in shaping competent, responsible, and globally relevant talent by guiding individuals to act justly, speak truthfully, respect others' dignity, and avoid unethical behaviour.

Hypothesis 1: *Islamic communication ethics has a significant positive influence on global talent development in the digital era.*

Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is essential for competence in the 21st century, particularly in global talent development. It is not merely the digitally mediated space of using digital tools; it is the ability to analyse, produce and share information and digitally mediated space. Digital literacy refers to a combination of cognitive, technical and socio-emotional skills allowing people to operate in digital space productively (Gamji et al., 2022; Martínez-Bravo et al., 2022; Nasidi et al., 2025). These are information processing, online communication, digital

content creation, cybersecurity awareness and ethical digital behaviour.

The knowledge-based economy has made digital literacy a source of effective professional development, innovation and international cooperation. In the age where people and organisations aim to be part of the world markets, digital literacy is no longer a choice, but a condition (Sharma et al., 2016). Bearing in mind the current age of digitalisation, the focus of talent development should be placed on the ability of employees, entrepreneurs, or leaders to navigate virtual spaces, learn to cooperate using digital tools, and manage fast-changing technological trends. Digital literacy is increasingly becoming a matter of inclusion or exclusion; in a more digitised working environment, professionals with high levels of education are no exception to this risk.

In the case of countries that are on the path of digital transformation, such as Nigeria and Malaysia, digital divides are already present, and it is critical to promote digital literacy. This is because in these situations, the digitally literate tend to find online learning opportunities, interact with professional networks and work remotely, precisely the main experiences of developing global talent. Additionally, more digitally literate people will be more flexible and innovative as they feel more able to pursue new knowledge, combine different technologies, and react to change in flexible manners.

Digital literacy is also significant when considering ethical and responsible technology use (Rosengrün, 2025). Misunderstanding, passing the wrong information and invasion of privacy can easily happen in digital workstations where communication is usually asynchronous and without non-verbal communication. Ethical awareness is significant in reducing these risks, and when combined with digital literacy, it allows one to think rationally and act respectfully on the internet. This is particularly applicable in matters of intercultural teams where the issue of tone, timing and language used can determine communication success. Moreover, digital literacy helps in the autonomous learning ability of people (Martínez-Bravo et al., 2022). Since learning and upskilling become some of the most important values in an organisation, the digitally literate workforce has more proactive possibilities to find new knowledge independently, engage in e-learning activities, and introduce communities of practice.

Digital literacy consists of five major components: (1) information and data literacy, (2) communication and collaboration, (3) digital content creation, (4) safety and cybersecurity literacy, and (5) problem-solving using digital tools (Martínez-Bravo et al., 2022). In Nigeria, universities such as Ahmadu Bello University and UNILAG have integrated digital literacy modules for students, while Malaysia's MDEC leads nationwide digital skilling initiatives including eRezeki and MyDigitalMaker. Digital literacy catalyses global talent development by enhancing individuals' ability to learn, communicate, collaborate, and innovate in a digitalised world. Its role becomes even more critical in multicultural, multilingual, and multi-faith environments such as

Nigeria and Malaysia, where it helps bridge digital divides and supports inclusive professional development.

Hypothesis 2: *Digital literacy has a significant positive influence on global talent development in the digital era.*

Cross-Cultural Communication Competence

An essential skill in the contemporary globalised economy is cross-cultural communication competence (CCCC). It can be stated as a person's capacity to appropriately and conveniently interact with individuals with varying cultures in various communication contexts. In contrast to regular communication skills, cross-cultural communication competence imposes a need to be aware of the cultural differences, be knowledgeable about social rules, sensitive to language and its different interpretations, and have empathetic and flexible abilities (Yashnyk & Turitsyna, 2023). Cross-cultural communication competence is imperative to enable productivity and reduce conflict as talent sourcing and development in the global economy increasingly incurs the involvement of heterogeneous teams both physically and virtually. Multicultural competence is also more likely to help employees work in international NGOs, multinational corporations, and remote settings.

In Nigeria and Malaysia, both multicultural and multi-religious societies, cross-cultural communication competence is even more imperative. Internally, the two nations consist of diverse ethnic and linguistic categories, who daily relate with one another in learning institutions, state organisations, and in privately owned businesses. On the outside, these countries tend to be involved in transnational associations, international education, and a multinational workforce. To succeed in the global labour market, people living in such contexts should be able to negotiate intercultural interactions in an enlightened and clear way. Cross-cultural communication competence consists of cultural awareness, empathy, behavioural flexibility, adaptability, tolerance for ambiguity, and linguistic sensitivity (Yashnyk & Turitsyna, 2023). These competencies enable individuals to function effectively in multicultural work environments, a reality in both Nigeria and Malaysia where ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity shape daily interactions.

Regarding leadership and talent management, CCCC would allow managers to mentor, motivate, and manage multicultural teams more efficiently. Fine-tuned intercultural competence enables leaders to offer culturally responsive performance-related feedback, handle conflicts constructively to avoid attrition, and build inclusive workplaces that recruit and retain the best talent. This, in turn, promotes innovation and the ability of the organisation to handle tremendous pressure; the two being the most important attributes in the development of talent globally in the digital age.

Cross-cultural communication competence allows people to build successful cooperation across boundaries, adjust to new environments, and become important to international teams and projects. It is, therefore, a major

facilitator of talent worldwide, especially those populated with multi-ethnic and digitalised working conditions.

Hypothesis 3: *Cross-cultural communication competence has a significant positive influence on global talent development in the digital era.*

Theoretical Framework: Social Learning Theory
Social Learning Theory (SLT), developed by Albert Bandura in 1977, serves as a valuable lens through which the process of talent development can be understood in the digital and globalised era. SLT posits that human behaviour is acquired through observing others, imitating modelled behaviours, and internalising social norms. Learning is not merely a matter of individual trial and error but is profoundly shaped by social contexts, role models, and perceived consequences of actions (Rumjaun & Narod, 2025). This theory introduces key constructs such as observational learning, reinforcement, self-efficacy, and reciprocal determinism to explain how knowledge and skills are transferred across individuals and environments.

However, in the modern relationship, in which the evolutions of technology and culture influence almost all the labour market factors, SLT is proven to offer useful theoretical framework regarding how individuals develop the competencies learned to be globally employable. Learning in the present frequently occurs in liquid, technology-assisted contexts that involve individuals simulating conduct by digital role models, work-based mentors, or networked crowds. Such settings permit constant feedback and reinforcement that help shape the behavioural responses and inner drive. The way SLT approaches the interplay between the individual, behavioural and environmental angles is one of the reasons why it best explains the multidimensional nature of talent development into the new digital age.

SLT presents a comprehensive approach to explaining the development process of competencies necessary to generate success in the globalised digital economy. People do not learn the ethics of communication, digital literacy, or cultural intelligence in a vacuum. Instead, they acquire these characteristics by observing role models, reinforcement mechanisms, and social interactions. The main stages of such observational learning involve workplaces, schools and online sites. The behaviour modelled and reinforced by peers, supervisors, or society will depend on the scope to which it will be adopted and maintained.
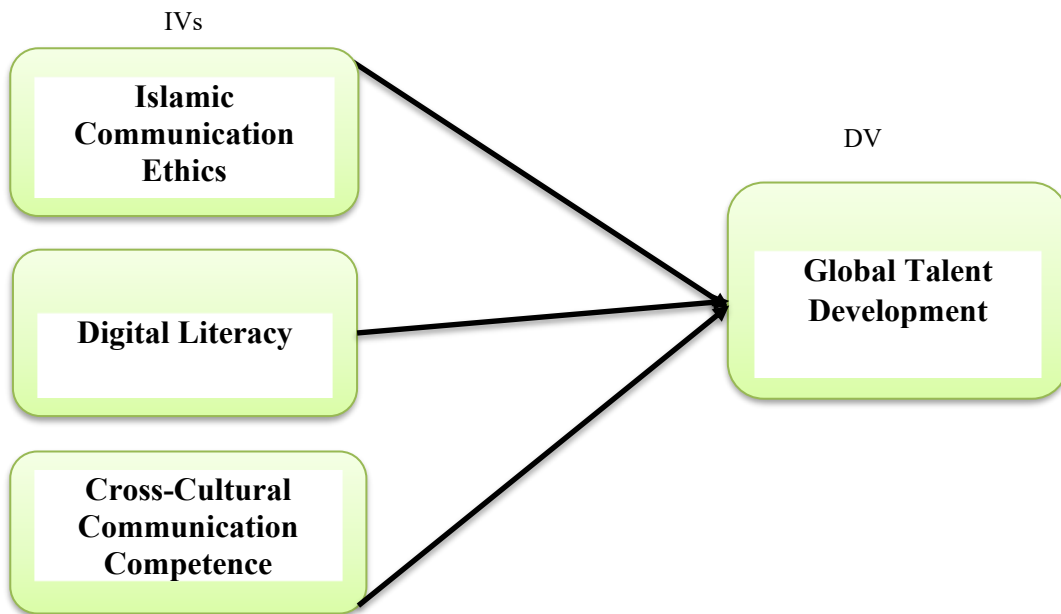
In applying SLT to the process of global talent development, it becomes clear that talent is not simply born, but socially and behaviourally shaped over time. As such, environments that encourage ethical behaviour, promote digital experimentation, and foster intercultural awareness will be more successful in developing globally competent individuals. Therefore, the theory provides a foundation for academic inquiry and a practical roadmap for designing interventions that support ethical, digital, and culturally fluent talent across

industries.

Research Framework

The relationship between independent variables (IVs) and dependent variable (DV), are depicted in the research framework for this study.

IVs

Islamic Communication Ethics

Digital Literacy

Cross-Cultural Communication Competence

DV

Global Talent Development

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between Islamic communication ethics, digital literacy, and cross-cultural communication competence on global talent development in the digital era. The study was carried out in two countries, Nigeria and Malaysia. The target population comprised young adults aged between 18 and 35, including final-year university students, and early-career professionals. These individuals were selected because they represent a vital segment of the future global workforce and are increasingly immersed in digital communication environments. Different sampling locations were used in both countries to reflect local demographic and digital engagement realities. In Nigeria, samples were drawn from major urban centres with high youth populations and academic activity. In Malaysia, sampling focused on Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Penang, and Johor Bahru, which represent the country's most digitally active regions. This ensured adequate diversity and captured the true variation in digital exposure and cultural interaction across both nations. The study employed a multistage purposive and quota sampling technique to ensure representation from both countries and capture a diverse range of respondents. In the first stage, universities, tech hubs, and professional networks were identified as sampling clusters. In the second stage, quotas were set to ensure balance between the two countries, and simple random sampling was used for

the third and final stages. 500 respondents were surveyed, 250 from Nigeria and 250 from Malaysia, providing a robust sample suitable for multivariate analysis.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, distributed physically and digitally through online forms shared on social media and professional platforms (See Appendix). The questionnaire consisted of five sections: demographic profile, Islamic communication ethics, digital literacy, cross-cultural communication competence, and global talent development. Each variable was measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Items were adapted from validated instruments in prior studies (Munajat et al., 2024; Rožman et al., 2023; Sharma et al., 2016), with cultural contextualisation to ensure relevance in Nigeria and Malaysia. A pilot test was conducted with 40 respondents (20 from each country) to ensure reliability and validity. Feedback led to minor revisions in wording and item clarity. Internal consistency of each scale was verified using Cronbach's Alpha, all of which exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, as Hair Jr et al. (2021) recommended. Content and face validity were also ensured through expert review by communication scholars in both countries. Data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) through SmartPLS 4.0 software. All ethical procedures were followed. Participation was voluntary, anonymity was assured, and informed consent was obtained.

Result

Five hundred valid responses were collected from participants in Nigeria and Malaysia. The sample was equally distributed, with 250 respondents from Nigeria and 250 from Malaysia. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 500)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Country	Nigeria	250	50.0
	Malaysia	250	50.0
Gender	Male	260	52.0
	Female	240	48.0
Age	18–24	210	42.0
	25–29	180	36.0
	30–35	110	22.0
Education	Bachelor's Degree	270	54.0
	Master's Degree	140	28.0
	Diploma/Other	90	18.0

Employment	Student	230	46.0
	Early-career Professional	180	36.0
	Entrepreneur	90	18.0

The demographic profile reveals a balanced representation between the two countries in study, with an equal number of participants from Nigeria and Malaysia (50% each). The gender distribution shows a near-equal split between male respondents (52%) and female respondents (48%), ensuring diversity in perspectives. Regarding age, majority of the respondents (42%) were between 18 and 24 years old, representing a significant portion of digitally active university students and fresh graduates. Another 36% were in the 25–29 age bracket, while 22% were between 30 and 35 years, largely comprising early-career professionals.

Educationally, most respondents (54%) held a bachelor's degree, 28% possessed a master's degree, and 18% reported holding either a diploma or other qualifications. This aligns with the study's focus on young, educated individuals likely to participate in global talent development programmes. Regarding employment status, 46% of respondents were full-time students, 36% were early-career professionals, and 18% were entrepreneurs. This distribution reflects the target population's mix of individuals preparing for or actively engaging in global work opportunities, particularly in digitally oriented careers. These demographics validate the appropriateness of the sample for analysing the role of Islamic communication ethics, digital literacy, and cross-cultural communication competence in shaping global talent development in the digital era.

Common Method Bias

The findings of a principal component analysis using the conventional technique are shown in Table 1. Five components with eigenvalues higher than 0.9 were retrieved by the study. 35.431% of the variation was explained by the first component, which was less than the 50% criterion usually used to signify simple common method bias (Garba et al., 2022; Podsakoff et al., 2003). All five components combined accounted for 55.919% of the total variation. With the first component accounting for 35.431% of the variation, the volatility was more evenly divided throughout the components following rotation. Since no one factor explained the bulk of the variance, this distribution indicated that common method bias was not a significant problem in this study.

Table 1: Common Method Bias

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	27.636	35.431	35.431	27.636	35.431	35.431
2	7.278	9.330	44.761	7.278	9.330	44.761

3	3.572	4.580	49.341	3.572	4.580	49.341
4	2.812	3.606	52.946	2.812	3.606	52.946
5	2.319	2.973	55.919	2.319	2.973	55.919

Measurement Model

The measurement model establishes the quality and validity of the constructs. Its primary role is assessing how well the observed variables represent the unobservable latent variables (constructs) before examining the relationships between them. Thus, this study's measurement model was assessed through convergent and discriminant validity.

The results presented in Table 2 demonstrate that all constructs in the study meet the recommended thresholds for reliability and validity, confirming the robustness of the measurement model. The Cronbach's alpha values for the four constructs, Cross-Cultural Communication Competence (0.846), Digital Literacy (0.842), Global Talent Development (0.852), and Islamic Communication Ethics (0.911) are all well above the minimum acceptable level of 0.70. These results indicate that the items within each construct are internally consistent and measure their intended concepts reliably. Similarly, the composite reliability (ρc) values, which range from 0.885 to 0.930, further reinforce the high reliability of the constructs, demonstrating that the indicators have strong shared variance and provide accurate measurement.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs also exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50, confirming that the constructs exhibit adequate convergent validity. Cross-Cultural Communication Competence has an AVE of 0.569, Digital Literacy 0.615, Global Talent Development 0.693, and Islamic Communication Ethics 0.654. These results indicate that more than half of the variance in the indicators for each construct is explained by the latent variable itself, reducing the likelihood of measurement error and confirming the constructs' validity within the research model.

Table 2: Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Cross-Cultural Communication Competence	0.846	0.878	0.885	0.569
Digital Literacy	0.842	0.869	0.888	0.615
Global Talent Development	0.852	0.856	0.900	0.693
Islamic Communication Ethics	0.911	0.916	0.930	0.654

The results of the discriminant validity test using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, presented in Table 3, confirmed that each construct in the study is distinct from the others. According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct, which appears on the diagonal of the matrix, should be higher than the correlations between that construct and all other constructs. The diagonal values for Cross-Cultural Communication Competence (0.754), Digital Literacy (0.784), Global Talent Development (0.833), and Islamic Communication Ethics (0.809) are all greater than the off-diagonal correlation values in their respective rows and columns. This indicates that each construct shares more variance with its indicators than with the indicators of any other construct, thereby satisfying the requirement for discriminant validity.

For example, the correlation between Cross-Cultural Communication Competence and Digital Literacy is 0.585, lower than their respective square root AVE values of 0.754 and 0.784. Similarly, Global Talent Development correlates strongly with Cross-Cultural Communication Competence (0.847) but remains distinct, as its square root AVE value (0.833) is higher than its correlations with other constructs. Likewise, Islamic Communication Ethics, despite its relatively strong correlations with Digital Literacy (0.791) and Cross-Cultural Communication Competence (0.683), demonstrates adequate discriminant validity because its square root AVE (0.809) is greater than these correlations. These findings confirmed that the constructs are conceptually distinct, meaning they had no problematic overlap.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity – Fornell- Larcker Criterion

Constructs	Cross-Cultural Communication Competence	Digital Literacy	Global Talent Development	Islamic Communication Ethics
Cross-Cultural Communication Competence	0.754			
Digital Literacy	0.585	0.784		
Global Talent Development	0.847	0.462	0.833	
Islamic Communication Ethics	0.683	0.791	0.584	0.809

The cross-loadings presented in Table 4 provide another important test of discriminant validity in the measurement model. For discriminant validity to be established, the loading of each indicator on its associated construct should be higher than its loadings on other constructs.

An examination of the table shows that each item generally loads highest on its intended construct. For instance, the indicators of Cross-Cultural Communication Competence (CCC), such as CCC3 (0.770), CCC4

(0.827), CCC5 (0.857), and CCC6 (0.838), load more strongly on their corresponding construct than on Digital Literacy, Global Talent Development, or Islamic Communication Ethics. Similarly, the Digital Literacy items (DL1 = 0.869, DL2 = 0.823, DL3 = 0.830) show stronger loadings on their construct than on the others, reinforcing their distinctiveness.

Global Talent Development (GTD) indicators follow the same pattern, with GTD1 (0.874), GTD2 (0.827), GTD3 (0.829), and GTD4 (0.798) all loading most strongly on their construct compared to the other variables. The same trend is observed for Islamic Communication Ethics (ICE), where items such as ICE2 (0.859), ICE3 (0.863), and ICE7 (0.837) clearly load highest on their intended construct, confirming construct uniqueness. These findings align with the Fornell-Larcker criterion and further confirm that the constructs exhibit sufficient discriminant validity for subsequent structural model testing.

Table 4 Discriminants Validity - Cross Loadings

	Cross-Cultural Communication Competence	Digital Literacy	Global Talent Development	Islamic Communication Ethics
CCC1	0.554	0.502	0.373	0.497
CCC2	0.626	0.508	0.463	0.551
CCC3	0.770	0.359	0.649	0.489
CCC4	0.827	0.422	0.694	0.515
CCC5	0.857	0.537	0.726	0.610
CCC6	0.838	0.421	0.801	0.499
DL1	0.517	0.869	0.443	0.726
DL2	0.494	0.823	0.365	0.680
DL3	0.478	0.830	0.409	0.644
DL4	0.363	0.712	0.270	0.513
DL5	0.424	0.667	0.284	0.497
GTD1	0.761	0.429	0.874	0.508
GTD2	0.691	0.343	0.827	0.445
GTD3	0.713	0.399	0.829	0.548
GTD4	0.651	0.365	0.798	0.438
ICE1	0.542	0.482	0.484	0.754
ICE2	0.573	0.616	0.478	0.859
ICE3	0.618	0.651	0.542	0.863
ICE4	0.478	0.549	0.433	0.796
ICE5	0.531	0.701	0.410	0.784
ICE6	0.503	0.724	0.424	0.760
ICE7	0.604	0.765	0.509	0.837

Structural Model

Once the reliability and validity of the measurement model have been established, the focus shifts to the structural model, or the inner model. This model examines the hypothesised relationships between the latent
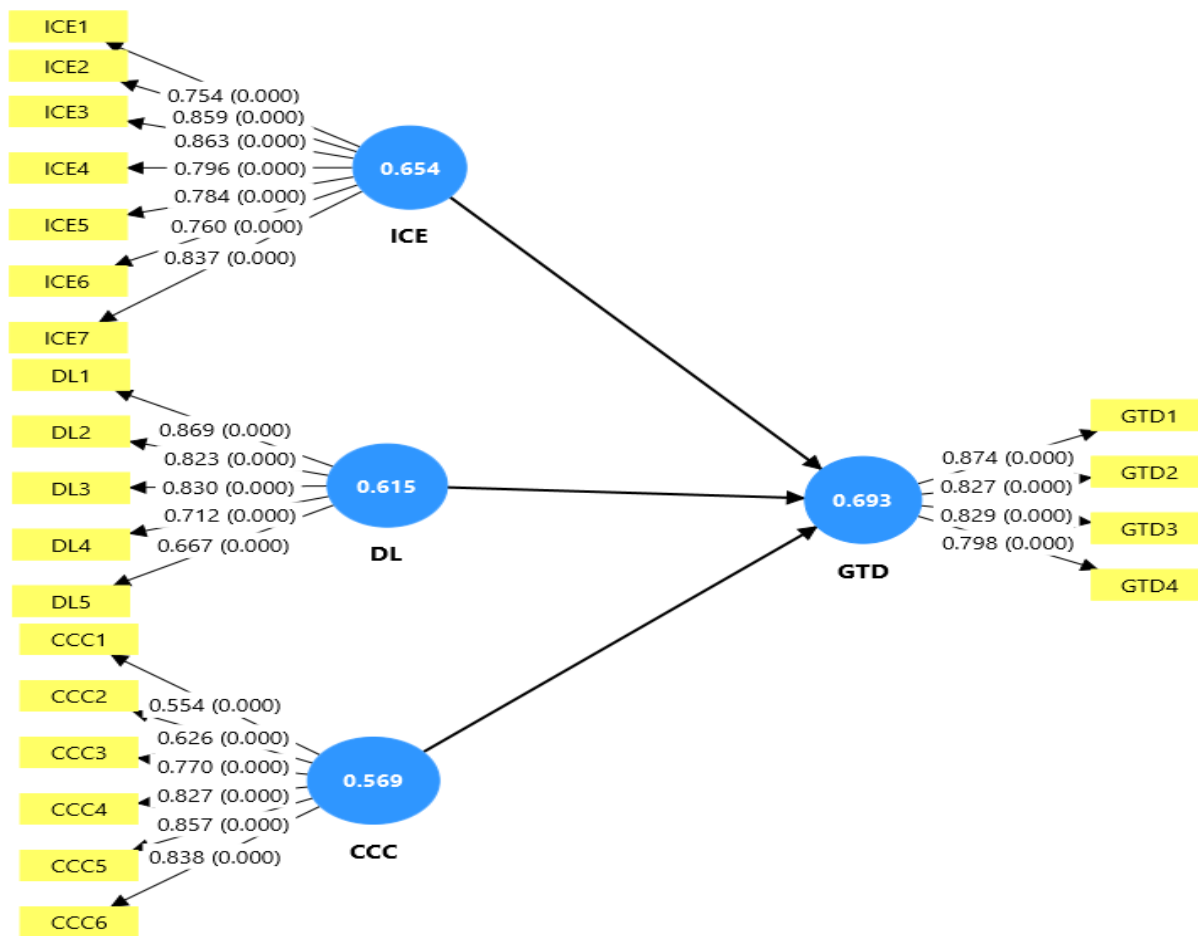
variables themselves

Figure 2: Graphical Output

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis results in Table 5 provide insights into the structural relationships between the independent variables, Cross-Cultural Communication Competence (CCCC), Digital Literacy (DL), and Islamic Communication Ethics (ICE) and the dependent variable, Global Talent Development (GTD).

MGA was conducted to examine whether path coefficients differed significantly between respondents from Nigeria and Malaysia. The results show no statistically significant difference between the two countries for any of the three predictor variables ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that the influence of Islamic Communication Ethics, Digital Literacy, and Cross-Cultural Communication Competence on Global Talent Development operates similarly across both national contexts. This significant relationship indicates that CCCC is the strongest predictor of GTD in this study. The result implies that individuals with higher levels of intercultural communication competence are much better equipped to function effectively in diverse, global workplaces, which supports the importance of cultural adaptability in talent development. This finding aligns with previous

studies that emphasise the role of intercultural skills in enhancing employability, teamwork, and leadership in globalised environments.

Digital Literacy also significantly but negatively affects Global Talent Development (β = -0.099, t = 2.599, p = 0.009). This result is counterintuitive, as digital literacy is typically expected to positively influence talent development. Digital literacy alone does not automatically translate into enhanced talent development, suggesting the need for a more integrated skill set beyond digital competence, this negative relationship may indicate that individuals with high digital literacy but weaker interpersonal or cultural skills may rely excessively on technology, reducing their ability to engage in diverse, human-centred professional contexts effectively.

Islamic Communication Ethics, on the other hand, has a positive but statistically insignificant effect on Global Talent Development (β = 0.082, t = 1.617, p = 0.106). While the direction of the relationship suggests that ethical communication practices rooted in Islamic principles may contribute to talent development, the lack of statistical significance implies that this effect is not strong enough in the current model. This could be due to the possibility that the influence of Islamic ethics is indirect, potentially mediated through other variables such as workplace culture or leadership practices, rather than directly impacting talent development. Therefore, H1 is rejected because Islamic Communication Ethics did not significantly predict GTD (p = 0.106). H2 is rejected because Digital Literacy negatively and significantly predicted GTD. Lastly, H3 is supported.

Table 5: Path Coefficients

Construct	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Cross-Cultural Comm. Competence -> Global Talent Development.	0.849	0.848	0.038	22.154	0.000
Digital Literacy -> Global Talent Development.	-0.099	-0.097	0.038	2.599	0.009
Islamic Comm. Ethics -> Global Talent Development.	0.082	0.083	0.051	1.617	0.106

Discussion

The findings of this study provide significant insights into the role of Islamic Communication Ethics, Digital Literacy, and Cross-Cultural Communication Competence in shaping Global Talent Development in Nigeria

and Malaysia. The high explanatory power of the model ($R^2 = 0.78$) confirms that these three variables collectively serve as important determinants of talent development in the digital era. However, the strength and direction of each path coefficient reveal unique patterns that require careful interpretation.

The most notable result is the strong, positive, and statistically significant effect of Cross-Cultural Communication Competence ($\beta = 0.849$, $p < 0.001$) on Global Talent Development. This underscores the importance of intercultural adaptability in preparing individuals for participation in a globalised workforce. In increasingly diverse and virtual work environments, professionals who can navigate cultural differences effectively are better positioned to collaborate, resolve conflicts, and build strong professional relationships. This finding aligns with Caligiuri (2023) assertion that intercultural communication competence is key in promoting organisational effectiveness and talent mobility. For Nigeria and Malaysia, where cultural diversity is a social reality, investing in cross-cultural communication training within higher education and workplace programmes could enhance the employability and global competitiveness of the workforce.

Interestingly, Digital Literacy was found to have a statistically significant but negative relationship with Global Talent Development ($\beta = -0.099$, $p = 0.009$). While this finding contradicts the conventional view that digital skills universally enhance talent development, it may reflect a context-specific phenomenon. One plausible explanation is that digital literacy, when developed in isolation from soft skills such as intercultural competence, could lead to over-reliance on technology and reduced human-centred collaboration. Another interpretation is that individuals with higher digital literacy might focus more on technical tasks than on broader talent development opportunities that require interpersonal and cultural engagement. This suggests the need for integrated training programmes that combine technical proficiency with social and cultural competencies to ensure well-rounded professional growth.

In contrast, Islamic Communication Ethics exhibited a positive but statistically insignificant effect on Global Talent Development ($\beta = 0.082$, $p = 0.106$). While ethical values rooted in Islamic principles such as honesty, respect, and justice are vital for building trust and credibility in professional interactions, their influence may not directly translate into measurable talent development outcomes. Instead, their impact might be mediated by other variables, such as organisational culture or leadership practices. This implies that while ethical Communication is important for maintaining professional integrity and harmony in diverse workplaces, it may need to be combined with other factors to influence talent development significantly.

These findings emphasise that while technical skills are necessary in the digital era, they are insufficient to drive global talent development. Cultural adaptability and communication competence remain central to preparing individuals for global opportunities, while ethical principles serve as a complementary foundation

that may require further institutional support to exert a measurable effect.

These results have practical implications for universities, organisations, and policymakers in Nigeria and Malaysia. There is a need for comprehensive talent development strategies that integrate intercultural communication training, digital skills development, and ethical awareness programmes. Such a holistic approach could equip individuals to thrive in digital, multicultural, and ethically complex global work environments.

In Nigeria, agencies such as NITDA, NOTAP, and the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy can use these findings to strengthen digital talent programmes. In Malaysia, MDEC, TalentCorp, and the Ministry of Higher Education can integrate cross-cultural competence modules into digital upskilling programmes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the role of Islamic Communication Ethics, Digital Literacy, and Cross-Cultural Communication Competence in shaping Global Talent Development in Nigeria and Malaysia within the context of the digital era. The analysis results, using SEM-PLS, revealed that cross-cultural communication competence is the most significant and positive predictor of talent development, emphasising the importance of cultural adaptability and effective interpersonal skills in preparing individuals for participation in the global workforce. This finding reinforces the idea that communicating across cultural boundaries is essential for career growth and organisational success in an increasingly interconnected world.

The study also found that while digital literacy is a critical skill in the modern workplace, it has a small but negative relationship with global talent development. This unexpected result suggests that when developed in isolation, technical proficiency may not directly translate into talent growth and should instead be integrated with soft skills training to produce more holistic and adaptable professionals. Meanwhile, Islamic Communication Ethics, although positive in direction, was not statistically significant, indicating that its influence may be more indirect, possibly operating through organisational culture or leadership practices rather than as a direct driver of talent development.

These findings collectively highlight the need for a more integrated approach to global talent development that combines technical skills, cultural competence, and ethical principles. This means rethinking how universities, organisations, and policymakers design talent development programmes for Nigeria and Malaysia. Greater emphasis must be placed on cross-cultural communication training and ethics-based professional development while aligning digital literacy programmes with real-world workplace demands.

Based on the study's findings, several practical recommendations are proposed for universities, organisations, and policymakers in Nigeria and Malaysia to enhance global talent development in the digital era.

1. There is a critical need to integrate cross-cultural communication training into higher education curricula and workplace learning programmes. Since the results indicate that Cross-Cultural Communication Competence is the strongest predictor of global talent development, universities and professional training institutions should introduce courses and workshops focusing on intercultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, and communication adaptability. Such training can help students and professionals develop the skills needed to collaborate effectively in diverse, multicultural environments, both locally and globally.

2. Digital literacy programmes must be redesigned to align with holistic talent development. Although digital literacy is essential for modern careers, its negative relationship with global talent development suggests that technology skills alone may not be sufficient. Universities and organisations should embed digital literacy training within broader talent development frameworks, including teamwork, problem-solving, and cross-cultural engagement.

3. There is a need to promote Islamic communication ethics as part of professional development programmes, particularly in contexts where Islamic values play a significant cultural and social role. Although Islamic Communication Ethics showed an insignificant direct effect, it remains an essential moral foundation for trust-building and ethical conduct in professional settings. Organisations should implement ethics-focused training modules that draw from universally shared principles such as honesty, fairness, and respect while contextualising them within Islamic ethical frameworks where relevant.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS FOR VARIABLES

Islamic Communication Ethics (ICE)	
CODE	**ITEM**
ICE1	I always communicate truthfully and avoid exaggeration in digital or face-to-face interactions.
ICE2	I consider honesty (*sidq*) and trust (*amanah*) as central to my communication behaviour.
ICE3	I respect others' dignity (*ikram*) regardless of their religion, gender, or cultural background.
ICE4	I avoid gossiping (*ghibah*) or spreading unverified information online.
ICE5	I am patient (*sabr*) and fair (*adl*) when responding to criticism or disagreement.
ICE6	I feel morally accountable to God for the way I communicate with others.
ICE7	My communication is guided by justice, empathy, and respect.
Digital Literacy (DL)	
DL1	I can find and evaluate information effectively using digital tools.
DL2	I can use various digital platforms (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet, Teams) for learning or work.
DL3	I am able to create and share digital content (e.g., presentations, reports, videos).
DL4	I understand basic principles of cybersecurity and online privacy.
DL5	I use digital media responsibly and ethically.
Cross-Cultural Communication Competence (CCCC)	
CCCC1	I adapt my communication style to fit people from different cultures.
CCCC2	I respect cultural differences in communication behaviours.
CCCC3	I can effectively interact with people who have different cultural or religious backgrounds.
CCCC4	I am comfortable working in teams made up of people from various cultural backgrounds.
CCCC5	I try to understand the values and traditions of others during communication.
CCCC6	I remain calm and patient when cultural misunderstandings occur.

Global Talent Development (GTD)	
GTD1	I actively seek opportunities for personal and professional growth.
GTD2	My education and experiences have prepared me for global career opportunities.
GTD3	I can apply ethical and cultural principles in a global workplace.
GTD4	I feel confident in my ability to compete globally in my field.