

# Hands to work and heart to God – Organizational justice, Islamic work ethics, ethical leadership and work outcomes

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## Abstract

*Effective leadership and work ethics are critical for an organization's success. While previous studies have examined the relationship between leadership and work ethics, there are gaps in understanding the impact of ethical leadership and work ethics on work outcomes, particularly in different research contexts and religious perspectives, specifically in combining the influence of organization justice. This study aims to examine the relationship between Islamic work ethics, organizational justice, and work outcomes in the specific context of financial institutions. Using PLS-SEM with Smart PLS (version 3) on a sample of 372 employees, the study found a direct relationship between organizational justice and job satisfaction and organizational commitment, but no direct association with turnover intention. There was partial mediation of Islamic work ethic in the relationship between organizational justice and job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The moderation effect of ethical leadership was partially supported for the interaction between organizational justice and job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The study contributes to enhancing the understanding of the relationship between Islamic work ethics and work performance and provides practical implications for financial institutions to improve work-related policies.*

**Keywords:** Organizational Justice, Ethic, Islamic Work Ethic (IWE), Employee Outcomes, Job Satisfaction, Organization Commitment, Turnover Intention.

*“Regarding the debate about faith and works: It’s like asking which blade in a pair of scissors is most important.” C. S. Lewis*

## 1. Introduction

The above quotation is by Lewis (1898 – 1963), an Irish writer and scholar best known for his ‘Chronicles of Narnia’ fantasy series and his pro-Christian texts. He views work and faith as different sides of the same coin. Similarly, Anne Lee, the

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founder of the American Shaker Movement, believed that “hands to work, heart to God” was a core belief that work was a form of worship and that every aspect of life, including work, should be done with one’s best ability and sense of purpose (David et al., 2020). Thus, work when done in the service of divine has much larger meaning and purpose, and it offers spiritual growth beyond material gain, has its grounding in spiritually informed management theory (Steingard, 2005).

The key perspective and focus of this study is to assess work outcomes for people following the work values prescribed by Islam in the form of Islamic work ethics, which are based on the principles of the Holy Quran and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Some of the principles include hard work, honesty, and justice, dedication to work as a virtue, creative work as a source of happiness, etc. (Aldulaimi, 2016).

Tufail et al. (2020) state that in the context of the theory of reasoned action (behavior under a person’s willful control), a person’s religious belief predicts one’s intention to behave. However, consistent relationships between religion and constructs associated with work were not supported in earlier research, which is now supported in more recent research (Oraye-Ebede et al., 2020). This study approaches research on the role of Islamic work ethic, ethical leadership, and work outcomes by assessing the influence of organizational justice. It does so by empirically testing the relationships between organizational justice, Islamic work ethics, ethical leadership, and work outcomes.

### **1.1. Top of Form**

The core theme of this paper hinges on the idea that work can be a devotion and that it can offer spiritual growth and fulfillment beyond material gain (Fairholm, 1996). This perspective has been explored by various scholars. Research suggests that individuals who view their work in this way may be more likely to act ethically and to promote justice within their organizations, and that this perspective may have a positive impact on job outcomes (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel & Rupp, 2001; Oriana et al., 2020).

According to Kiessling et al., (2004) in his classic book “Managing for Results,” has argued and give a more secular claim that work can be a means of self-development and personal growth, and that it can be fulfilling when it is done in the service of a higher purpose. However, the relationship between work ethics, organizational justice, and job outcomes is a complex and multifaceted topic. More research is needed to understand the nuances of this relationship in different contexts and cultures, which this study aims, being undertaken in an Islamic and Asian country, with its religious and culturally distinct identity.

The construct of organizational justice on its own reflects the subjective view of justice in terms of the perception of fairness held by the employees, considering their experience, and not an objective determination of justice based on any principle, thus it ignore the aspect of intention to behave, which this study tests in relation to Islamic work ethics. Despite this assertion, numerous empirical studies support clear relationship between subjective perceptions and positive organizational outcomes, resulting in attitudinal changes that are manifested in the form of job satisfaction, organizational commitment (Purwanto, 2020). Which is further supported by positive behavior in the form of task performance and increased efficacy of output (Jameel & Ahmad, 2020; Amelec, 2015).

Research involving the study regarding association between work ethic and individual work outcomes (in the form of job satisfaction, organizational commitment) has not been something new, number of research studies have been undertaken in more recent past on the subject (Ahmed et al., 2019; Soomro & Shah, 2019; Abouraia & Othman, 2017). Work ethic is believed to reflect an individual's attitudes towards various aspects of work. Much of the work in the past has been carried out in the West referring to Protestant work ethic (PWE) developed by Weber, proposing an association between work ethic and economic progress in the West, with a religious thrust for capitalism, linking success in work with religion (Rao, 2012). Parboteeah et al., (2009) quoting Vinten (2000); Dean et al., (2003), claim that research literature supports the contention that religion has a role in the work context, which is supported by resurgence of religion at the work place as well (Rathee & Rajain,2020). Despite this fact, management scholars, like Hofstede (2011), has merely given a passing reference to the importance of religion and its implication in the workplace in his major research on cultural value dimensions.

Islamic work ethics is the Muslim understanding and interpretation of the Qur'an and the practices of Muhammad (PBUH). Its meaning has always been in the context of active submission to God. According to the Qur'an, this natural inclination is subverted by humanity's approach to material success and it highlights by pointing out clearly that there should be honesty and justice is all facets of business. The Quran is against waste of time by either remaining idle or engaging in unproductive activity, and views dedication to work as a virtue. It considers work as a source of independence and means of personal growth, self-respect, and self-fulfillment. The group of values encapsulated within the construct of Islamic work ethic has its basis on intentions of the individual rather than from the results of work (Murtaza et al., 2016). Resultantly, those who believe and practice Islam, tends to be more committed to their organizations and more satisfied with their jobs.

There have been number of research studies linking Islamic work ethic and its

positive impacts on job-related outcomes, more research in this area would further strengthen the empirical evidence. Islamic work ethics encapsulates some of core intrinsic attributes, like dedication to work is virtue, has quality of being morally good, one should carrying out work with one's best ability, work leads to personal growth, life has no meaning without work, and value of work is derived from intention rather than results (Ali, 2015).

In view of the above review, this study aims to bring some empirical evidence to establish linkage between perceived organizational justice (POJ) and Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), and explore indirect effects with organizational commitment (OC), job satisfaction (JS), and turnover intention (TI) and the moderating role of ethical leadership. These propositions and hypotheses are further strengthened by the detail literature review in the next section,

## 1.2. Research Questions

RQ1: Does perceived organizational justice influences job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention?

RQ2: Does IWE mediates the relationship between POJ and JS, OC and TI?

RQ3: Does Ethical leadership moderate the relationship between Organizational Justice and JS, OC and TI?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Process & Outcomes in Justice Research

The term “organizational justice and ethics” is used in the context of addressing questions of what is right or wrong in organizational issues. Research in this field has primarily focused on how people perceive the process by which outcome decisions are made (procedural justice) and the distribution of outcomes (distributive justice). Similarly, research in ethics examines how people distinguish between processes and outcomes in determining what is ethical. This translates into utilitarian (outcome-based) and formalist (rules or process-based) decision-making, as classified in previous research (Afolabi et al., 2021). This study explores how these are integrated mapping with similar approaches in ethics.

First reference to organizational justice was made by Thomson (1965), which has four distinct elements; 1) distributive justice, referring to fairness in the process of getting the compensation by an individual; 2) procedural justice, if the process of the compensation determination was fair or not; 3) interactional justice, refers to the

attitude of respect toward the individual during the determination; and 4) informational justice, referring to the quality of the explanation provided to the individual.

Research on distributive justice has primarily focused on employees' perceptions of equity (Usmani & Jamal, 2013) in terms of pay equity or inequity, which are linked to other organization-related variables such as job security, supervision, and job challenge. Individuals' perceptions of the fairness of outcomes affect their attitudes and behaviors, and this focus on fairness shifted from distributive to procedural justice. Procedural justice emphasizes that even if employees receive unfavorable outcomes, they view it positively when they believe that the process followed was fair and just. This dimension of justice has a wider impact in the organization, as it is reflected in areas such as performance appraisal, selection testing, recruitment, budget decisions, layoffs, etc. (Radburn & Stott, 2019). Although distributive and procedural justice are two distinct constructs, their perceptions affect each other (Raja et al., 2018). Thus, individuals' reactions will differ depending on their focus on outcomes, procedures, or both. This result is not unique to organizational justice, as research on ethical frameworks suggests that individuals could differently treat processes and outcomes (Noothigattu et al., 2018).

## **2.2. Ethical Behavior**

This area deals with moral judgments underlying ethical frameworks, and here as well, individuals' could differ in judgments, driven through formalist and utilitarian approaches, which contrasts with process and outcome focus respectively (Brittain et al., 2020). A formalist approach is process oriented and individual relies on set of rules for guiding behavior, thus actions are ethical or unethical as the individual follows or does not follow the rules. Whereas a utilitarian approach is linked with outcomes, where ethical actions are those, which have greatest net social good, thus those outcomes are classified as ethical. These two approaches are approximately identical to the two ethical principles of deontology and teleology (Nussbaum, 2020) and Smith et al., (2023), do not classify these two principles as alternate but as two independent sub dimensions. Thus, there exist a parallel between organizational justice and normative ethics, since outcomes and processes are the focus of both. Overtime the two fields (organizations justice and ethical framework) have moved away from their commonalities, and there is lack of attention towards process, and outcomes (distributive) have gained focus. Amilin et al., (2018) claim that there are benefits in rejoining the two, as both have strong theoretical foundations on which to build them. Leading the researchers to focus to separate but complementary aspect of the organizational environment. In terms of ethical focus on individuals' and their beliefs, justice research focuses on situations perceptions and how characteristics of

situations affect individuals' perceptions of organizations.

Ethical behavior is guided by rules and implies behavior that can be categorized as right or wrong, and guidelines for what is morally right behavior (Niven & Healy, 2016; Gamarra & Giroto, 2022). An ethical person behaves in terms of moral principles, such as justice and fairness (Samara & Paul, 2019). Brockner et al., (2005), states that the fundamental principle underlying both ethic and organizational justice is fairness, which effects the judgment of people in terms of what is right or wrong.

For a work organization ethical employee are optimistic and demonstrate positive work behaviors, which are important employee attributes and contributes towards sustainable growth of organization. At the same time, employees' unethical behaviors can create an unhealthy working environment effecting other workers and can damage its reputation. Mohammad et al., (2018) quoted "terms work ethics as predominant variable, and has profound impact on employees' attitudes and behaviors at work, and has impact on their job performance, and helps in reduction of counterproductive behaviors (Noe et al., 2006). Thus, research in this area has gain significant growth (Tipu & Ryan, 2016).

### **2.3. Islamic Ethic and its Relationship with Work**

Prior to industrial revolution, work was not held in high esteem in Europe, this then lead to subsequent keen interest in work ethic. The negative notion about work is also derived from Adam Smith's *Wealth of the Nations* (Werhane, 2019). With the onset of industrial revolution, this notion started to change to a positive view of work, which was strengthened with the publication of Max Weber's work "The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism". However, societies other than Europe had their work ethic and beliefs, more attuned to their cultural realities. More specifically Islamic societies, which has accumulated its own knowledge and experience with regards to work and economic activities, and offers its unique perspective and conceptualization on work. This has reinforced the faith of Muslims, and is more in accord with current thinking about work (Ali Abbas & Al-Owaihan, 2008).

Ali (2015) posits that evolution of the concept of work is linked with the desire of the human beings to continue to aspire to enhance their quality of life, and is influenced by both economic development and spiritual factors in elevating work concepts. At the same, there has been concern concerning ethical conduct to safeguard the welfare of people, thus under scoring the role of ethics in the workplace, and inspired the researchers to establish the link with religion as a key factor that forms the work view and role of ethics in it.

Islam emphasis importance of work and its necessity in life when compared with

other religions. The Quran teaches its followers to work wherever there are opportunities, whether locally or globally, in ayah 62:10, state “disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah”, Ali (2015) states “rise early to make a living and gain your economic needs as dedication represents benefits and success”. Islam has linked justice with work, which bestows it quality which is not seen in the common discourse on the subject of work ethics. Thus, justice is not considered a byproduct in relation to work, but rather it is the foundation for a moral society and functional economy, Ali (2015).

IWE is an idea created by Ali (1988), and is characterized by Ali (2015) as a required action considering the requirements of an individual and need to build balance in one’s individual and social life. Work empowers man to be free and is a wellspring of confidence, fulfillment, and satisfaction. Achievement and progress at work relies upon dedication, commitment, hard work and obligation to one’s work. Obligation to work includes commitment to work and desire to improve its wellbeing along with society. Society would have a less issue if every individual were too focused on his work and kept away from unscrupulous strategies for wealth accumulation. Imaginative work and collaboration are wellsprings of bliss as well as are viewed as honorable deeds (Ali, 2015).

#### **2.4. Theoretical Relationships**

The overriding theoretical support for the work under the domain of ethics and moral values emanate from spiritually-informed management theory (Koestenbaum, 2002). This theory emphasizes the integration of spiritual values and principles in organizational practices and decision-making as a management approach. It emphasizes the importance of ethical and moral considerations in management, and encourages managers to adopt a holistic perspective that includes the well-being of employees, society, and the environment. Koestenbaum argues that spiritual values such as integrity, responsibility, and authenticity are crucial for effective management and leadership. He also emphasizes the importance of developing a sense of purpose and meaning in work, and the need for managers to cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves and their role in the organization, as part of applied ethics direction.

In addition scholarly work under the domain of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen et al., 2018) has an important linkage to the subject of this study. This is a psychological theory that explains how people make decisions about their behavior. It suggests that people’s behavior is determined by their intentions, which in turn are influenced by their attitudes and subjective norms. The theory posits that behavior is under a person’s willful control, as it is based on their intentions, and can be influenced by changing their attitudes and subjective norms.

## 2.5. Organizational Justice

Justice is fundamental to the functioning of social systems, such as work organizations. Nevertheless, the term justice has varied definitions, within the scope of this paper, it is however used in the context of an organization, and thus the term organizational justice is used. Theoretically organization justice is about how people form perception about their work outcomes and the process through which these outcomes are allocated, and is a dynamic construct, reflecting changing justice perceptions (Lim & Loosemore, 2017). In the context of an effective functioning of organizations, the ideals of justice are very important. It has strong relevance for the individuals, who spent a significant part of their lives involved in organizational activities in relation to their responsibilities with work (Kurian, 2018).

Baldwin (2006) states that the perception fairness of work place interaction, procedure and outcomes by the employees is classified and termed as organizational justice (Baldwin, 2006). Categorizing employee's view and feelings about their treatment and others in the organization, which forms its underlying basis. In the literature on this subject, fairness and justice are used interchangeably, although these two constructs have differences at a finer level. Cropanzano et al., (2007) have classified it as a subjective and descriptive concept, and what individuals believe is right and not the objective reality or a prescriptive moral code (Cropanzano et al, 2007).

The subject of organizational justice needs to be seen from the perspective of individuals' reactions to decisions, procedures and authorities. What it implies is that individuals do not react, seeking answer to what is good, and rather they inquire if it was fair, thus, forming the basis for perceptions of fairness, which explains variance to key attitudes and behaviors like organizational commitment, citizen behavior (Brockner et al., 2005).

Colquitt et al. (2001) further points out that justice scholars in the beginning had emphasized only on fairness of decision outcomes, which was classified as *distributive justice*, meaning degree to which appropriate allocation norm is followed in decision making context. This subject has a multidisciplinary context as well, with law e.g., where fairness of decision-making is categorized as procedural justice. Thus, fairness of decision (verdict) and courtroom procedure is differentiated. This concept was further extended by Zhang and Bareinboim (2018), bringing in decision making in resource allocations, and proposed that the procedure so adopted would be viewed fair, when it would adhere to criteria classified as "rules" in terms of consistency, accuracy, correctability, suppression of any bias, as followed in execution of the procedure. To correctly understand the elements of fairness in decision-making, the event needs to be classified into three aspects, a decision, a procedure and an interpersonal interaction.



Colquitt (2001) quoting Bies and Moag (1986) states that justice scholar has termed fairness of interpersonal interaction in this event as interactional justice, wherein the authorities involved have ensured procedural details were shared with respect and justified decisions using honest and truthful information. Karches & Sulmasy (2016), later segregated these two aspects by arguing that respect and truthfulness were distinct, and he labelled the later as interpersonal justice. Thus, organizational justice dimension has four different aspects as classified above.

Workplace behavior taking place in a group setting is classified into “role based”, signifying activities which relate to the formal operating policies and which are under purview of the control and incentive systems of an organization. The other behavior is called “extra role”, which covers individuals’ activities that are not covered in the first role, and are more discretionary. Ridwan et al., (2020) first identified and defined behavior of the individual that is discretionary (outside the job description), and not directly covered by the formal reward system, for the effective functioning of the organization both these activities are essential. An individual’s perception of justice promotes extra role behavior, and is referred to as “organizational citizenship behavior”, which is manifested in many positive behaviors (helping group members, facilitating group decision etc.). This results in employees having higher intrinsic satisfaction, commitment, and have strong desire to perform well and remain with the organization (Sun & Hovey, 2017).

## **2.6. Perceived Organizational Justice and Job Satisfaction**

Different authors have evidenced the influence of justice in organizations, Mulang (2022) referring to Li, Liang & Crant (2010), points out that organizational justice has an important effect on the results obtained by organizations. Nili, Mahmoudi & Soltani (2012) found that procedural justice influences the degree of job satisfaction. Moliner, Martinez-Tur, Ramos, Peiro & Cropanzano (2008) found that distributive justice is related to salary satisfaction, while procedural justice predicts the level of participation with the organization.

H<sub>1</sub>: Perceived Organizational justice has a direct relationship on Job Satisfaction

## **2.7. Perceived Organizational Justice and Positive Work Outcomes**

Perceived organizational justice (POJ) has been widely studied in the literature, particularly with regards to its relationship with job satisfaction. A plethora of studies have shown a direct relationship between POJ and job satisfaction. A better perceived Organizational justice leads to organizational commitment (Ghosh, et al., 2014) and reduces the turnover intention of employees (Farooq & Farooq, 2014) and vice versa.

This results in achieving organizational goals and high employee motivation (Kang & Sung, 2019). If the perceived organization justice is poor the turnover intension of employees will be higher and would result in poor performance (Khalid, Rehman & Muqadas, 2018), demotivating other employees (Tziner, Oren, Bar & Kadosh, 2011), corruption (Mir, Kar, Dwivedi, Gupta & Sharma, 2020), delays in achieving the organizational goals (Malik et al., 2019), and create poor work environment (Elovainio & Virtanen, 2020).

Organizational commitment has a direct relationship with the organizational perceived justice (Pimentel, 2020). The committed employee is more productive (Huang et al., 2020), motivate other employees (Hanaysha, 2020), set high standards for their colleagues (Murray & Holmes, 2021), and create healthy competition between the employees (Ridwan et al, 2020) and leads organization to excel (Cherif, 2020). Colquitt et al. (2013) found that perceptions of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice were all positively related to job satisfaction. Seminal work by Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) undertaking a meta-analysis found a positive relationship between organizational justice and job satisfaction, which was consistent across a variety of organizational contexts and types of justice. Overall, the literature strongly suggests a consistent and strong positive relationship between perceived organizational justice and job satisfaction, as supported by multiple studies across different contexts and settings.

H<sub>2</sub>: Perceived Organizational justice has a direct relationship on organizational commitment

## 2.8. Perceived Organizational Justice and Turnover Intention

Perceived organization justice has a close association with employee productivity (Imran & Allil, 2016); trust in workplace (Farooq & Farooq, 2014) and turnover intension (Mulang, 2022; Ozkan, 2022; Suifan et al., 2017). Increased productivity also leads to trust in workplace (Abbasi, 2020) which again is strongly associated with the employee turnover (Moon, 2015). The employee turnover in any organization is not beneficial to the concerned organization. It leads to poor motivation, poor performance, delays in carrying out important tasks, corruption, focusing on short term day-to-day operational activities rather than focusing on achieving long-term organizational strategic goals.

H<sub>3</sub>: Perceived Organizational justice has a direct relationship on turnover intention.

## 2.9. Mediation Effect of Islamic Work Ethics

Islamic work ethics (IWE) establishes Islam's assumptions concerning one's conduct at workplace which incorporates their work, commitment, collaboration, duty, social relations and innovativeness (Sa-U & Abd-Rahman, 2008). When there is a close connection with God, then every action of a person revolves around the Islamic teaching of God (Rahman et al. 2006). Hard working attitude, specifically, reflects person's mentalities towards different parts of work, including inclination for action and contribution, perspectives toward financial and non-money related prizes, and the craving for upward career mobility (Gheitani et al., 2019). In Islam, religion, morals and spiritual element dominates leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Daud & Asha'ari, 2018). Islamic Work Ethics is generally based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah, furthermore, the output that expected such as cohesiveness, improvement of community welfare and smooth performance are considered mandatory (Ali, 2015). Literature supports the intervening role of Islamic work ethics, Asutay et al., (2022) in their research claim that spirituality has influence on job satisfaction and organisational commitment, and work ethics mediate this influence.

H4: Islamic work ethics mediates the relationship between POJ and JS, OC and TI.

## **2.10 Moderating Effect of Ethical Leadership**

Scandals that highlighted unethical behavior by leaders of large corporations highlighted the need to understand "and promote" Leader's ethics (Fehr et al., 2020; Brown & Treviño, 2005; Treviño & Brown, 2004). In recent decades, the study of transformational and authentic leadership has dominated research in the field (Barling, 2013). According to Brown et al. (2005), ethical leadership is characterized by transparency and honesty. In this way, management show themselves as they are and act in the same way they expect their employees to act. In addition, they show absolute trust towards them, granting them a greater degree of autonomy.

Recent studies have explored the moderating role of ethical leadership in the relationship between perceived organizational justice and employee attitudes and behaviors. For example, a study by Islam et al. (2020) found that ethical leadership significantly weakened the negative impact of perceived injustice on job satisfaction and turnover intention. Saha et al., (2020) found that ethical leadership moderated the relationship between perceived organizational justice and affective commitment (a type of organizational commitment that involves emotional attachment to the organization). Specifically, the positive relationship between organizational justice and affective commitment was stronger when ethical leadership was high rather than low.

These findings are consistent with previous research by Colquitt et al. (2013) also support the moderating role of ethical leadership in the relationship between

organizational justice and employee attitudes. Overall, these studies suggest that ethical leadership may play an important role in shaping the impact of perceived organizational justice on employee attitudes and behaviors.

H5: Ethical leadership moderates the relationship between perceived organizational justice and job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention

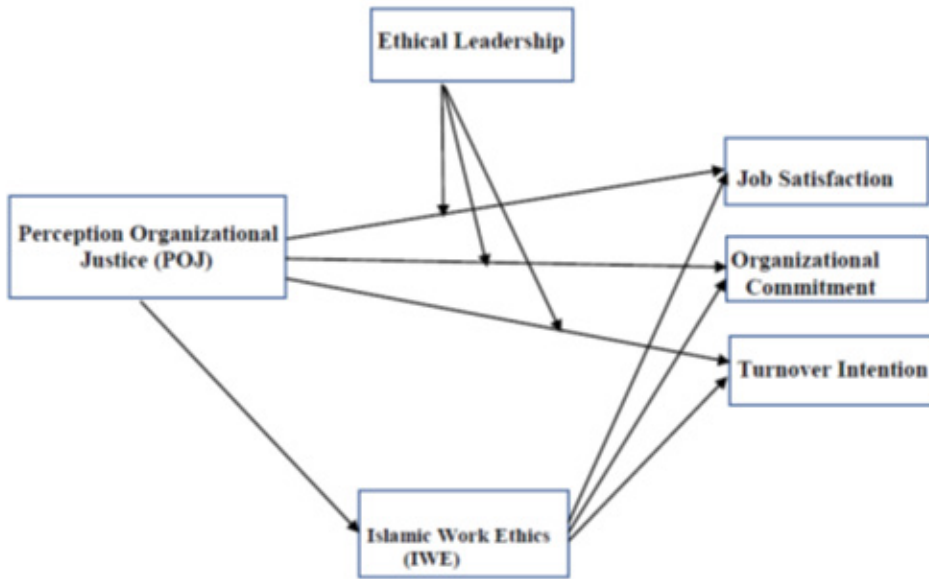


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

### 3. Research Method

#### 3.1. Method and Methodology

The term research methods refer to the methods used to obtain and analyze data, using quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (non-statistical) techniques for analysis. Whereas, methodology refers to the theory of how research should be undertaken (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The study has employed quantitative survey design using a structured questionnaire to attain the research objectives and obtain measurable and cross-section sample data. The unit of analysis was the employees working in commercial and Islamic banks in Pakistan. Practically getting a list of all employees working in the banking industry in Pakistan was not possible; hence, non-probability convenience sampling approach was employed, which allows theoretical generalization of the findings (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The respondents were

targeted through social media primarily LinkedIn and Facebook, as well as direct mailing to potential respondents, over a four weeks' period.

The banking industry plays a crucial role in the financial system of a country. In Pakistan, this sector employs over 188,000 individuals (State Bank of Pakistan, 2020) and accounts for 52.1% of the country's GDP in terms of total assets (State Bank of Pakistan, 2022), making it a significant contributor to the economy. Therefore, it is a fitting industry to be the focus of this study. Additionally, the banking system in Pakistan is increasingly adopting Islamic principles, making it an ideal setting to explore the influence of Islamic work ethics in practice.

### 3.2. Research Instrument

This study has used existing scales to measure the study variables, referring to the literature in domain of organizational justice, Islamic work ethic and work outcomes because of justice (Table 1). The level of agreement to the questions was assessed using seven point Likert scale, where 7 indicated strongly agree and 1 reflect strongly disagree, for all variables used.

Specifically with regards to the use of scale for measurement of Islamic work ethic (Ali, 1988), is a significant construct for understanding work values and behaviors of individuals in Islamic societies. The IWE scale developed by Ali (1988) has been widely used in research to assess the Islamic work ethic among Muslim individuals. The scale has been found to be reliable and valid in various studies and has been translated into multiple languages, including Arabic, Malay, and Turkish.

Prior to administration of the questionnaire, the research instruments were discussed with a select group of bankers to validate understanding and relevance of the questions in the questionnaire to the current setting. Suggestions and informal feedback received was mostly related to the text of the questions, and accordingly some minor changes to the original text of the questions were made to improve readability.

**Table 1:** Measurement Scales Used

Scale Used	# of Items	Reference
“Islamic Work Ethic (IWE)	17	“Ali (1988)”
Perception of Organizational Justice (POJ):”		“Colquitt (2001)”
“Distributive Justice”	4	
“Procedural Justice”	7	
“Interactional Justice “	9	

“Job Satisfaction (JS)”	3	“Dubinsky & Hartley (1986)”
“Organization Commitment (OC)”	3	“Luna-Arocas and Camps (2007)”
“Turnover Intent (TI)”		
“Ethical Leadership (EL)”	3	“Hom & Griffeth (1991); Luna-Arocas & Camps (2007)”
“Brown et al., 2005”	4	

### 3.3. Research Procedure

A total of 372 responses were received and used as a sample for analysis. Although as a guideline five observations per item or variables are required for analysis (Hair et al., 2006), thus minimum size of the sample required was 230 (total number of items 46 multiply by 5). The demographic results (Table 2) shows that majority (296) of the respondents were from conventional banks (79.6%) compared to 20.4% (76) from Islamic banks, number of male respondents were 360 (96.8%). The sample has bulk of the respondents who are over 40 years (about 48% up to 40 years, 33% up to 50 years and 11% over 50 years); average age of the respondents was 41 years. About 71% of the respondents hold master degree and 9% having a bachelor’s degree. The average experience of the respondents was 16.5 years.

### 3.4. Ethical Considerations

Respondents have participated on voluntary basis. It was clearly stated in the Questionnaire that the purpose of the research survey was purely academic in nature and had no commercial purpose. Since the questionnaire was floated using Google forms, the respondents had the complete choice to complete the feedback in privacy and at their convenience. This tool allows complete confidentiality of the respondents, and only demographics details of the individual respondent were captured for analysis. It was clearly stated that the feedback is anonymous and no identification information is being gathered to link the data with respondents.

### 3.5. Limitations (Delimitations and Limitations)

The respondents for this research has been mostly author’s social and academic contacts based in Pakistan, a few respondents were Pakistanis who were working abroad. Sample was obtained via online participation (via Google Forms); hence there is a possibility of lack of understanding of the questionnaire on the part of the respondents. Although questionnaires were sent to different groups of potential respondents, thus an effort was made to achieve some randomness and avoid any biasness.

**Table 2:** Demographic Profile of Respondents

Profile	Number (n=372)	Percentage
Bank Type		
Conventional Bank	296	79.6
Islamic Bank	76	20.4
Gender		
Male	360	96.8
Female	12	3.2
Age		
Up to 30 Years	33	8.9
Up to 40 Years	177	47.6
Up to 50 Years	121	32.5
Greater than 50 Years	41	11.0
Highest Degree		
Bachelor's	84	22.6
Masters	265	71.2
MPhil / MS	21	6
PhD	2	.05
Experience		
Up to 5 Years	29	7.8
Up to 19 Years	46	12.4
Up to 15 Years	102	27.4
Up to 20 Years	114	30.7
Greater than 50 Years	81	21.8

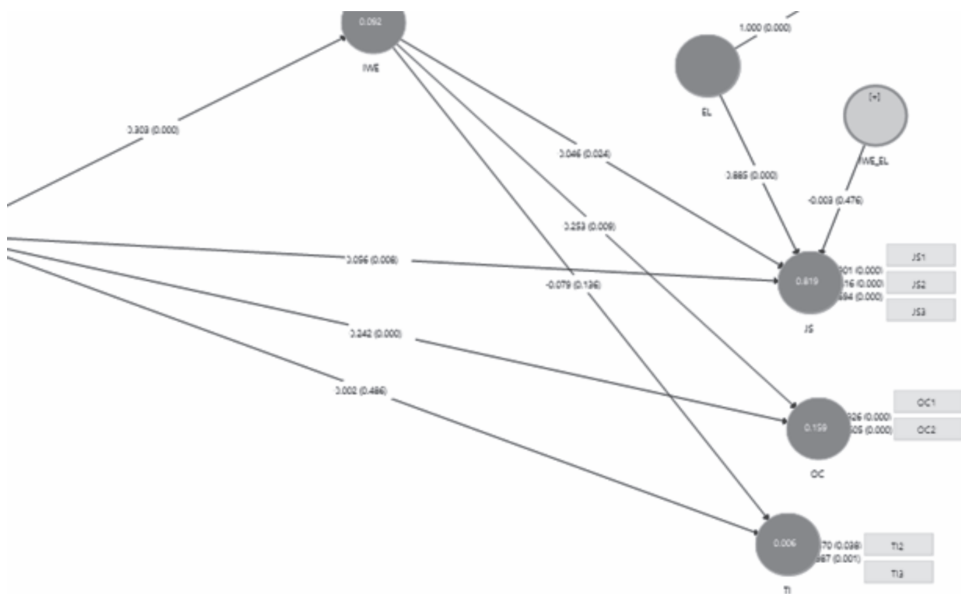
The methodology followed a cross-sectional input using a survey, completed over period of about four weeks. However, since the survey was conducted at a point in time, thus predictor (independent variable) and criterion variables (dependent variables) were measured at the same time. This could bring some common method bias and variance due to methodology adopted for measurement rather than the constructs (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Thus, leaving room for inflation of relationship between independent and dependent variables. Jakobsen and Jensen (2015) in their study submit that, common method variance does not inflate interaction effects, but rather it attenuate interaction effects.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Model Evaluation

Research hypotheses were tested using Smart PLS 3 software (PLS-SEM based), as it is consistent with the approach to determine the relationships in the inner model. In addition, use of PLS-SEM accrue benefit in terms of higher degree of statistical power, implying that it will more likely identify relationships as significant when they are indeed present in the population (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2019). Research for exploratory research shows that higher statistical power is useful, when less developed and developing theory is examined. Therefore, suitable for this study, as it explores the mediating effects of Islamic work ethic between Organizational Justice and employee outcomes.

The model evaluation approach used two-stage evaluation, first stage involved validity of the measurement model, followed by testing the relationships in the structural model, and results obtained are discussed in the next section.



Note. Model shows the hypothesized relationship between Independent Variable OJ and Dependent Variables (JS), (OC) and (TI) with mediation through (IWE) and moderation through EL.

Figure 2: Research Model



## 4.2. Reliability

In order to ensure that the measure produce consistent results free from error, reliability of the measures used needs to be ensured, this ensures its goodness. Thus, assessment of reflective measurement model first requires exploring the indicator (item) loadings, recommended to be greater than 0.708, indicating that the construct explains 50% of the indicator variance, thus ensuring acceptable item reliability. In addition, internal consistency reliability assessment was done through Cronbach's coefficient (CA), which reflect extent to which a set of indicator measures the same underlying construct (Cronbach, 1946); Composite reliability (CR), and rho to assess reliability. Table 3 lists all items with threshold factor loading of 0.60 (or close) and above (Novianti & Roz, 2020); items with less than 0.60 were omitted. Same table shows that Cronbach alpha, rho and CR meeting the threshold levels (except OC and TI for Cronbach alpha and OC for rho). Thus, reliability of the constructs was reasonably established.

**Table 3:** Factor Loadings, Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Items	Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Rho	CR	AVE
OJ	PJ1	0.814	0.960	0.964	0.963	0.621
	PJ2	0.796				
	PJ3	0.828				
	PJ4	0.832				
	PJ5	0.856				
	PJ6	0.815				
	PJ7	0.849				
IFJ	IFJ1	0.762				
	IFJ2	0.779				
	IFJ3	0.772				
	IFJ4	0.763				
	IFJ5	0.728				
IPJ	IPJ1	0.759				
	IPJ2	0.778				
	IPJ3	0.758				
	IPJ4	0.703				
JS	JS1	0.817	0.745	0.749	0.854	0.660
	JS2	0.813				

	JS3	0.808				
OC	OC1	0.849	0.507	0.578	0.734	0.486
	OC2	0.631				
	OC3	0.583				
TI	TI2	0.595	0.600	1.577	0.784	0.659
	TI3	0.981				
IWE	IWE3	0.762	0.829	0.844	0.871	0.494
	IWE4	0.731				
	IWE5	0.561				
	IWE6	0.760				
	IWE7	0.705				
	IWE10	0.648				
	IWE12	0.730				

Notes. OJ – Organizational Justice; JS – Job Satisfaction; OC – Organizational Commitment; TI – Turnover Intention; IWE – Islamic Work Ethic; CR Composite Reliability; AVE Average Variance Extracted

### 4.3. Convergent Validity

The convergent validity of each construct, measures the extent to which the construct converges to explain the variance of its items. The metric used for evaluating its convergent validity is average variance extracted (AVE), calculated by squaring the outer loading of each indicator associated with the construct, and then taking a mean value. Acceptable value of AVE is 0.50 or higher, which explains at least 50% variance is on account of its items (Hair et al., 2019). Table 3 shows that the AVE value is meeting the threshold (or is close in case of OC and IWE at 0.486 and 0.494 respectively), thus reasonably establishing convergent validity.

### 4.4. Discriminant Validity

To evaluate the measurement model, it is common to verify both the convergent and discriminant construct validity. Discriminant validity is the degree to which a construct differs from the others. The criterion to make the decision is that off-diagonal values should be less than diagonal values. From the table, it is clear that discriminant validity exists among constructs.

### 4.5. Direct Effect of Organizational Justice (OJ)

It was hypothesized that there is a direct relationship of organizational justice in

Table 4: Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

	IWE	JS	OC	OJ	TI
IWE					
JS	0.197				
OC	0.399	0.710			
OJ	0.311	0.283	0.494		
TI	0.104	0.112	0.272	0.082	-

Note. Valid values are less than 0.90

predicting employee work outcomes, which was partially supported by data in terms of positive relationship with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention and relation with Islamic work ethic. The results (Table 5), however, did not support its relation with turnover intention. However, the theory does support hypothesized predictions. Cheng et al., (2020) through his work in the area of inequality in social exchange and in view of equity theory has done the pioneering work in the domain of Organizational justice, which developed over time as a dominant theoretical perspective which helps in understanding workplace attitudes, emotions, and motivation (Gilliland, 2018).

Thus, quality of exchange relations in organizations is derived through employee's perception of justice, and it positively affect employee attitude demonstrated in terms of job satisfaction (Tziner et al., 2011; Iqbal, 2013), similarly positive relation with organizational commitment (Suliman, & Al Kathairi, 2013; Bakhshi et al., 2009), and negative relationship with turnover intention (Rai, 2013; Ponnu & Chuah, 2010). There are numerous studies, which support both these propositions. Thus organizational resources and policies needs to be geared to justice and promote perception of fairness, in order to achieve its intended positive results in terms of job satisfaction and commitment with the organization.

Greenberg (1990) submits that, "...Social scientists have long recognized the importance of ideals of justice, as a requirement basic to the effective functioning of organizations and the personal satisfaction of the individuals they employ". As referred to by Colquitt et al. (2001), "one of the reasons why academics study justice is because they believe that increasing perceptions of justice can improve results relevant to organizations (e. g organizational commitment, job satisfaction and performance)".

#### 4.6. Indirect Effect of Organizational Justice (via Islamic Work Ethic)

Table 6, explains the indirect effect of OJ via IWE on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention. The study had proposed positive

**Table 5:** Structural Model Results Summary (Direct Relationships Hypotheses)

Hypotheses	Path Coefficient	SE	t-value	P value	Decision
H1: OJ → JS	0.222	0.054	4.105	< .001	Supported
H2: OJ → OC	0.290	0.051	5.704	< .001	Supported
H3: OJ → TI	-0.041	0.063	0.650	0.516	Not Supported
H4: OJ → IWE	0.292	0.050	5.863	< .001	Supported

mediation of (IWE) with organization justice and employee work outcomes, the result support the hypothesized propositions only to the extent of positive effect of IWE with organizational commitment. The results do not support mediated relation with job satisfaction and turnover intention, which to the extent of this study contradicts with most of the past studies. However, Colquitt et al., (2001), had concluded that the findings on the relationship between OJ and TI is “somewhat muddled”, as different studies show different aspects of justice (some state distributive justice and other state procedural justice) having influence on TI, and the subsequent research continue to predict different results on the relationship (Rai, 2013).

**Table 6:** Mediation Effect

Hypotheses	Path Coefficients	SE	t-value	P Value	Decision
H5: OJ → IWE → JS	0.097	0.051	1.905	0.057	Not supported
H6: OJ → IWE → OC	0.220	0.091	2.415	0.016	Supported
H7: OJ → IWE → TI	-0.062	0.074	0.837	0.413	Not Supported

**Table 7:** Moderation Effect

Hypotheses	Path Coefficients	SE	t-value	P Value	Decision
H8: IWE_EL1 → JS	0.221	0.081	2.46	0.015	Supported
H9: IWE_EL2 → OC	0.220	0.091	2.415	0.016	Supported
H10: IWE_EL3 → TI	-0.062	0.074	0.837	0.413	Not Supported

Hypotheses about the moderation effects of ethical leadership were supported to the extent of having a positive intervention on both job satisfaction and organization commitment. However, the empirical results derived did not any show any channeling effect of ethical leadership on turnover intention in the context of organizational justice.

#### **4.7. Implications for HRM**

This study has the potential to offer valuable insights for both researchers and practitioners. By examining the interplay between organizational justice and Islamic work ethic as moderators of the relationship between work outcomes, it can enhance our understanding of how these factors operate in a non-Western Muslim context. This, in turn, could stimulate further research in this area, including investigations into the specific components of organizational justice and how they interact with work ethics and ethical leadership. The findings of this study may also be useful for educators teaching topics related to Islamic work ethic and its relevance to organizational behavior.

Furthermore, this study could provide valuable insights for practitioners seeking to enhance organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and reduce turnover intention. It could also enhance their understanding of the applicability of Islamic work ethics in the current context, thereby aiding in the development of a work-related policy framework. Additionally, the research findings could assist policy makers, particularly those working in Islamic financial institutions, in utilizing the principles of Islamic work ethics to establish work-related standards.

The perception of justice among employees plays a crucial role in determining the quality of exchange relations within an organization. Therefore, it is important for organizations to prioritize justice in their resources and policies to promote a perception of fairness and achieve positive outcomes such as increased job satisfaction and commitment.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The objective of this study was to empirically validate the presence of mediation effect of Islamic work ethic on organizational justice by measuring direct and indirect effects on behavioral and attitudinal variables (i.e. job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention), and also assess the positive and negative relationships with the dependent variables. The findings as per hypothesized propositions were partially supported. This demand for the need for more replication research with the same variables and different contexts in terms of cultures, religious

and economic stages. By unbundling the core constructs, i. e. both the exogenous and mediating variables, especially the organizational justice to its subcomponents for future research to explore the relationships at first order to enhance the predictability of the theoretical model. In addition, there is a need to enhance the validity of the measurement scales by more close adaptation of the scale in the local language. Also, there is need to enhance its scope and link with applied ethics and integrate with elements of business philosophy by looking into the elements of Koestenbaum's diamond leadership model.

### 5.1 Future Research Directions

For future research on the subject, the scope of the measurement of the outcomes of the interplay between justice and ethic and its perception by the employees, can be broadened. This can be done by including measurement of possible impact on the financial performance and competitive position of the overall organizations, and not limiting to some aspects of the organization citizenship behavior of the employees. Thus, future research should take into consideration, other external independent factors. Factors that are associated with economic, industry, competitive forces, market trends, organizational resources, and technical capabilities, social changes, which can be examined for association with the overall performance of the business firm. Both financially and in terms of its competitive position. This would pose challenges in terms of research design due to incorporation of these factors, but such studies would provide good insight in the relationship of organizational justice with complete organizational level performance.

Ethical leadership is a complex concept that is made up of several underlying components. To better understand it, researchers need to break down these components and examine them separately. One way to do this is to explore the “moral dimension” of leadership, which includes qualities like being spiritual, authentic, and transformational. Additionally, several theories can be used to explore ethical leadership and its related concepts, including signaling theory, stakeholder theory, social learning theory, attribution theory, social identity theory, social exchange theory, and role congruence theory. To fully understand ethical leadership, it is important to focus on both the measurement and theoretical aspects of the construct. This involves developing accurate ways to measure ethical leadership and testing different theories to see which ones best explain the concept. (Banks et al., 2021).

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