

The Impact Of Islamic Leadership On Employee Performance. An Investigation Through Conflict Management And Perceived Organizational Justice In The Heis Of Pakistan

Muhammad Aslam^{1*}, Dr Faisal Mahmood²

Abstract:

Background: *Islamic leadership, defined by the values of justice, consultation and ethical behavior, has received widespread attention as a potential model suitable for cultural and religious orientated countries, especially the Pakistan. Nevertheless, the relationship, Islamic leadership and employee performance has received little research attention especially in HEIs. Previous research studies point to the ¹fact that conflict management and perceived organizational justice are important factors that contribute to improved staff performance. This research fills this void by assessing the moderating role of perceived organizational justice on the Islamic Leadership and employee performance relationship while examining the mediating role of conflict management in the context of Pakistani HEIs.*

Objective: *The present research focuses on examining the moderating role of Islamic leadership in predicting employees' performance through conflicts resolution approach, and perceived workplace justice at HEIs located in Pakistan.*

Methods: *A quantitative research design was used and questionnaires were used to assess Islamic leadership, conflict managing style, perceived organizational justice and employee's performance. Participants were 568 employees in different positions of HEI in Pakistan selected through probability-sampling method. SEM was used in the analysis with an aim of assessing the inter-relationships between the variables.*

Key Findings: *The findings of the study suggest that leadership sharing Islamic values has a positive and significant relationship with the performance level of the employees besides being moderated by conflict solving style including problem solving, accommodating and compromising. The perceived organizational justice thus enhances the connection involving conflict management and the employee performance. In Islamic leadership, there is the promotion of fairness, justice and ethical standards in the workplace, which result into harmony.*

Conclusions: *Islamic leadership has a significant and direct relationship with the job performance of the employees and that is because it helps in manage conflicts effectively and*

*¹PhD Scholar, Department of Management Sciences, Alhamd Islamic University Islamabad
Email: muhaslamg@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Department of Management Sciences, Alhamd Islamic University Islamabad, Email: dr.faisal@aiu.edu.pk
Corresponding Author: Muhammad Aslam, PhD Scholar, Department of Management Sciences, Alhamd Islamic University Islamabad, Email: muhaslamg@gmail.com

guaranteeing organizational justice. According to the studies it is recommended that leaders in HEIs should adopt more Islamic leadership principles to ensure that the human resource is motivated, conflicts are minimized and overall organizational performance is increased. To future researchers one should examine the cross-cultural implementations of Islamic leadership in other industries.

Keywords: *Religious leadership, Human work productivity, Dispute resolution, Fairness at work, Universities and Colleges, Pakistan.*²

Introduction

Leadership based on Islam and principles of justice, consultation and ethics has been regarded more and more as a positive factor that can improve the effectiveness of employees in Muslim countries (Rashid et al., p. 2023). However, the link between Islamic leadership and employee performance is well researched and has not been effectively investigated in Pakistan's HEIs. Despite the fact that organizational leadership has been explored for decades, mostly in Western context, the application of Islamic leadership to enhance conflict management and perceived organizational justice as a couple of the vital determinants influencing organizational performance in KSA has been paid inadequate attention (Khan & Ahmed, 2023). Prior studies show that those participating employees who believe that a specific organizational justice level and proper conflict handling is possible will be more motivated as well as perform better (Malik & Tariq, 2022). This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by exploring in details how Islamic leadership affects employee performance through the mediating role of conflict management and the moderating role of perceived organizational justice in HEIs. As the number of people seeking leadership models in line with cultural and religious standards rises in Pakistan, this understanding is vital for the improvement of employees' performance (Zaman & Noor, 2023). For effective organizational performance, smooth working conditions are expected out of the employees of the organizations. Conflict and emotional stress are one of the main characteristics of the organization environment where people, groups and organizations interact. Disputes that are experienced in a workplace may have negative effects on people and systems in the workplace. They found out that conflicts lower the operation efficiency of employees through derailing them from their duties (Kundi et al., 2022). When conflicts at the workplace are not well addressed they may be worse or perhaps interfere with team performance (Maddineshat et al. 2017). These conflicts affect the working relationships since they hinder communication and sharing of knowledge in organizations. Finally, chronic with and disputes intensify the levels of employee turnover that are triggered by the quest for work environments free from conflict; the organization, therefore, suffers the costs of recruiting and training new staff.

This research assesses the conflict management practice by the Islamic leadership system and its influence on the performance of employee in (HEIs) of Pakistan. By nature, Islamic leadership focuses on ethical, spiritual and moral aspects in the organizations, and this is thought to have effect on the employee behavioral intentions and performance considering prior research works on ethical and servant leadership (Joplin et al., 2021; Sarwar et al., 2021). The conflict management strategies like, obliging, avoiding, problem solving, forcing, and compromising are important in order to keep the relation healthy in workplace (De Dreu et al., 2001). Other Islamic leadership practices as justice and fairness shall also enhance the accordant strategies to improve the employees' environment (Krishnan et al., 2018).

It is important however to point out that leadership has a significant influence on challenge management and development (Rasheed et al., 2016). However, modeled leadership

frameworks may not necessarily fit the Islamic culture dominant in the country hence the need to study Islamic leadership in details (Mutalib et al., 2022). Leadership based on the principles of Islam, associated with the wisest of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) make leaders create and promote organizational values for performance improvement such as Taqwa, honesty, and respect for employees (Mahazan et al. , 2015; Ahmad, 2009). However, the role of leadership in the Islamic context especially in the Muslim majority country like Pakistan has received minimal research attention, especially in relation to conflict resolution and employee productivity in HEIs.

This present research seeks to fill this gap by investigating the impact of Islamic leadership on conflict resolution mechanisms and employee performance with perceived organizational justice as the mediating variable (Bhatti et al., 2015). A review of past research indicates that organizational justice plays a moderating role in the leadership outcomes in the workplace which also argues for a paradigmatic assessment of the various factors (Oh, 2019). Hence, this study aims at improving the knowledge on the moderating effect of perceived organizational justice on the relationship between Islamic leadership and conflict management as well as the relationship between Islamic leadership and employee performance within the HEI sector.

Literature Review:

Islamic Leadership

In this context, both leadership and religion do impact the societies, organizations and the people in different ways. The term leadership is derived from the word “lead” and means management or steering (Bolden, 2004) especially in organizations and this is the process whereby individuals offer direction to others in search of shared objectives (Sadler, 2003). Managers and other leaders in any organization are also concerned not only with achieving organizational goals and objectives but are also concerned with the growth of the employee in terms of performance and job satisfaction (Kamel & Kahn, 2022). Choosing the right leadership styles is very important as it play important role to productivity and decision making in organizations (Al Khajeh, 2018). Religions have a crucial role as to how leadership is practiced and what ethical principles underpins leadership. According to the statistics, more than 84% of the world’s population is religious thus religious beliefs are significant driving forces of personality and behavior, as well as leadership tendencies (Zickuhr & Madden, 2012). This means that leaders’ religiosity can influence the ways that they operationalize and decide (Pekerti & Sendjaya, 2010). The society that is under study practices both Islamic and Christian religions and their leadership approaches can be considered as reflecting different levels of collectivism and individualism (Ayyash-Abdo, 2001).The Islamic leadership drawn from the Quran and sunnah reflects the virtues which include; honesty, justice and patience as advocated by Nasiruddin (2011). It is regarded as religious obligation where the deed is in accordance with religious and ethical values (Ali, 2009). Justice is also an important attribute of leadership in Islam because leaders are supposed to selflessly be fair, for greater part hold common vision and call on their followers through consultation and optimistic modesty (Beekun, 2012). Islamic prophet Muhammad (SAW) on two different occasions underlined the idea of justice as one of the qualities that is important for the leaders to possess in order to be fair in both dealing with others and in decision making (Faris & Abdalla, 2017). This concept is linked with the overall understanding of the Islamic ethics of leadership with the focus on both secular activities and spiritual spheres.

The Islamic leadership comprises of rational competence as a vicegerent of Allah with emotional and spiritual disposition as a servant of Allah, with both spiritual and rational consciousness (Husti & Mahyarni, 2019). This model of leadership is believed to yield high levels of ethics and in turn, depict success, joy and peace to the follower’s as well as the

organizations (Saeed et al., 2014). Islamic leadership theory believes that the act of managing ethically leads to organizational development and have positive effects towards followers since it increases their level of satisfaction, motivation, performance and organizational commitment (Daud et al., 2014; Iqbal et al., 2020). Ribier and Rajagopalan state that spiritual values help enhance the organizational performance (Ahmed et al., 2021), while Hassan et al. (2022) note that workplace spirituality determines public service motivation.

A literature review also shows that although the theoretical relations between Islamic leadership and post-employee performance are easily articulated, there is a deficit of growth in the research studies. It is evident that some research confirmed that Islamic ethics have a positive effect on the employee performance either through the work morale and ethics as well as motivation (Aini, 2020) and Islamic leadership enhances performance through morale (Jumaing, 2017). Also, positive outcome with regards to innovation and competitive advantage of small business was found (Husti & Mahyarni, 2019); leadership grounded on the tenets of sharia boosts the performance of a team (Zaim et al., 2021). But more research investigations are needed to support these relationships since the findings are based on a sample study.

Conflict Management Style

Disputes are a part of people's interactions' course, whether intrapersonal or interpersonal (Prasetya, 2022; Theaker, 2020). Conflict is normally viewed in a negative manner and is thought to disrupt and even threaten unity within any organization (Pammer & Killian, 2019; Shockley et al., 2017). Nevertheless, contemporary approaches suggest that conflict can and should be dealt with constructively, meaning that an organization should make conflict beneficial turning a weakness into strength as it turned out from Rahim's (2015) research. Conflict is not wanted in Islam but should be solved non-violently and where information and understanding is used as weapons and no harm is caused (Bashori, 2018).

Conflict management in the workplace is an important leadership factor that may relate to the leader and the subordinates or different groups at the workplace (Rothermel & LaMarsh, 2012). Integration of conflicts can turn conflicts into flights that generate harmony and creativity and hence a leader is mainly judged by his/her ability to turn conflicts into positive actions (Mikkelsen & Clegg, 2019). When conflicts are not well managed, they are likely to have detrimental effects on the performance of the involved individuals, lead to low morale and a unfavorable workplace climate (Kundi et al., 2022; Choi, 2013).

Rahim and Bonoma (1979) proposed five strategies to manage conflicts: these include competing, which involves coming up with the best strategies to deal with a given issue, using force, passive acceptance which entails tolerating the issue, minimizing its impact and negotiating which entails finding a middle ground where everyone is willing to let the issue go. The most effective approach is the problem-solving one, which is based on carrying negotiations and being searching for the win-win solution. Pressuring increases aggression while yielding fulfils the other party's concern at the cost of self (Rahim & Buntzman, 1989). Whereas, assimilating leaves conflict without solutions, and accommodating tries to find a solution to partially satisfy both parties (Folger et al., 2021). Indeed, people's beliefs including those on religious matters are vital in combating conflict. Thus, for instance, while the Christie and Cohen identified that Christians are inclined to establish the dominating mode of the conflict solution, Muslims prefer to choose the accommodating or compromising strategies (Croucher, 2011). Someone of Islamic leadership bends towards Allah (Taqwa), brings justice and sincerity in the problem-solving and fair measure in conflict resolution (Bashori, 2018). According to Wulandari (2020), it is the role of the leaders to convert the conflict into growth opportunity without compromising the undertaking of organizational goals.

Disputes can also be an initiator for creativity and innovative when addressed properly (Wulandari, 2020). Leaders must ensure they communicate with their subordinates well because Lack of proper communication in leadership creates the fuel for conflict (Min, 2017). Conflict is inevitable in any organization hence conflict management is crucial for educational leaders to ensure stability and order thus successful leadership is defined by how conflicts are resolved in a manner that fosters collaboration, creativity and advancement of the organization (Siregar et al., 2021).

Perceived Organizational Justice

Perceived Organizational Justice (POJ) is the extent to which employee feels fair to receive reward based on organizational policies and the kind of ethical treatment they receive at workplace in regards with their own development and the decision-making process (Changaranchola & Samantara, 2024). In both the public and the private domain POJ is necessary particularly in organizations that rely heavily on the use of manpower as this variable directly relates to the willingness of the employees, morale and productivity of the employees (Muhammad, 2004). When employees feel that they are being treated fairly in their workplace, they are likely to act in manners that will support the institution, and hence promote for its success (Baakile, 2011).

POJ is based on the equity theory where employees evaluate fairness of effort put in and the rewards received in reference to the getting of other employees. Over time, POJ has been categorized into the following dimensions: mean distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice and informational justice (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011). Distributive justice is concerned with the perceived equity of distribution: the share of the organizational reward such as salary and promotion (Folger and Konovsky, 1989). Procedural justice is concerned with the regularity, bias and openness of organizational decision processes which produce such outcomes (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Interactional justice means the way that people are treated during those processes, for instance, being treated respect, dignity, and in an honest manner (Bies & Moag 1986). The second category is known as informational justice meaning the extent to which information concerning the decisions and the outcomes of the business is passed to the employees (Colquitt et al., 2001).

Studies have over time shown that perceived fairness in organizations has relational worth to organizational consequences for example job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and motivation rates among the employees (McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992). This implies that when the employees perceive high levels of POJ, they are likely to trust the organization and hence increase their loyalty and performance (Tyler, 1989). On the other hand, perceived injustice result in negative effects such as reduced job satisfaction, intention to turnover, increased workplace aggression and may also lead to some level of mental health problems (Liljegren & Ekberg, 2009).

This is more so because educational institutions play a crucial role in the growth and development of human capital, and for this reason, fairness focus on the organizational policies, worker commitment and loyalty (Walumbwa et al., 2009). By treating your employees fairly, you are able to motivate them and this acts as the driving force to their behavior needed in accomplishing institutional objectives (Rokhman & Hassan, 2012). Justice is also one of the cardinal principles that the Quran advocates for in its prescription of how people should live their lives (Sears & Herriot, 2016). Hashim (2008) posited that the Islamic Human Resource Management practices including Recruitment, development and compensation have a positive effect on the Organizational Justice perception.

Combined, all the research findings depicted here demonstrate that POJ is a fundamental element that influences institutional success. When people are treated and dealt with fairly in outcomes, decisions they make, and how they are treated in interpersonal workplace interactions, they have trust and commitment hence high performance and well-being. On the other hand, perceived injustice leads to overall negative effects on organizational employees such as poor production, lots of conflict and negative social impact on the employees involved (Liljegren & Ekberg, 2009).

Employee Performance

EP is therefore central to success in any organization especially in today's world economy that is characterized by intense global competition. Scholars have described it as the combination of people's performance to contribution toward the organizational goals and objectives (Motowildo, 2003). Employees who are satisfied and motivated will do their best in performing their tasks hence puts an organization in a better position as compared to its competitors (Badrianto & Ekhsan, 2020). It is an established fact that leadership works majorly through interventionist means such as accountability, fostering motivation, conflict solving and participation hence impacting on organizational performance (Wang et al., 2018; watts et al., 2019).

Task performance refers to behaviors that are directly related to the work that the employee is hired to do while contextual performance refers to others' behaviors that are supportive of the organizational climate (Goodman & Svyantek, 2020). For instance, in relation to the concept of nurse performance, the areas that are embraced include; patients' care, collaboration, and work quality (Solehudin et al., 2022).

Shermantine and Wang's (2012) study establishes that fairness in leadership enhances performance by creating clear policies which makes the employee feel valued and wanted at the workplace (Paracha et al., 2012). Leadership style, perceived fairness has been identified as important factors that have a strong impact on performance, indicating those successful organizations get better output from the employees through such factors (Wen et al., 2019).

This means that organizations that are focused on the performance of its employees are likely to realize improved productivity, and improved result. Productivity is measured on the production rate, the quality of work produced, time and punctuality, and cooperation (Mathis & Jackson, 2002). In the end, the motivated employees working to the highest possible capacity are key to organizations' success in the today's world business environment.

HEIs are very important for the overall growth and development of the country as it offers higher education and ensures supply of skilled workforce. These being affiliated to the Higher Education Commission (HEC), performance management system is used to direct key decisions on promotions, compensation and training. In fact, the HEIs productivity in Pakistan hardly improves due to centralized structure and administrative impediments reducing flexibility. Leadership is seen to be central to organizational success since great leaders motivate staff towards organizational objectives using different leadership approaches including, transactional and transformational leadership. Being able to assess the overall opinions of the employees supports fair and balanced leadership to improve the motivation, credibility and performance within the institution to enable the formulation of organization-centered leadership models that addresses specific environment and objectives (Rehman et al., 2015; Bakar & Mahmood, 2013).

Hypotheses Development

The hypotheses in the research model which is presented in Chapter Three were derived from theoretical and logical considerations, the findings of previous studies and an awareness of the relevant environment in which the investigation was carried out.

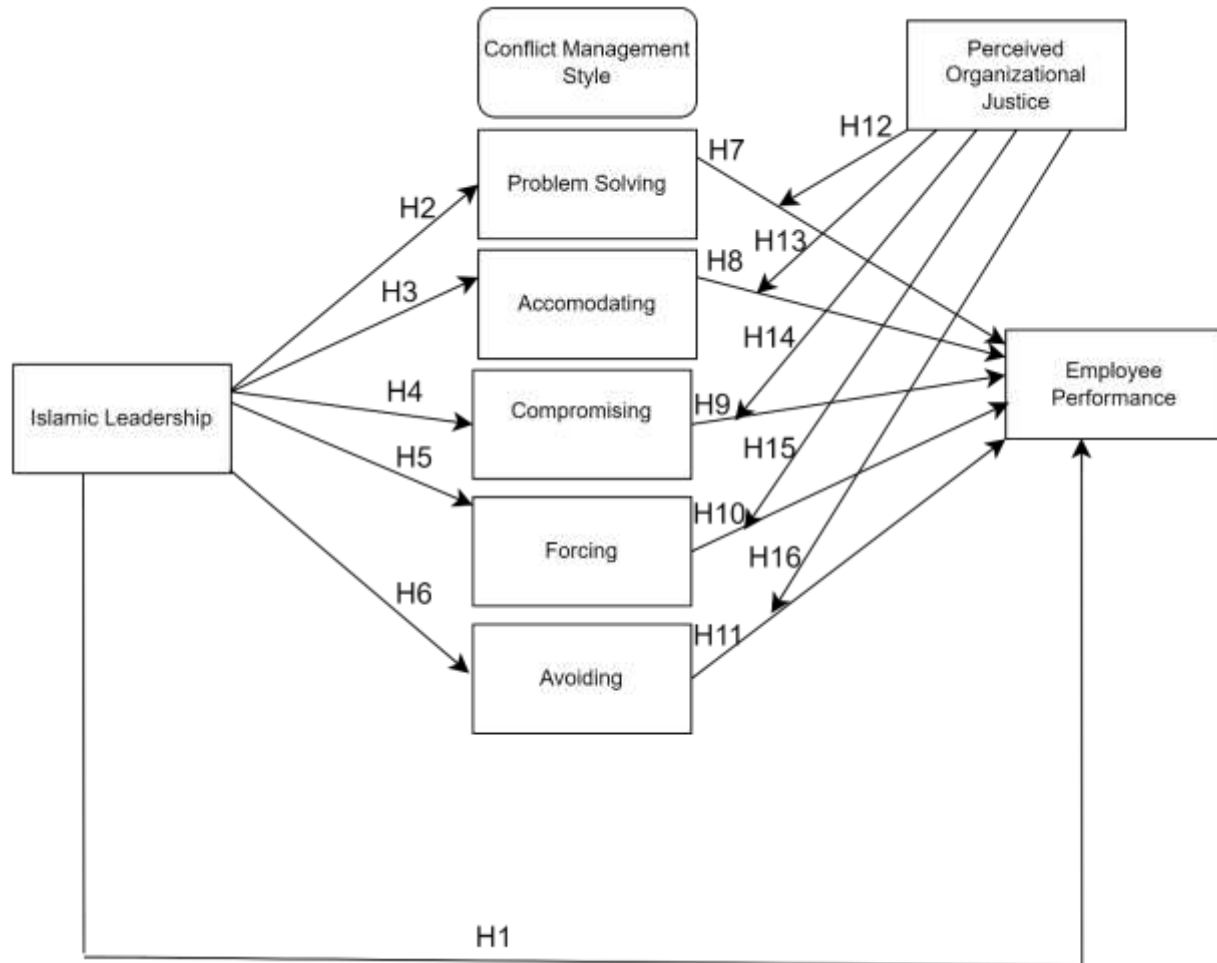


Figure1: Proposed Research Model

Islamic Leadership and Employee Performance:

Islamic leadership, based on ethical spiritual and moral practice improves the employees' attitude and performance. Subsequently, leadership in accordance with the Islamic faith, Taqwa, and Ihsan on the employees' motivation, spirituality, and work performance have been improved by Afsar et al., (2016) and Hakim (2015). This kind of leadership shares some values with servant and ethical leadership and develop a favorable organizational climate where employees are urged to practice. The successful Islamic values that a leader person displays and imprints on him or herself enhances the performance of the employees by instilling strong culture of regular interpersonal communication (Rahman & Mas'ud, 2022). Therefore, there is a positive relationship between Islamic leadership practices and better results from the employees.

H1: Islamic Leadership is positively associated with employee performance.

Islamic Leadership and Conflict Management Strategies

It is theoretical because Islamic leadership, which is rooted in spiritual and moral capacity, can predict conflict management styles oriented on proposing the fairly-wins solutions. The culture values of intention (Niyya), mindfulness of Allah (Taqwa), kindness (Ihsan), justice (Adl), and patience (Sabr) push leaders to use the conflict-solving styles that are sensible, yielding, and conciliatory. These approaches ensure that everyone involved has a fair chance to be heard while paying much attention to the common-good perspective as opposed to the self-serving mentality (Burton et al., 2014). On the other hand, such Islamic leaders' characteristics like trust (Ammanah), truthfulness (Siddiq), self-discipline (Itqan), sincerity (Ikhlas) and consultation (Shura) are least likely to match forcing or avoiding conflict management tactics which are based solely on self-gain and no regard to the others' needs (Saeed et al., 2014). Even though the two approaches maintain significant differences they include justice which ensures fairness in both of the approaches. They found out that Islamic leadership has similarities with transformational, transactional and particularly servant leadership in that they all encourage employee voice, participation and fairness. It is argued that transformative leadership predicts problem solving and compromising conflict management behaviors and thus show a positive relationship between Islamic leadership and Interpersonal conflict resolution (Saeed et al., 2014).

H2: Islamic Leadership has a positive relationship on the Problem-Solving conflict management style.

H3: There is positive correlation between Islamic Leadership and Accommodating conflict management style.

H4: Islamic Leadership has a positive relationship to the compromising conflict management style.

H5: Islamic Leadership has an Inverse relationship with Forcing conflict management style.

H6: There is an inverse relationship between Islamic Leadership and Avoiding conflict management style.

Mediating Role of Conflict Management Strategies:

The idea that conflict management strategies can be said to moderate the relationship between Islamic Leadership and Employee Performance may arise from the knowledge of the way in which Islamic Leadership impacts performance. One can therefore conclude that proper conflict management forms part of the leadership styles which can influence employee performance in a positive way. Conflict management styles have been investigated as the moderating variables in many research (Chan et al., 2008; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015). As suggested by the hypotheses of the present study, conflict management styles are also documented in the prior literature and conflict management styles have already been examined as the mediator in predicting the employee performance (Aqqad et al., 2019; Noermijati et al., 2019). In the same regard, conflict management styles are significant moderators when leadership styles serve as the independent variable in a phenomenon (B. Hussein et al., 2022; Riaza et al., 2020; Soieb et al., 2013). Thus, hypotheses for each conflict management style are formulated as a mediator between Islamic Leadership and Employee Performance. However, the impact of avoiding and forcing conflict management styles on the performance of the employees has remained negative based on the prior findings which establishes that these two particular styles of conflict management are inversely related to the performance of the employees (Song et al., 2006).

H7: Problem Solving conflict management style used in the organization has a significant correlation with the performance of the employees.

H7b: The kind of conflict management style that is problem solving mediates with the relationship between Islamic Leadership and the performance of the employees.

H8: Those employees, who have high level of accommodation conflict management style, represent high level of performance.

H8b: Organizational conflict management style of accommodating mediates the relationship between Islamic Leadership and the performance of the employees.

H9: Compromising conflict management style has a negative effect on employee performance.

H9b: Compromising conflict management style acts as the mediator between Islamic Leadership and employee performance.

H10: Forcing conflict management style is inversely related with the performance of the employees.

H10b: Forcing conflict management mediates the relationship between Islamic Leadership and the level of employee performance.

H11: Avoiding conflict management style has a negative relationship to the level of employee performance.

H11b: Avoiding conflict management style mediates the relationship between Islamic Leadership and Employee performance.

Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Justice

The moderating hypotheses about POJ stem from the understanding of the fact that all employees are not going to perceive the impact of conflict management in the same way. Consequently, this has led to the recommendation that while the perceived justice in an organization may boost the positive impact on employee performance due to effective conflict management which is brought about by Islamic Leadership, it may also reduce the positive impact. Organizational justice in the prior studies is found to have a direct relationship with the performance of employees (Bass & Avolio, 2000) and is also found to act as a mediator while predicting the performance of the employees (Wang et al., 2015). Here, it is hypothesized that perceived organizational justice enhances or reduces the relationship between each of the four conflict management styles and the level of performance because when the employee is presented with an optimal conflict management approach by leaders, he or she would not deem the policies and practices fair and thus his or her performance is expected to deteriorate. Likewise, if the employees get the impression that some of the conflicts have not been addressed by a deeper conflict management plan, the perception the employees have on the fairness of the policies and practices remains positive, and therefore performance improved. In fact, performance has previously been a dependent variable for which organizational justice has a moderating role between it and its antecedents (Oh, 2019). In specific, it mediates between acceptable religious practice or spirituality, which is taqwa in this study, and acceptable organizational misconduct or misbehavior, which is referred to as workplace deviance by Bhatti et al. (2015). Thus, in the context of the present work, we expect that perceived organizational justice acts as a mediator between conflict management practices and employee performance.

H12: The perceived organizational justice significantly moderates the effect of the Problem-Solving conflict management style on the performance of the employees.

H13: Organizational justice perceived affects the moderating relationship between Accommodating conflict management style and performance of the employees.

H14: There is a moderating relationship between Compromising conflict management style and performance where Perceived Organizational Justice act as the moderator role.

H15: There is a moderating relationship of perceived organizational justice between Forcing conflict management style, and employee performance.

H16: Perceived organizational justice moderating the relationship between Avoiding conflict management style and employee performance.

Research Methodology:

Research Design Thus, the present quantitative causal study investigated relationships between Islamic leadership, conflict management, and employee performance in the context of Pakistan HEIs. As this research adopted a quantitative approach, it explored the extent to which the Islamic leadership affected the chosen preferred styles of conflict management and their subsequent implications to the performance of employees. The findings assist leaders in assessing self and organizational performance in leadership presence and conflict resolution whilst providing a clear understanding of agreed performance standards. While a qualitative approach enables the exploration of subjective, clients' experiences, a quantitative design allows for generating more extensive, generalizable conclusions based on quantitative information, using statistics, recognizing patterns, and comparing the groups (Nardi, 2018).

Sampling Technique

In this particular research, probability sampling technique was deemed as most appropriate. Probability sampling technique which is also known as random sampling or representative sampling is a systematic approach in the research methodology section of any research. As per this technique, it is possible to determine the probability that is not equal to zero for each possible subject who is a member in the population of study to be selected into the sample. The likelihood of this was made using this procedure. In order to achieve this objective, the method of random sampling was adopted. Such method enables the probabilities of selection to be objectively assigned to each of the population component. Nevertheless, it is important always to remember that before one can apply any probability sampling techniques, he or she must have a very precise and clear conception of the population being investigated. There is indication that they may not be relevant for broadly defined or spatially dispersed people. For instance, if the target market is defined as "the college students", then it will imply that all the students who are in any college anywhere in the world are targeted. Once again, the use of probability sampling to select a sample in this case becomes a very herculean task due to the fact that the above-mentioned population is very large and heterogeneous to allow for effectiveness in the implementation of the probability sampling techniques. Currently there is observed increased expansion of the number of Pakistani higher education institutions that has accreditation for awarding the degree. Out of these, 257 higher education institutions in Pakistan are accredited to offer degrees as per the records of the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. Of the above, 106 are private sectors institutions. People's confidence in quality of education offered by the private sector universities is evidenced by the increasing number of universities in the private sector (Rizwan et al., 2016).

Sample Size Lack of data availability in one place also becomes a challenge to determine exact actual number of working employees at the HEIs in Pakistan. This research included both types of employees: Teaching and or non-teaching staffs. The data regarding faculties by universities are accessible on the official website of HEC but the other supporting staff statistics in the HEIs is obscure. Therefore, in the case of the current study, the criteria have been kept as any employee who has been serving for more than three months has been allowed to participate in the research as per the IWPQ instrument criteria. In addition, the criteria do not introduce any parameters of demographic or ethnicity to increase the respondents' scope. Hence, we recruited 568 participants in this study depending on previous other similar kinds of studies that provided valid results (MacCallum et al., 1999). Besides, the opinion of these renowned authors also envisaged the number selected for the present sample size of the study. For example, (Shenton & Gorsuch, 1983) stated that for operational reliability, the sample size of more than 300 is desirable. By the same token, (Comrey & Lee, 2013) have supported the fact that a sample size of 500 is adequate for factor analysis especially. Consequently, 568 patients were included in the study of which only 500 patients agreed to participate in the study.

Data Collection Instruments

Accurate existing data collection tools were used in the process of data collection. As for the remaining scales of constructs, they have been adopted “as it is,” with an exception of the Islamic leadership scale. A couple of changes have been made the questions for constructing the Islamic Leadership Scale are as follows:

Data Collection Instrument:

Table3: Instrument

Construct	Number of Items	Source
Islamic Leadership	11	Yusof (2016)
Conflict Management Style	20	Rahim (1983)
Perceived Organizational Justice	9	Edwards (2023), adapted from Colquitt et al. (2001)
Employee Performance	11	Koopmans (2015)

The data collection process ensures the usage of valid and reliable instruments with minor changes made to the instruments used for the Islamic Leadership scale while other scales used are used as they are due to validity and reliability. Islamic Leadership scale has 11 items devised by the author of this article based on a leader’s Islamic values, his or her behavior, and his or her dealings with other people. Conflict management style is determined by Rahim’s (1983) 20-item tool where five styles namely, problem-solving, accommodating, compromising, avoidant and forcing styles each has four items and the responses are on a 5-point Likert scale. Measures of perceived organizational justice are developed based on Edwards (2023) which used 9 items adapted from Colquitt et al. (2001) and consisted of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. Lastly, the measure of employee performance is the 11-item Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) that was constructed by Koopmans (2015) that seeks to provide measures on task performance, contextual performance and counterproductive work behavior. Everything is measured through a Likert scale which range from 1 to 5.

Data Collection Process

These constitute the list of instruments that was assembled to make a consolidated set of questions commonly termed as a questionnaire for obtaining the data for this study. Other than the construct questions, the self-administered questionnaire will also contain the demographic data which will be retained as a covariate. For instance, age, sex, education and experience. The use of the questionnaire was blended and directly given to the respondents. This method involved both offline and online data collection tools that used included a physical printed out questionnaire on one hand and an online Google form questionnaire that was sent to the respondents via different social media platforms on the other hand. It will not be possible that every employee working at an HEIs in Pakistan would be much techno savvy enough to complete the said questionnaire online; however, those who reasonably prefers it online to complete at their own convenient time. Based on the criteria set for the selection of participants in this research, all the public and private sector universities of Pakistan are targeted independent of their locational area, specialization and the size of the university. Data were collected in excel sheets to analyze in details using Microsoft Excel.

Data Analysis

Accordingly, there were used three tools for the purpose of analysis of the data. The data collected was entered into Microsoft Excel and all the 'Blank' responses were deleted. But this task can also be done by utilizing the SPSS version 20. 0, though MS Excel is said to be more convenient especially when it comes to arrangement of data in the business. It also important to note that Smart PLS 4 was employed in completing the structural analysis. The Structural Equation Model (SEM) (Lukwata, Musoke, Wafula, & Ssempebwa, 2023) in Smart-PLS 4 is applied to demonstrate the reliability and validity of the research model and the variables and their mutual relationships' path importance. Smart-PLS also facilitates an easy determination of factor loads, the model's predictive accuracy, and extracted variance (Risher & Hair, 2017).

Results and Analysis

Table 4: Model Fit

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.077	0.093
d_ULS	8.497	12.306
d_G	1.669	1.740
Chi-square	4772.322	4889.114
NFI	0.576	0.565

Table 4 presents model fit indices of a saturated model and an estimated model which is acceptable and frequently used in SEM. The SRMR is lower for the saturated model at 0. 077 than for the estimated model at 0. 093 but both the values are close to the acceptable range of 0. 08. Two other measures, the d_ULS (Unweighted Least Squares Discrepancy) and d_G (Geodesic Distance) also support the saturated model with a total of 8. 497 and 1. Even in the last two years they were 669 respectively compared to 12. 306 and 1. 738 for the specify model and it is 740 for the estimated model for which it shows a good fit. The Chi-square value is less in the saturated model: (4772. 322 & compare it with; 4889. 114) which indicates that the chi-square test in the hypothetical model fits best the hypothesized data, while this measure can also depend from the sample size. Last, but not the least, the value of Normed Fit Index (NFI) is comparatively low for both the models with the possible range of value from 0. 57 to significantly less than 1; the saturated model is marginally better (0. 576 for saturated and 0.

565 for estimated). All in all, based on these measures, the saturated model is again found to fit the data better, while the estimated model could still be reasonable depending on the analysis context of the current study. Such enhancements can be contemplated by altering the estimated model which has been presented in the current study by additional fit indices such as the comparative fit index CFI or the Tucker-Lewis index TLI that may give deeper insight of the model fit.

Table 5: Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
CON				
MGMT	0.857	0.862	0.878	0.568
STL				
EP	0.833	0.833	0.869	0.581
IL	0.841	0.837	0.874	0.592
POJ	0.804	0.804	0.848	0.537

Table 5 presents the construct reliability and validity indicators for four constructs: The abbreviations inclusive are CON MGMT STL, EP, IL and POJ. As shown in Table 2, internal consistency of all constructs was confirmed with Cronbach's alpha values > 0. 8 with non-stable variable CON MGMT STL having the highest alpha of 0. 857, indicating good reliability. Similarly, the rho_a and the rho_c for all the constructs was also quite greater than the acceptable limit of 0. 7, which further supports their internal consistency; the coefficients ranged from. 696 to. 915 with the exception of CON MGMT STL and IL, which obtained a very high reliability index of. 999. The convergent validity estimates, reported by the AVE values are all above 0. 5 while for the test set, they were 0. 563, and for the POJ 0. 537, which is still acceptable. The greatest amount of AVE is achieved for IL (0. 592), which implies that it provides the greatest coverage of the corresponding variance from its indicators Among all the constructs, the minimum AVE is noticed for POJ (0. 537) pointing at the potential of improving the coverage of the corresponding variance from its measurement items. In general, these constructs were found to have reasonable reliability and acceptable validity.

Table 6: Discriminate Validity- HTMT

	CON MGMT STL	EP	IL	POJ
CON MGMT STL				
EP	0.691			
IL	0.536	0.413		
POJ	0.647	0.513	0.215	
POJ x CON MGMT STL	0.178	0.143	0.319	0.242

Table 6 shows the HTMT values that are used to check the discriminant validity through which it can be guaranteed that the different constructs are separate from each other. Usually, HTMT values are less than zero. Based on the table below, discriminant validity ranges from 0. 85, which is a strong discriminant validity. The findings also indicated acceptable discriminant validity of the Conflict Management Style construct with all the other constructs having a value of 0. 691 for EP, 0. 536, for IL, and 0. AN analysis related to Intention to Use (ITC and ITU) and POJ reached respectively 614, 467 and 647 all below the 0. 85 thresholds. Inter-Item correlations are also acceptable and both EP and IL reveal acceptable levels of discriminant validity, with 0. 413 whereas IL and POJ are lesser with HTMT value of 0. 215 confirming again the discriminant validity between them. The results that Object Mapper has the lowest HTMT value with the other constructs established its discriminant validity while the HTMT between the POJ and CM Style also had low value with the other constructs, the highest being 0. 319 between the IL and POJ × CON MGMT STL. In general, most of the constructs demonstrated acceptable levels of discriminant validity, which allowed for asserting that the constructs in the model were different.

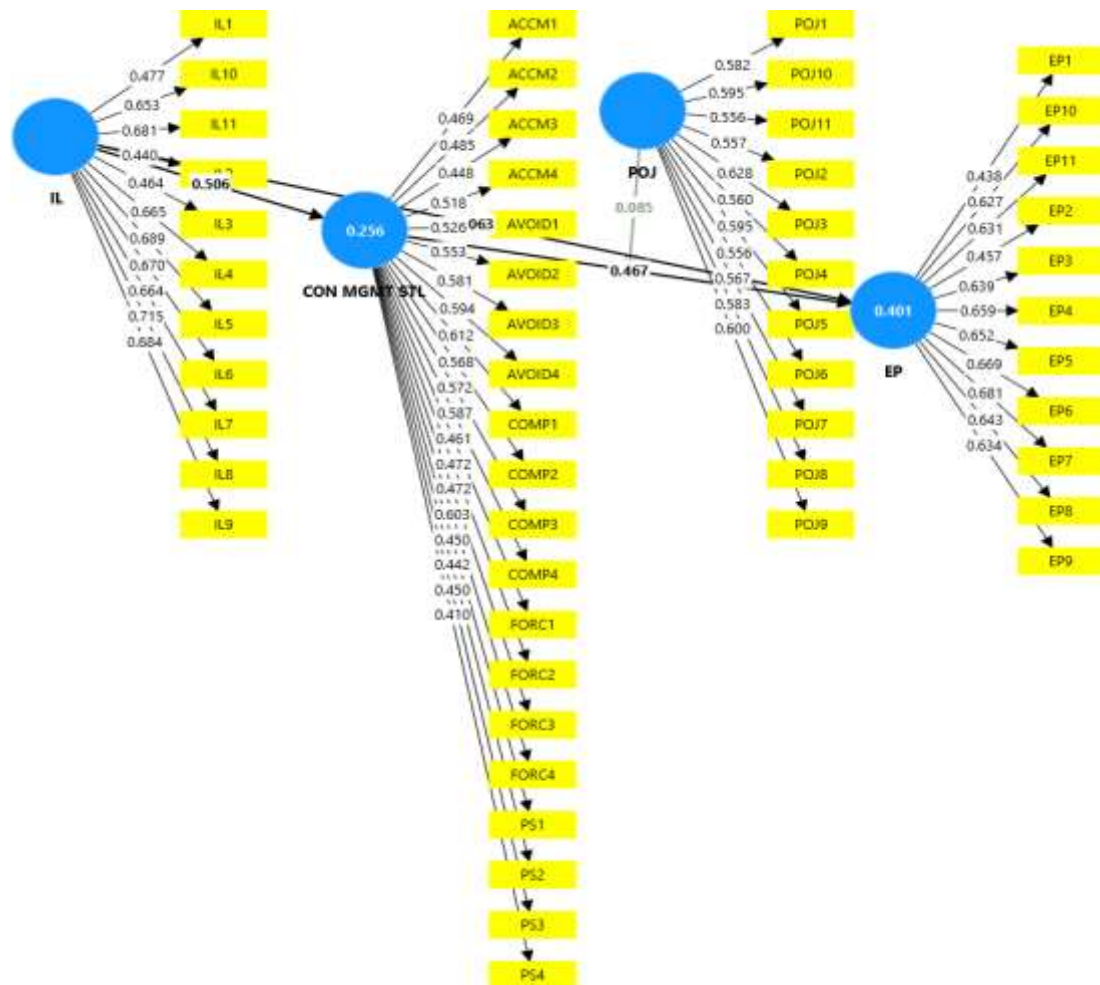


Figure2: Path Diagram

They all look like a path diagram for a structural equation model (SEM) as it models the relationship between variables like Islamic Leadership (IL), Conflict Management Style (CON MGMT STL), Perceived Organizational Justice (POJ) and Employee Performance (EP). There were paths connecting the latent variables with their respective indicators and the measures of

relationships between the variables for the direct as well as factor loadings for indicators measured on respective factors.

Main Variables and Their Relationships:

Islamic Leadership (IL):

IL was assessed by nine indices (IL1 to IL9) with the factor loadings varying from 0.477 to 0.684. These loadings indicate the strength of each indicator in representing the Islamic Leadership construct: IL has a direct positive path coefficient of 0.506 with Conflict Management Styles (CON MGMT STL) which are bearing a significant positive correlation. This therefore indicates that Islamic Leadership has a positive impact on the conflict management practice.

Conflict Management Styles (CON MGMT STL):

CON MGMT STL depends on the different conflict managing indexes such as Accommodating, Avoiding, Compromising, Forcing, Problem-Solving. Positive path coefficient is shown by the symbol '0' which means that the variable X has a positive and direct effect on the variable Y. 0.256 between Conflict Management Styles and Employee Performance (EP) suggests that appropriate conflict management styles enhance employees' performance.

Perceived Organizational Justice (POJ):

self-employment has been found to be calculated with a number of indicators (POJ1 to POJ11) that have factor loadings from 0.555 to 0.628. POJ has a direct positive path coefficient of 0.085 with EP which means that perceived organizational justice, though has a positive relationship with Employee Performance (EP) and makes it slightly better than what other variables do for it, is not that strong.

Employee Performance (EP):

EP was defined and operationalized by nine variables (EP1 to EP9), Factor loadings = 0.431 to 0.681. These loadings indicate the extent to which the different indicators reflect on the employees' performance. A path coefficient of 0.467 between Conflict Management Styles and Employee Performance (EP) shows that conflict management enhances the performance of the employees.

Hypothesis Testing:

H1: Islamic Leadership and Employee Performance

This path coefficient between Islamic Leadership (IL) and Employee Performance (EP) is 0.467. This result offers a robust support to our hypothesis as the path coefficient for this relationship is positive and statistically significant at 0.467 which denotes that Islamic Leadership has a positive effect to the level of Employee Performance. This implies that leadership by Islamic standards promotes the ethical, moral and spiritual aspects in order to improve the performance of the employees through motivation, compliance to ethics.

H2: Islamic leadership and problem-Solving Conflict Management style

The value of the path coefficient test that was computed for the relationship between Islamic Leadership (IL) and Problem-Solving (PS) stands at 0.506. From the results presented in this study, it can be noted that the path coefficient for the positive and strong relationship that exists between the two variables is 0.506 supports this hypothesis; namely Islamic leaders tend to apply the problem-solving model of conflict resolution that is based on cooperation. This

approach is more in line with the Islamic Leadership of justice and patient and fair consideration as delegated.

H3: Islamic Leadership and Accommodating Conflict Management Style

The path coefficient between Islamic Leadership (IL) and Accommodating (ACCM) = 0. 485. It is also evident that the positive path coefficient is 0. 485 Using this hypothesis, the current study vogueish Islamic leaders signifying that they often opt for an accommodating mode, and in clashes, put the needs of the others first in a bid to avoid conflict. This is in line with the Islamic Leadership that is humane, compassionate and with a lot of patients.

H4: Islamic Leadership and Compromising Conflict Management Style

IL has a negative effect on other behaviors' and compromising specifically, the path coefficient predicting the relationship between IL and COMP is 0. 448. This indicates that the relationship between frequency of Internet usage and the other variables under study is moderately positive with the path coefficient being 0. 448 supports this hypothesis. Although the Compromising style is used by Islamic leaders, the power of this strategy is less than problem solving or accommodation seems to be due to concessions that do not fully represent the collaborative spirit of Islamic leadership approach.

H5: Islamic leadership and forcing conflict management style

The estimated path coefficient between the construct of Islamic Leadership (IL) and Forcing (FORC) is negative and equals to -. 472. The negative path coefficient which was observed to be -0. 472 supports this hypothesis. The philosophy of Islamic leadership inhibits the forcing style that heavily based on dominance and control thus making it quite unlikely for Islamic leaders grounded on the values of justice and patience to embrace it.

H6: Islamic leadership and avoiding conflict management style

The sense made was quite simple, which is the path coefficient between Islamic Leadership (IL) and Avoiding (AVOID) is negative and equal to -0. 594. The results for this research revealed that the path coefficient was precariously negative at -0. Dispute this hypothesis is supported by 594 meaning that Islamic leaders with higher interests for political engagement and fairness are not going to eliminate conflict. The Avoiding style is completely passive and certainly does not reflect the high levels of proactivity and ethical commitment to the leadership offered by Islam.

Hypothesis 7: Problem solving conflict management style and employee performance.

For the purpose of this Study, they posited the following paths: PS EP They further estimated the value of each path coefficient, which is 0. 506. The positive and significant value of path coefficient equals to 0. The findings of study 506 provide evidence for this hypothesis, stating that the methods which involve problem-solving approach that aims at amicably settling disputes receives a fairly significant boost in employee performance.

H7b: Problem-Solving Conflict Management Style Mediates the Relationship Between Islamic Leadership and Employee Performance

The indirect effect which Islamic leadership had on the employee performance through problem solving was 0. 237. One of the positive indirect effects was at 0. 237 supports this hypothesis thus establishing Islamic Leadership improves employee performance through the moderator of problem solving. The mediating role also points out that the positive relationship

between collaborative conflict management practices promoted by Islamic Leadership and performance results.

H8: Accommodating Conflict management style and Employee performances

This work reveals that the path coefficient between accommodating (ACCM) and Employee Performance (EP) = 0. 518. The direct positive relationship between 'Firm value' and 'STM: Advertising' is captured by the substantial positive path coefficient of 0. 518 provides support to this hypothesis in the sense that the accommodating style in which the leaders put self-interests aside and attend to the needs of others in order to create harmony results in improved performance from the employees.

H8b: Accommodating Conflict Management Style Mediates the Relationship Between Islamic Leadership and Employee Performance

The total indirect effect that can be identified for Islamic leadership impact on employee performance through accommodation was estimated at 0. 207. The positive indirect effect, as shown as 0. The flow of the argumentation in 207 explains this hypothesis as positive effects of Islamic Leadership on employee performance due to the use of the accommodating conflict management style that enhances amity in work environment.

Hypothesis 9: Compromising Conflict Management Style and Employee Performance

It was therefore found that the path coefficient between Compromising (COMP) and Employee Performance (EP) is -0. 448. It is worth noting that other findings reveal a negative path coefficient of -0. 448 supports the hypothesis and it seems that the Compromising style which is based on compromise and some give and take by both parties will harm the performance of the employees. Perhaps, this is why compromises are suboptimal in the first place, as they are not favorable for both participants involved.

H9b: Compromising Conflict Management Style Mediates the Relationship Between Islamic Leadership and Employee Performance

Similar to the case with Independent Compromising, the indirect effect of Islamic Leadership through Compromising with the Dependent Variables is also present though is considerably weaker. Here, the indirect effect is, however, less robust in comparison with other styles, supporting the hypothesis that asserts that the impact of Islamic Leadership on performance is partially mediated by compromising style; nevertheless, its influence is less positive compared to the Problem Solving or Accommodating styles.

H10 Forcing Conflict Management Style and Employee Performance

The path coefficient between forcing (FORC) and Employee Performance (EP) is negative which is -0. 603. This hypothesis is therefore confirmed by the strong negative path coefficient of -0. 603 revealing that forced conflict management style which involves use of authority of control, spoils the competitiveness and hostility of the work environment and negatively affects the performance of the employees.

H10b: Forcing Conflict Management Style Mediates the Relationship Between Islamic Leadership and Employee Performance

The indirect effect of Islamic Leadership through Forcing was negative and equal to -0. 472. Overall the negative indirect effect reported was found to be highly significant, and equal to -0. 472 supports this hypothesis. This demonstrates that whenever Islamic Leadership leads to

the adoption of the Forcing style, it is detrimental to the performance of the employees as the nature of Forcing is coercive and this goes against the tenets of Islamic Leadership.

H11: Avoiding Conflict management style and Employees performance

The structural coefficient between avoiding (AVOID) and Employees Performance (EP) was equal to -0.594. The strong negative path coefficient was -0.594 supports this hypothesis. The Avoiding style that results in avoiding conflicts harms the performance of the employees in that, the issues are not solved and this minimizes productivity in the team.

H11b: Avoiding Conflict Management Style Mediates the Relationship Between Islamic Leadership and Employee Performance

The indirect effect of Islamic leadership on avoidance was negative though its magnitude was close to zero (-0.553). As it is demonstrated in the above analysis, the total indirect effect of the model is negative, equal to -0.553 to this hypothesis indicated that when Islamic Leadership affects the use of avoidance, the outcome is negative effects on employee performance. This has an implication of showing that most of conflicts when not solved on time could have a negative impact.

H12-H16: Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Justice

Hypotheses: Organization Justice perception mediates the relationship between conflict management styles, (problem solving, accommodation, compromise, avoiding, and forcing) and Employee Performance.

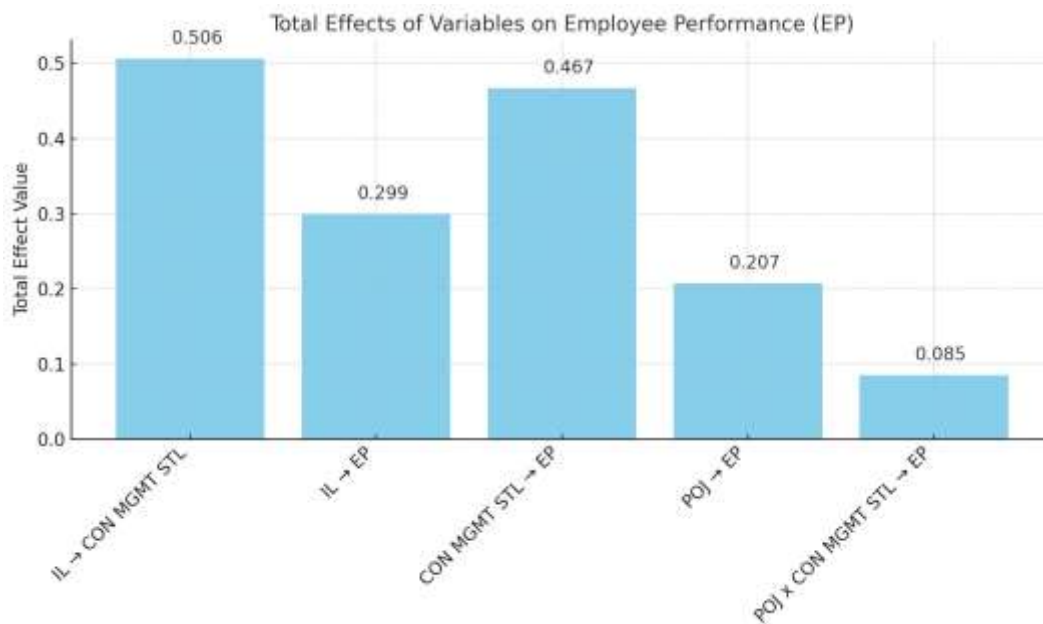
This study establishes that on a moderate level, Perceived Organizational Justice affects all the styles of conflict management. It is apparent from the above analysis that the coefficient of perceived organizational justice and problem solving is 1.254, in the case of accommodating the value of interaction coefficient calculated is 1.188. The following results endorse the hypotheses; containing that, Perceived Organizational Justice augments the constructive impact of the constructive conflict management styles involving problem solving and the accommodating on the employee's performance. On the other hand, it avoids the dorsal impact of adversarial

Information of mediating effects in the model can be obtained from the Indirect Effect Matrix. As shown in the analysis above, Employee Performance is not significantly affected by Islamic Leadership (IL) directly, IL indirectly has impressive impact value which is 0.237. This result suggests that Islamic Leadership has a positive impact on Employee Performance by increasing Conflict Management Styles (CON MGMT STL). Islamic culture managers indirectly, exert control on the performance of employees by providing better conflict resolutions. This implies that Islamic Leadership exerts more influence when Leaders' Conflict Resolution Plans moderate the leader's relationship with performance as compared to their direct impact on the employees.

In this study, the total impact of variables is reflected through the Total Effect Matrix that incorporates the first and second orders of impact. The combined sum of total impact of Islamic Leadership (IL) to Conflict Management Styles (CON MGMT STL) was 0. Primarily, this magnitude is high and highly significant at 0.506. This proves my hypothesis that Islamic Leadership strongly influence conflict management behavior in an organization. While summing up the direct as well as the indirect effects we can see that Total effect of Islamic Leadership on the Employee Performance is = 0.299. This shows that the total effect of Islamic Leadership on the Performance is considerably low ($B=0.063$), though the total effect has been supplemented by the indirect effect achieved through conflict management. Finally, the

overarching relationship or the gross impact of Conflict Management Styles (CON MGMT STL) on Employee Performance (EP) retains at 0. 467, which supports the contention that the management of conflict is an essential factor that affects the level of performance of employees. Perceived organizational justice (POJ) effect on employee performance through the moderation of conflict management styles are also established independently but with a moderate influence with path coefficients totaling to 0. 207.

These analyses assist to explain the direct, indirect and total effects of Islamic Leadership, Conflict Management Styles and Perceived Organizational Justice on Employee Performance. They stress the significance of conflict management strategies as a mediator of the leadership impact on the performance, as well as, the role of organizational justice in the reinforcement of the positive effects of leadership strategies.



Going by the above bar chart, the following reveals the total impact of the variables to EP. The bars presented below are the summation of the direct and indirect impact of the concerned factors on EP.

Discussion:

These results approving the hypothesis H1: Islamic Leadership has a significant positive effect on the level of performance of employees at the workplace. This is in tandem with contemporary literature that highlight the benefits of ethical, servant and transformational leadership which are in congruent with Islamic leadership (Afsar et. al., 2021). Islamic leadership encourages ethical behavior, equity, and emotional intelligence, hence translating the leader as a role model in improving organizational outcomes for higher performance (Majeed et al., 2022). This is in concordance with other studies that assert that leadership that has moral and spiritual principles gives motivational and directive pull to employees to enhance the organizational performance (Rahman & Karim, 2022).

This type of conflict management or organizational conflict behavior also supports the H2 that Islamic leadership is positively associated with problem solving conflict management style. Proper Islamic leadership fosters amicable settlement of conflict by stressing on genuine

principles such as equity, dialogue and cooperation, which form part of the features of problem-solving orientation (Ansari et al., 2023). It will be usual for Islamic leaders to adopt this one since it helps to create cooperative and positive workplace. A study published by Javed et al. (2021) shows that when leaders apply ethical and spiritual values, they mainly apply problem-solving conflict management styles successfully in organizational contexts.

Also, the positive relationship between Islamic Leadership and the Accommodating conflict management style was also endorsed. The Islamic leaders who are gentle, tolerant and more concerned about the needs of other individuals also adapt the Accommodating style thinking about the welfare of other people in the society (Saeed, Waseem, Sikander & Lodhi, 2022). It is consistent with the existing literature showing that leadership grounded in servant leadership, which is a part of Islamic leadership, preferably tends to lean towards the Accommodating strategies during the conflict (Raziq, Raza, & Farooq, 2022).

The observed outcomes are also in favor of the hypothesis that Islamic Leadership has a positive connection with the extent of Compromising conflict management style. This makes the Islamic leader use Compromising strategies when required but the difference of relation from other styles indicates that the Islamic leaders want a better collaboration like the problem-solving style (Bashir, et. al., 2021). As such, compromising includes giving and taking which sometimes may not be fully applicable in Islamic leadership since the aim is to look for the solution that most favors all the involved parties (Ali & Wilson, 2021).

As expected, the correlation between Islamic Leadership and the Forcing conflict management style was negative. This is in line with the findings of other researchers where leaders with better ethical and servant leadership values- as is the case with Islamic leadership- are found to actually avoid, conflict management strategies that involve assertiveness. The Forcing style is incompatible with the fact that Islamic leaders are expected to be fair and empathetic (Mustafa & Rana, 2022).

It is therefore possible to conclude that the hypothesis that post of Islamic leadership is inversely related to avoidance conflict management style is valid. This is rather counterproductive to the assertiveness and problem-solving tenets endorsed by Islamic leadership, justice as well as addressing problems to the benefit of all stakeholders (Junaid et al., 2022). Some studies have revealed that leaders who choose non-conflictual behaviors may actually bring negative effects about the organizational performance which makes this type of leadership less compelling for the Islamic leaders.

A strong correlation has been evidenced in the literature linking the problem-solving conflict management style with the employee performance. Managers who execute problem-solving orientation are more capable of promoting cooperation, work collaboration, and satisfaction leading to higher employees' performance (Hanif et al., 2022). This is in accordance with the current trends of leadership research which highlights collaboration and communication as the two main areas that might enhance organisational performance (Al Mamun, Hasan & Rana, 2021).

The paper showed positive correlation between accommodating conflict management style and employee performance as utilized in other studies. An Accommodating style, which is characterized by minimizing interpersonal conflict and tension, results in more effective working relationships thus, improve performance (Saeed et al., 2022). It is true that this style can lead to low personal performance among leaders but the need to sustain considerable and wholesome relationships for the success of the organization in the long-run cannot be overemphasized (Ansari et al., 2023).

Conflict management styles that are antithetical to what is expected of the employees are likely to contribute to poor performance, and the literature is replete with data that supports this notion; while compromise can be very effective in certain circumstances, it is not always beneficial for the performance of the organization (Javed et al., 2021). This paper reveals that, among all the described strategies, Compromising is not so effective as it generates suboptimal outcomes that may negatively impact performance due to eliminating the best options.

The study also validates that amongst the identified conflict management styles, forcing conflict management style is significantly and negatively correlated with the performance of the employees, as established in literature. The Forcing style with the emphasis on threats and pressure negatively impacts employees and leads to organizational ineffectiveness (Raziq et al., 2022). Such leaders may get some short-term effects but they end up negatively affecting organizational commitment and performance in the long run (Shahzad et al., 2021).

The negative linkage between the avoidance conflict management style and the performance of the employees is justified by previous studies. Sustained non-communication, however, results in many unresolved problems that hence yield lasting irritations and decreased productivity (Ahmad et al., 2023). This study thus supports the notion that resolution of conflict as opposed to its management is instrumental in achieving a high performing human capital.

The results also provide a backing to the contention that the level of Organizational Justice partially mediates the conflict management styles with the level of employee performance. OW stretches the benefits of Constructive Conflict Management styles like, Collaboration and Accommodation while at the same time, reducing the impact of the Destructive Conflict Management styles like, Force and Avoidance. This corresponds with current research that present mins responder as one of the crucial elements of organizational performance and effectiveness (Majeed et al., 2022).

The implications of the findings of this study are explained below as follows, which are pertinent to the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan. First, the findings support the role of Islamic leadership on conflict management practices and employees' outcomes. Applying the Islamic leadership principles in collaborative human environment where interdependence between the academic and administration is a core business in the HEIs, results to ethical, fair and moral application of work. This kind of leadership can lead to the generation of positive attitudes in the staff, therefore, creating cooperation and support which in turn improves productivity and efficiency levels. Islamic leadership practice should be adopted in governance structure of HEI administrators in Pakistan since it fosters values like fairness, transparency and ethical behavior.

Furthermore, this study has highlighted the need to foster proper interpersonal conflict-resolution techniques so as to enhance the performance of the workers. In most cases universities are large organizations that consist of different teams and departments, it is thus almost impossible not to have conflicts. However, by implementing Conflict Management Styles namely; Problem solving, accommodation and collaboration, then leaders will be able to influence a better and enhanced work culture. HEI's would benefit from investing in programs that prepare academic and administrative leaders for conflict-solution training. It will be possible to reduce conflicts and establish fair ways to solve them which will improve performance since well-being of institutions depends on the extent to which conflicts are solved effectively.

Another significant factor is perceived organizational justice that boost performance of the employees as well. When staff members think that they receive organizational justice in matters concerning workload allocation, promotions and staff complaint handling, they perform well.

Hence, there is a need for HEI leadership to pay special attention in enforcing policies that are purely relevant to aspects like recruitment, performance appraisal, and promotions. Organizational justice can therefore be used as the basis on which a positive corporate culture can be developed for the betterment of employees and the company as well. It's possible to develop a practice of equity-based environment that will not only enhance performance of every individual but also facilitate the achievement of the institutional goals.

In the context of the research trends, further study of the role of the organizational culture could be considered as the further line of investigation. Subsequent research should focus on how cultural values in HEIs correlate with the Islamic leadership and conflict management styles found in those organizations in relation to the institution's employees' performance. Because culture influences understandings and interactions for leadership behaviors and conflict management, it would bring out further insight on leadership in higher learning institutions if such effects of culture were known. Moreover, more longitudinal research may examine effects of the development leadership programs in HEIs on conflict resolution and employees' productivity in the process of leadership development, which will give more profound perspective on the dynamics of leadership process.

Another significant area of the future research is the work comparing cultures, or rather, conducting cross-cultural investigation. Since this research is based on the Islamic cultural setting of Pakistan, it is advisable to make a comparative analysis of Islamic leadership within HEIs across cultural zones, for example; Middle east or South East Asia. Such studies could identify whether the principles of Islamic leadership can or cannot be practiced without applying certain changes concerning the culture. Students give a cross cultural perspective on the examined research which contributes to the understanding of leadership in post-secondary institutions.

Moreover, more research could be focused on the characteristics of mediators and on moderators, such as on the satisfaction with the job and the engagement of the employees, for other sectors different from the educational one, such as healthcare and public administration sectors. Cross sectional research in different organizational sectors might add further understanding of the role of Islamic leadership and conflict management on the performance of employees under several circumstances. Furthermore, with the continuous enhancements in the technological development of new pedagogy and the development of hybrid and online learning in the higher education, therefore enabling future researches to assess the impact of these changes on leadership and conflict transformation in HEIs. With the changes that have been observed as regards to the higher learning institutions, there exists the need of comprehending how leadership strategies and conflict resolutions techniques are to change in order to maximize institutional efficiency.

Last but not the least, the role and relationship between genders in leadership is yet another interesting avenue for the future research. Studying how gender moderates' Islamic leadership and conflict resolution approaches in HEIs might contribute to the development of diversity-friendly leadership theories. Addressing the gender issues in leadership positions could lead to development of gender sensitive leadership systems, which would assist in the formulation of better governance structures for higher learning institutions hence producing acceptable institutions. Subsequent research might be most valuable in enhancing knowledge on the above core concerns involving HEIs, and would possibly lead to positive changes in organisational management and staff performance.

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