

# Relationship between Work-Family and Interpersonal Conflicts: Mediating Role of Psychological Distress and the Moderating Effect of Islamic Work Ethics

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## Abstract

This study has been carried out to examine the association between work family conflict, psychological distress and interpersonal conflict with moderating role of Islamic work ethics. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed and data of 262 medical practitioners were collected for this study. CFA and SEM techniques have been used to analyze the data. The results show that work family conflict has a positive effect on psychological distress and interpersonal conflict. The study finds that presence of Islamic work ethic plays a moderating role by weakening the relationship between psychological distress and interpersonal conflict. Results also show that psychological distress mediates the relationship between work family conflict and interpersonal conflict.

**Keywords:** Islamic work ethics (IWE), Work family conflict, Interpersonal conflict, Psychological distress.

**KAUJIE Classification:**

**JEL Classification:**

## 1. Introduction

Two of the vital facets of a person's adulthood are family and work. However, fast paced life of modern era makes both of these domains somewhat incompatible. Therefore, a conflict becomes inevitable, given the role expectations of these two domains. The studies have shown that these conflicts lead to numerous detrimental outcomes such as job burnout, dissatisfaction at job, employees' turnover as well as interpersonal conflict and workplace aggression (Frone et al., 1992; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991; Wang et al., 2014). Interpersonal conflict has been defined as "*negative interpersonal encounters involving covert hostility and contentious and angry exchanges between individuals within an organization*" (Keenan & Newton, 1985). Due to higher competition in employment situations, work-life conflict has become more prevalent, resulting in interpersonal conflicts and aggression at

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workplace (Frone et al., 1992; Netemeyer & Boles, 1996; Wang et al., 2014). It is important to achieve a balance between these two vital facets. Individuals come across more conflicts between job and personal life when they continue following the urge for quality of life that they crave for (Casper et al., 2011).

Another key outcome of work-life conflict is psychological distress that is “a state of emotional suffering characterized by symptoms of depression (e.g., lost interest, sadness, hopelessness); and anxiety (Mirowsky & Ross, 2002). According to Lazarus and Folkman’s (1984), a person’s ability to handle stress situation depends exquisitely upon his/her thinking, perception and motivation. It is possible that a person does nothing harmful at all, yet it affects his/her mental capabilities in the long run, which would ultimately affect his/her job performance (Restubog, Scott & Zagenczyk, 2011). Such stress and anxiety can spill over at workplace affecting one’s behavior, and ultimately the performance (Leiter & Durup, 1996). One such type of abusive behavior is called interpersonal conflict. Interpersonal conflict is a phenomenon that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with the attainment of their goals (Barki & Hartwick, 2001). It can occur amongst people who are victim of some frustration or facing some pressures at workplace due to misunderstanding or disagreements between coworkers (Harris et al., 2011; Penney & Spector, 2005).

Beekun (1997) defined Islamic work ethics (IWE) as a set of principles which help differentiate between right and wrong. To put in other words, it is what a person thinks of as appropriate to do or say. Islamic work ethics refer to orientation towards work, and Islam treats ethical behaviors at work place as a virtue (Rizk, 2008). In Islam, work ethics solely rely on the teachings and guidance of Islam; what ALLAH say and has taught us via Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). Studies of Ali (2005) and Rizk (2008) reaffirm that IWE concept originates from Holy Quran, and teachings of Holy Prophet (PBUH). The Prophet taught us that sins are forgiven for those who work hard and it is legacy of four pious Caliphs of Islamic era. The Prophet also said, “*I have been sent for the purpose of perfecting good morals*” (Ibn Hambal, No: 8595)

IWE have been researchers’ focus of attention for a while. For example, it has been found to be associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment, (Yousef, 2001; Rokhman, 2010). Others studied IWE in the context of attitude towards organizational change (Yousef, 2000), motivation (Hayati & Caniago, 2012), and other HR domain variables such as locus of control, role conflict and role ambiguity (Yousef, 2000). It is clear from the above discussion that ‘IWE’ is an imperative variable with implications for managers and researchers. However, it is important to note that focus of these studies has been other job related outcomes (e.g. job satisfaction, organizational commitment, change etc.) rather than job stress and employees’ wellbeing. Of course, a few studies have explored the relationship of IWE with stress and employees’ wellbeing such as Maaz ud din and Farooq (2016) and Ajmal and Irfan (2014). These studies provide some reference to the contextual role played by IWE, yet the number of studies are rare and the contextual role of IWE with psychological distress and conflict is still to be explored for proper guidance for the practitioners.

In the lights of above discussion, it is clear that work-family conflict leads to psychological distress which in turn results in various detrimental outcomes. Therefore, one of the objectives of study is to investigate the link between work-family and interpersonal conflict mediated by psychological distress. This relationship has been left ignored in past studies. Furthermore, the

role of IWE in reducing stress and conflict has not been explored in past studies to the best of this study's researchers knowledge. In the case of doctors and medical practitioners, the case of work life conflict becomes even more important. Medical practitioners being one of the key constituents of any economy and society, are most stressed individuals, who are prone to work life conflict (Machi et al., 2015). Therefore, a study to understand their work life conflict and to propose possible remedies is warranted.

Therefore, this study makes important contribution to the literature on work-family conflict and IWE. It contributes by tapping into the relationship between work-life conflict and interpersonal conflict mediated by psychological distress. Besides, it tests for the moderating role of IWE between psychological distress and interpersonal conflict.

## **2. Literature review and hypotheses development**

This section discusses the key variables used in this study and eventually leads to the development of hypotheses set forth.

### **2.1. Work family conflict and interpersonal conflict**

The work and family intermix has become a topic of greater interest in the psychological research. Significant and rapid changes occurred in the configuration of the workforce such as significant increase in women's workforce participation as well as the greater number of couples in which both of the partners having paid occupation (Major & Germano, 2006). Most recently, French et al. (2018) established that apart from dual-working couples, increased use of technology and cross-national work also cause work family conflicts. Kahn et al. (1964) first proposed the concept of work-family conflict that can be defined as "the role that might get conflicting and the pressure that is being triggered due to inconsistency at some level among the employment and domestic factors", which proceeds to the conflict at work life and personal life interface. Frone, Russell and Cooper (1992) directed that work-family conflict was a two-way concept, and possibly could break up into two conditions - either job that is interfered with household, or household that is interfered with job. When household troubles and liabilities meddle with work place fatigue, the unfinished job fatigue, in return, might meddle with home sweet home. On other side of the coin, when the troubles and burdens of job intrude with the functioning of household errands, the household errands would, in response, get involved with the job. Therefore, as an outcome of the modern life, individuals tend to experience very high levels of stress that ultimately lead to an adverse impact on their emotional, physiological, cognitive and behavioral state.

In a common practice, interpersonal conflict that occurs at work is a state of depression which results in minor arguments, scattering rumors and gossiping (Spector & Jex, 1998). More explicitly, the interpersonal conflict is defined by the researchers as "an organizational stressor that consists of differences among individuals in the workplace". Conflicts that take place at the workplace might lead to generating the unsympathetic environments that pave a way for the additional demands on part of the employees. Those who suffer interpersonal conflict at work often prefer to use the emotion regulation and rational thinking in order to cope up with the feelings of annoyance and antagonism; the direct outcome of the conflict. These strategies may leave them feeling shattered and incapable to deal with the additional demands at work or home (Grandey, 2000); in some cases, it may give rise to workplace bullying (Agotnes, et al., 2018).

Extant literature supports interplay between work family conflict and interpersonal conflict. Frone, Russel and Cooper (1992) found positive and consistent relationship between work family conflict and depression. While conducting a study on the relationship between work family conflict and its outcomes, Wang et al. (2014) also found that presence of conflict in family and work relations did influence aggressive behavior at work place. Other past studies also suggest that work family conflict is positively related to conflict at workplace (Netemeyer & Boles, 1996).

## **2.2. Work family conflict and psychological distress**

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985:77) define work-family conflict as "a form of inter role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some contexts. Psychological distress is mostly termed as a state of emotional suffering characterized by symptoms of depression (e.g., lost interest; sadness; hopelessness) and anxiety (e.g., restlessness; feeling tense) (Mirowsky and Ross 2002). Number of studies have found that work family conflict envisages psychological distress (Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Kobasa, 1979; Wang et al., 2014)

A typical conflict between work and family arises when one role collides with another (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This inter role conflict can take two ways (Frone, 2003). The job task can interfere with the family task (WIF), or the family task can interfere with the job task (FIW). It is really essential for every individual to stay calm and in a healthy mental state in order to be well prepared for anything forthcoming in life. Stress of losing someone close or any kind of the failure may cause a high impact on mental as well as physical health (Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Kobasa, 1979). Personality literature suggests some people are always mentally prepared to face sudden situations, which is a personality trait of few ones. Work family conflict can be the root of major stress and clashes. Probable aftermaths of work–family conflict can be split into three definite classifications: work-related, family-related, and domain-unspecific outcomes (Bellavia & Frone, 2005). Aminah (2008) has justifiably studied that the work family conflict has harmful impact on employee's execution levels. Stress or frustration from the side of family can be very problematic (Lim, Cortina & Magley, 2008). This makes people go down, get into isolation, more prone to anger and lack of creative thinking (Pearson, Andersson & Wegner, 2001).

The conservation of resource theory is a must to be mentioned here. It is a stress theory that describes the motivation that drives humans to both maintain their current resources and to pursue new resources (Hobfoll, 1989). When translated into the context of this paper, it states that when people run into conflict, they not only lose performance and get worried about their work, but they also fear of losing their valuable resources. Another key theory to mention here is spill over theory; which explains the conditions under which the spillover between work and family could be either positive or negative. The spillover is expected to be negative when work and family interaction are rigidly structured. While on the other hand, if there is flexibility between work and family, the spillover could be positive and would help to achieve work life balance (Hill, Ferris & Martinson, 2003). In the context of current study, when family tasks are not accomplished at home they are brought to workplace, and an unconscious attention diversion occurs. As a result, workplace gets neglected and performance graph falls down affecting one's performance. This phenomenon is also known as procrastination (Pearson, Andersson & Wegner, 2001). Hence, we hypothesize:

H1: Work family conflict affects the psychological distress positively and significantly.

### **2.3. Psychological distress and interpersonal conflict**

The existence of psychological distress has been recognized for thousands of years. Whenever someone is exposed to the stress, he / she first tries to cope up with it by resisting it. When it continues and body keeps on trying to resist, it leads to exhaustion. Long term exposure to stress can lead to physical dis-functioning which ultimately leads to a disease (Baum, Singer, & Baum, 1981). More recently, Letellier et al. (2018) argued that presence of adverse psychosocial work elements results in an increased level of psychological distress. Continuous psychological distress can decrease one's motivation and abilities to perform outclass in comparison with others (Hockey,1997). Stress or frustration from side of family can be very problematic (Lim, Cortina & Magley, 2008). People's response to the event or object of stress is also very important, how they may react is all dependent upon how much they feel frightened or endangered (Lazarus, 1966).

Interpersonal conflict that occurs at work manifests itself in minor arguments, scattering rumors and gossiping (Spector & Jex, 1998). These strategies may leave them feeling shattered and also incapable to deal with the additional demands at work or home (Grandey, 2000) and in some cases, it may give rise to workplace bullying (Agotnes et al., 2018). Human beings naturally form the groups and try to differentiate their respective group from those of the outsiders. This might lead to the possible conflict among races, religions, political systems and even teams or departments at work, thus just to make some people feel out of the place.

Family is said to be the backbone of every person's upbringing and personality, if one is not happy or stable in its family environment he will be very prone to anger, frustration, temper, which can lead to negative outcomes (Gibbons et al., 2011). And interpersonal conflict is one such negative outcome. Cortina et al. (2001) also stated that stress situations can lead to negative outcomes as mental disorder, serious deviant behavior and doing negative behaviors. Previously, Keenan & Newton (1985) and Spector & Jex (1998) also stated that the concepts of stress and interpersonal conflict are associated with each other. Therefore, we propose that:

H2: Psychological distress affects the interpersonal conflict positively and significantly.

### **2.4. Moderating role of Islamic Work Ethics**

Discussion on Islamic work ethics was initiated by Ali (1988). The term 'Islamic Work Ethics' (IWE) has been drawn from Weber's theory of protestant work ethics (Ajmal & Irfan,2014). IWE can be explained as the collective array of ethical ideologies that separate between incorrect and correct in the Islamic framework (Beekun, 1997). Rizk (2008) has explained the concept of IWE as an orientation that points towards the virtue of work in human lives. IWE in crux refers to acting upon the teachings of Muhammad (PBUH) and the Qur'an. The image of any company with Islamic work ethics is very important for every organization. People make financial investment decisions based on this concept and customers' purchase decisions are also linked to it. People avoid buying products from company labelled as unethical or immorally wrong (Sadozai et al., 2013). Quran says with regard to dealings with others, "*Give full measure and full weight in justice, and wrong not people in respect of their goods* (Quran 11:85).

Islamic work ethic are related to employees' performance and their well-being. It includes mental wellbeing, coping with workloads and stress (Mohamed et al., 2010; Ajmal & Irfan,

2014; Nasr, 1984). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that sins are waived off by hard work, and the food ate by a person by hard work is the best food (Ali, 1992). Previous researches have focused on just job performance or satisfaction; this research has been narrowed down and its variables are tested in light of the previous researches. The studies have shown and proved that work ethics are strongly related to one's mental or psychological state.

Islam has provided the simple and widespread knowledge that is purely based on the ethics. It tends to regulate every aspect related to life. For instance, it includes the setup of work in accounting, social and economic activities (Naqvi, 1981). IWE possibly spell out as the collective array of ethical ideologies that bifurcate the do's and don'ts of the Islamic framework. The IWE lead to an orientation that points towards the virtue of work in human lives. According to the Islamic Work Ethics setup, the success and achieving the peace of mind is known to be achieved with work. Moreover, the employee's turnover intent can also be predicated by Islamic Work Ethics related research. IWE oriented employees generally show lesser turnover behavior. Therefore, it can be considered as the believable fact that such employees who follow the Islamic work ethics, show lesser turnover intention, they are more satisfied with their job, tend to show high job involvement and don't become victim of psychological distress. Hence, they are less involved in the interpersonal conflict at work place (Ahmad, 2011).

IWE are generally derived from the intentions while doing the work, instead of the results of work. In order to have a welfare society, it is really important to have the necessary measures of the provision of full justice and generosity at the work place. The competition in work has also been seen as the improvement in work quality. Thus more precisely, IWE are obligatory for healthy life to earn money for the survival of life. According to IWE, work is kind of a noble deed as it fulfills the necessities for survival and maintains equilibrium in individual and social life. Work is associated to give the man a sense of independence, self-respect, satisfaction, pleasure and fulfillment of the purpose of life. IWE tend to reduce the problems of society and encourage commitment. If each person is committed to his job and avoids unethical methods of wealth accumulation, it would lead to the healthy working environment and lesser interpersonal conflicts that ultimately lead to a healthy and stress free life. This also brings good balance of work and life (Ahmad, 2011). The extant literature does support the argument that Islamic work ethics play a contextual role in job and work related studies. For example, Rawwas and Javed (2018) found that Islamic work ethics moderate the relationship between perception of politics and negligent workplace behavior in the way that relationship would be weaker when Islamic work ethics are higher.

Previous sections discussed that work life conflict leads to psychological distress and is associated with interpersonal conflict. However, previous studies' results are mixed. For example, some studies failed to establish a relationship between work life conflict and negative job related outcomes (Anwar & Shahzad, 2011; Bhuian et al., 2005; Netemeyer et al., 1996). Together, the controversies in the relationship between work life conflict and negative job related outcomes suggest the possibility of the presence of personal or contextual factors that may moderate these relationships (Colquitt et al., 2006). Since the Islamic work ethics are a source of inner satisfaction, IWE may be an important moderator in the relationship between stress and negative job outcomes. Hence, we hypothesize:

H3: Islamic work ethics moderate the relationship between psychological distress and interpersonal conflict in such a way that it weakens the relationship.

## **2.5. Mediating role of psychological distress**

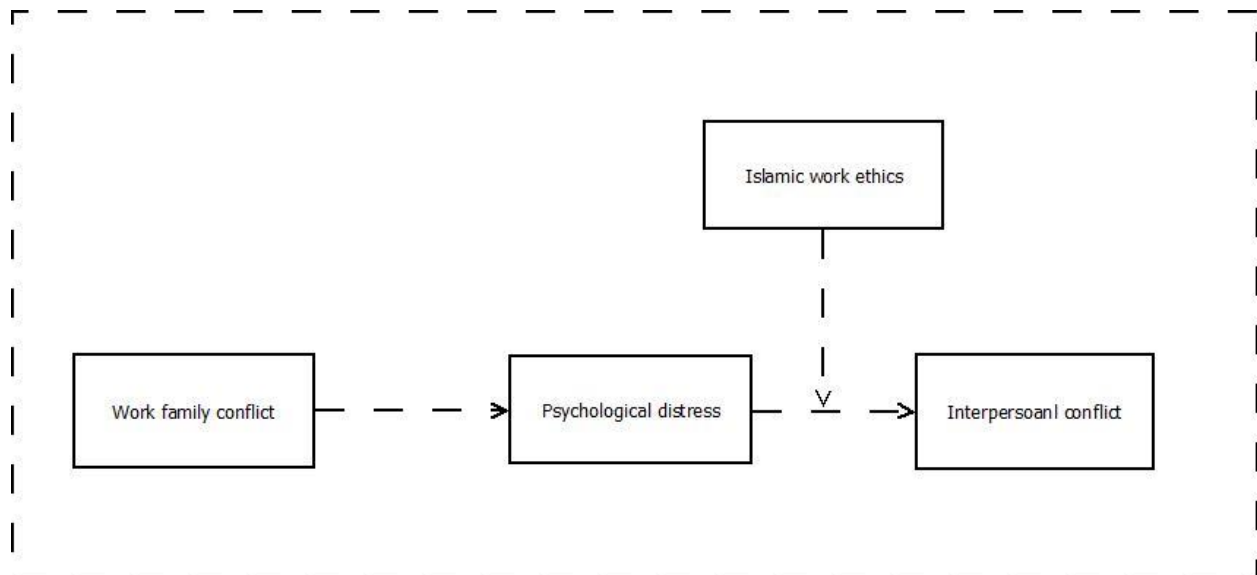
Psychological distress has an intense impact on the overall work performance of the individuals. The factors which cause the psychological distress are being found highly related to the various factors at work place like over-time exertion, pressure exerted regarding the goal attainment, which might be attributed to burden of responsibilities. Personal life events that lead to psychological stress can be ultimately resulting in the work outcomes, the most important of which is the conflict with other people at work (Bhagat, 1983). Actually, the experiences in one domain, such as the family, are very much responsible in casting the spillover to affect the mood and behavior in another domain such as the workplace. Studies have shown that the family stress might prevent workers from fulfilling their job responsibilities (Ford et al., 2007).

Employees who are the sufferers of imbalance in work to life balance might continue pondering and worrying during their job, thus making them negligent to work tasks. Family members might demand warmhearted communication from the employee, but various roles clash makes person incapable to various roles expectancy. Bartolome (1972) believed that many young managers have been subjected to two phases that may possibly not be in line with each other. Thus it may possibly be hard to regard both aspects simultaneously. The existence of imbalance in work and personal lives of the employees has resulted in higher interpersonal conflicts and lack of focus by the employees, and high turnover rates. The workers' abilities to achieve the critical goals of work have been declined due to psychological distress (Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

The objective of flexible work arrangements is reducing the inter-role conflict that could be caused by the psychological distress factor created at work. It also seems reasonable to assume that flexible arrangements would be attractive to workers. Particularly for those who are facing the competing demand of two domains (Rau & Hyland, 2002). Hence, the problem of work life balance needed to get fixed (Yasbek, 2004). Hudson (2005) took into account that work life balance was a predecessor of organizational commitment. Organizations must devise and then implement such practices and benefits that would help employees balance their work and lives (e.g., flexible work schedules etc.), because it has been found that the job-related tension has a causal impact on the interpersonal conflicts through psychological distress which then influences turnover intentions (Kemery et al., 1987). Hence, the hypothesis:

H4: Psychological distress mediates the relationship between work family conflict and interpersonal conflict.

On the basis of above formulated hypotheses, theoretical framework of the study is given below in figure 2.1.



*Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework*

### **3. Research methodology**

This portion discusses the methodology adopted for the study; includes sampling, measures adopted as well as reliabilities of measure and correlations. Some useful demographics have also been discussed.

#### **3.1. Population and Sampling**

The population of the study are the medical practitioners. Medical practitioners have been considered one of the most stressed individuals due to overwork. Hence, there has been higher prevalence of work life conflict among them (Mache et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2012). Due to time and cost considerations, the researchers used a convenience sampling for this study and initially distributed 300 questionnaires. Sample size of 300 was chosen on the basis of method suggested by Sekaran & Bougie (2016). According to their suggestion, if the population is 10000, the ideal sample size should be 260. In the twin cities (Rawalpindi/Islamabad) there are no more than 10000 medical practitioners; it is, therefore, an appropriate sample size.

Out of 300 questionnaires initially distributed, 262 (87 percent response rate) were returned in usable form with male respondents 66.4% and females 33.6%. Most of the respondents had age between 15 and 35, comprising about 85%. As far as marital status is concerned, 53.3 % people were single, while 44.3% were married. It can be observed that most of the doctors included in the study are young and have begun their careers. Therefore, 88.2 % had less than or equal to 10 years' experience, 8.8% had 11 to 20 years of experience, 1.1% had 31 to 40 years of experience.

#### **3.2. Measures**

All the study variables have been measured on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagreed=1 to strongly agree=5 or Not at all =1 and many times= 5.

Psychological distress was measured using 5 item scale adopted from Restubog et al., (2011). Work family conflict is measured using 5 item scale adopted from Netemeyer &



McMurrian (1996). Islamic work ethics have been measured using 16 item scale by (Ali, 1992). The Cronbach's Alpha values for all adopted scales are presented in table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Reliability analysis**

Variables	Cronbach alpha
Work family conflict	0.882
Psychological distress	0.827
Interpersonal conflict	0.806
Islamic work ethics	0.841

#### 4. Results

We analyzed the data using a procedure of maximum likelihood using IBM, SPSS, AMOS 21. The assessment of the structural model follows the two-stage analytic technique, confirmatory factor analysis/ measurement model followed by structural model.

##### 4.1. Correlations

Table 4.1 presents the correlations between the variables used in the study. According to the rule, a low correlation exists among variables when  $r$  is between 0.10 to 0.29 or  $-0.10$  to  $-0.29$ . A moderate correlation exists when  $r$  is between 0.30 to 0.49 or  $-0.30$  to  $-0.49$ . And a strong correlation exists when  $r$  is between 0.50 to 1.0 or  $-0.50$  to  $-1.0$  (Cohen, 1988). The correlation between work life conflict and psychological distress is .408 indicating a strong positive relationship. Similarly, the correlation between psychological distress and interpersonal conflict is .581 indicating a strong positive relationship between them as well. Furthermore, the negative correlation values of Islamic work ethics with all other variables also hints about their proposed negative moderating role.

**Table 4.1: Correlations**

S. No.	Variables	1	2	3	4
1	Work family conflict	1			
2	Psychological distress	.408**	1		
3	Interpersonal conflict	.271**	.581**	1	
4	Islamic work ethics	-.218	-.357*	-.425**	1

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

## 4.2. Measurement model

Before performing SEM, some pre-requisite assumptions have to be met. For this study, the pre-requisite assumptions as suggested by Dastageer and Rehman (2012) were met: it was ensured that no issues were existent in terms of missing data, outliers, skewness/kurtosis, normality, linearity, and multicollinearity.

An important parameter of confirmatory factor analysis is the estimation of standardized factor loading or constructs loadings. Hair et al. (2006) proposed the deletion of variables which violate the limit of standardized factor loadings by 1.00, or near to it. In order to ensure this limit value is not exceeding, Hair et al. (2006) also suggested setting a very small error variance value of 0.005. Table 4.2 shows that all the loadings were significant, with no item having the loading so low to be deleted.

Convergent validity was examined using average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the values of AVE and CR should be about 0.50 and 0.70, respectively. As seen in table 4.2, the CR and AVE values range from 0.823 to 0.955, while AVE values range from 0.524 to 0.631. As far as discriminant validity is concerned, it can be tested when the square root of AVE of each construct is greater than the correlation with itself and other constructs. The AVE values for work family conflict, psychological distress, interpersonal conflict and Islamic work ethic are 0.72, 0.79, 0.73 and 0.76 respectively. All these values are greater the correlations with itself and other constructs.

**Table 4.2: Construct loadings, AVE and CR**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Loadings</b>
Work family conflict AVE=0.524 CR=0.867	WFC1	0.726***
	WFC2	0.848***
	WFC3	0.772***
	WFC4	0.669***
	WFC5	0.632***
	WFC6	0.676***
Interpersonal conflict AVE=0.539 CR=0.823	IC1	0.670***
	IC2	0.767***
	IC3	0.754***
	IC4	0.743***
Psychological distress AVE=0.631 CR=0.871	PD1	0.855***
	PD2	0.841***
	PD3	0.745***
	PD4	0.729***
Islamic work ethics AVE=0.575 CR=0.955	IWE1	0.757***
	IWE2	0.702***
	IWE3	0.708***
	IWE4	0.834***
	IWE5	0.809***
	IWE6	0.765***
	IWE7	0.760***
	IWE8	0.752***
	IWE9	0.683***
	IWE10	0.803***
	IWE11	0.799***
	IWE12	0.822***
	IWE13	0.721***
	IWE14	0.652***
	IWE15	0.719***
	IWE16	0.823***

The measurement model has been estimated using structural equation modeling shown in figure 4.1. The goodness-of-fit indices for the measurement model are Chi-square = 864.617 (df =399),  $p < 0.00$ . The Chi-square is significant, and the normed Chi-square value ( $X^2/df$ ) is 2.167, which is within the suggested ratio of 2 to 3 as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.067 indicates acceptable fit, which is below the suggested cut off value of 0.08 (MacCallum et al., 1996).

Goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.92; Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 0.95; and comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.96. All the values are above the cut off values  $\geq 0.90$  suggested by Hooper et al. (2008). We therefore interpret the overall model fit as acceptable.

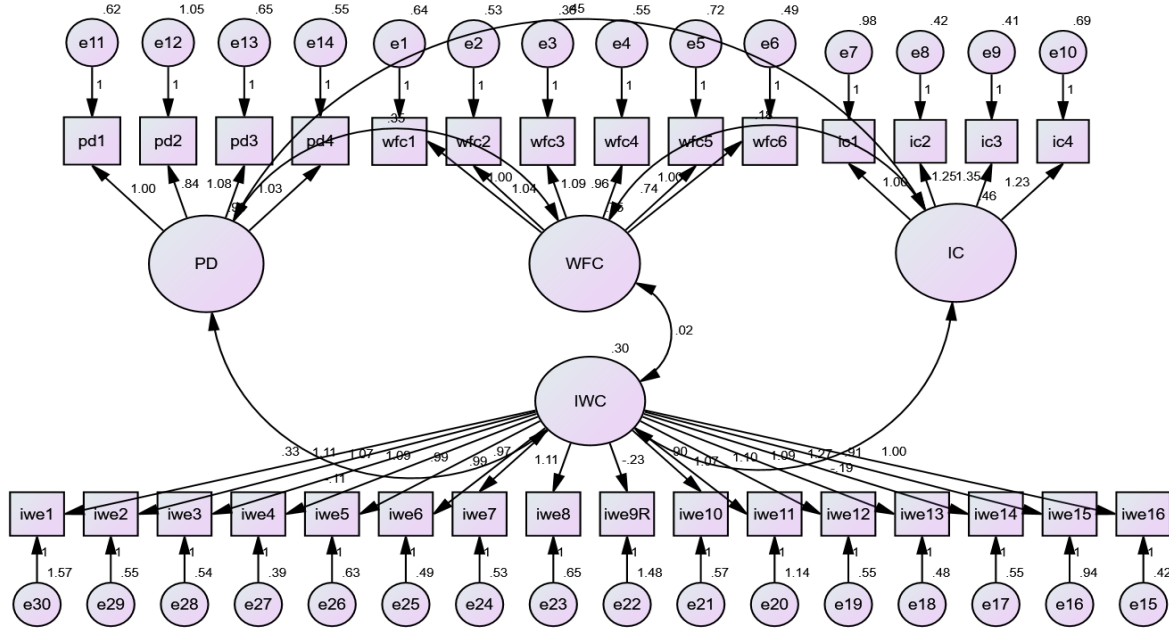


Figure 4.1: Measurement Model

### 4.3. Structural model

Table 4.3 presents the results of the hypotheses testing (H1, H2, and H3), including path coefficients, critical ratio for regression weight (C.R.), and standard error of regression weight (S.E.) values for each structural path.

Table 4.3: Structural parameter estimates

Relationship	Hypothesis	Estimate	C.R.	S.E.	<i>p</i>
Work Family Conflict → Psychological Distress	H1	.470	.065	7.226	***
Psychological Distress → Interpersonal Conflict	H2	.513	.045	11.518	***
(Psychological Distress x Islamic Work Ethic) → Interpersonal Conflict	H4	-.985	.059	-4.019	***

Where *P* value at \*\*\* indicates  $p < 0.001$

H1 predicted that work family conflict would have significant and positive effect on psychological distress. Results show that work family conflict is significant and positive predictor of psychological distress (path estimate .470,  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus H1 is supported. As

predicted in H2, psychological distress has been found to be a significant and positive predictor of interpersonal conflict (path estimate .513,  $p < 0.001$ ).

H3 proposed that the IWE would moderate the relationship between psychological distress and interpersonal conflict. The interaction effects for this relationship were established (path estimate  $-.985$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), thus supporting the hypothesis. Figure 4.2 plots the interaction effects of Islamic work ethics (IWE) and psychological distress (PD) on interpersonal conflict (IC). The graph shows that Islamic work ethics moderate the relationship between psychological distress and interpersonal conflict such that higher the Islamic work ethics, weaker the relationship between psychosocial distress and interpersonal conflict.

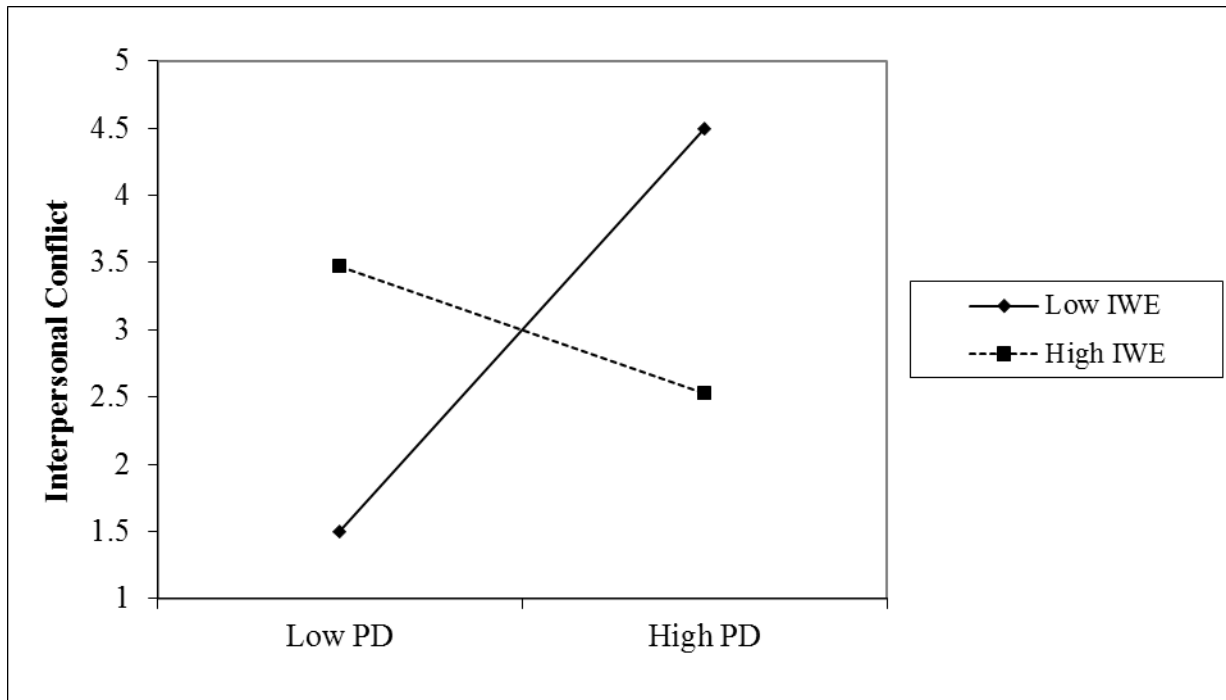


Figure 4.2: IWC moderates between PD and IC

As for the H4 is concerned, it was proposed that psychological distress mediates the relationship between work family conflict and interpersonal conflict. Preacher and Hayes (2008) method has been used for this analysis. In this study 95 per cent confidence interval was obtained with 5000 bootstrap resamples (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The figure 4.3 shows the outcome of mediation analysis performed.

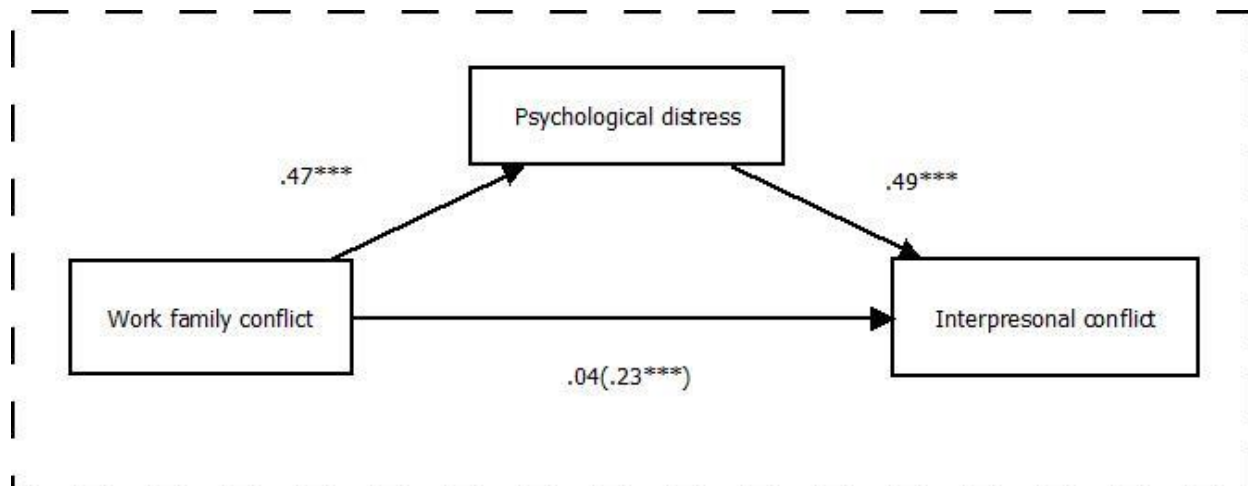


Figure 4.3: Mediation analysis

Table 4.4 summarizes the mediations analysis performed. First, it has been found that work family conflict is positively related to interpersonal conflict (B=.2345, p=0.000). It is also found that work family conflict is positively associated with psychological distress (B=.4701, p=0.000). And finally, it is found that the mediator, psychological distress is positively related to interpersonal conflict (B=.4988, p=0.000). Since both the X to M and M to Y paths are significant, mediation analysis is performed. The results reveal that psychological distress plays a mediating role between the relationship of work family conflict and interpersonal conflict (Bootstrap SE= .0411, CI= .1608 to .3233). It is also found that the direct effect of work family conflict on interpersonal conflict became insignificant (B=.0410) when controlling for psychological distress which indicates a full mediation. Hence H4 is supported.

Table 4.4: Mediation analysis

<b>Outcome: Psychological distress</b>				
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	1.0512	.2005	5.2425	.0000
Work family conflict	.4701	.0652	7.2117	.0000
<b>Outcome: Interpersonal conflict</b>				
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	.7717	.1664	4.6361	.0000

Psychological distress	.4988	.0490	10.1883	.0000
Work family conflict	.2345	.0564	.7266	.0000
<b>Direct effect of X on Y</b>				
	<i>Effect</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
	.2345	.0564	.7266	.0000
<b>Indirect effect of X on Y</b>				
	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>	<i>BootLLCI</i>	<i>BootULCI</i>
	.0410	.0411	.1608	.3233

Where P value at \*\*\* indicates  $p < 0.001$

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

In this study, we tested work family conflict with interpersonal conflict mediated by psychological distress. It also tested the moderating role of Islamic work ethics at two instances. First, it tests whether Islamic work ethics moderate the relationship between work family conflict and psychological distress and second, it tests the moderating role of Islamic work ethics between psychological distress and interpersonal conflict.

H1, which states “work family conflict affects the psychological distress positively and significantly” is accepted. The results are aligned with Holmes & Rahe (1967) and Kobasa (1979). When there is a clash between two roles or multiple responsibilities (whether family to work, or work to family) it increases the tension and stress level. Therefore, a person is not able to pay attention, which increases psychological distress and performance of a person.

The conservation of resource theory is a must to be mentioned here. It is a stress theory that describes the motivation that drives humans to both maintain their current resources and to pursue new resources (Hobfoll, 1989). When translated into the context of this paper, it states that when people run into conflict, they not only lose performance and get worried about their work, but they also fear of losing their valuable resources. Another key theory worth mentioning here is spill over theory, which explains the conditions under which the spillover between work and family could be either positive or negative. The spillover is expected to be negative when work and family interactions are rigidly structured. While on the other hand, if there is flexibility between work and family, the spillover is positive and it would help to achieve work life balance (Hill, Ferris & Martinson, 2003). In the context of current study, when family tasks are not accomplished at home, they are brought to workplace and an unconscious attention diversion occurs. As a result, workplace gets neglected and performance graph falls down affecting one’s performance. (Pearson, Andersson & Wegner, 2001).

H2 posited that psychological distress affects the interpersonal conflict positively and significantly. This hypothesis is accepted and the results are in line with findings of Lim, and Tai (2014). They also found that work family conflict leads to psychological distress, which in turn, ultimately leads to interpersonal conflict. When a person is depressed and is unable to think, the behavior of that person also changes. Therefore, if a person is not in a good state of mind, (s)he will not behave well, and a physical reaction might be generated (Ilies, Johnson, Judge & Keeney, 2011). H4 tested for the mediating role of psychological distress between work family conflict and interpersonal conflict, and it was also accepted. Previously, Ford et al. (2007); Lim, Cortina, & Magley (2008) found that work family conflict impacts on personal behaviors, leading to rude conversations and ultimately interpersonal conflict.

H3 posited that Islamic work ethics negatively moderate the relationship between psychological distress and interpersonal conflict. This hypothesis was also held true for the study. These results support the findings of previous studies by Mohamed et al., (2010): Ajmal and Irfan (2014): Nasr (1984 who found that Islamic work ethics had not only a negative effect on psychological distress, but the same also had a negative effect on the interpersonal conflict. Contrarily, presence of Islamic work ethics leads to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Yousef, 2001; Rokhman, 2010).

### **5.1. Implications**

For practitioners, one of the key implications of this study is the role of Islamic work ethics. It is important for the managers to develop and retain an environment in which all personnel implement Islamic work ethics at the organizations. This will help not only to reduce psychological distress caused by work family conflict, but would also mitigate the interpersonal conflict. Ultimately, presence of IWE environment would lead to better job satisfaction and higher organizational commitment. In sum, presence of Islamic work ethics at an organization reduces stress and conflict which in turn leads to better employee's satisfaction, commitment and overall performance.

This study contributes toward highlighting the other side of the picture and suggests that organizations can come up with a system to identify distress at the earlier stage and thus referring the affected to a psychologist for help. Furthermore, organization can make it compulsory for the employees to participate in recreational activities along with family and spend sufficient time with family. This is a two-way process, if employer cares for its employees, ultimately employers will be rewarded in the form of better job performance.

For researchers, this study provides important insights into the relationship of work family conflict and its outcomes. From the results of this study and findings of previous researches, it has been observed that work family conflict leads towards low job performance and serious mental health issues. Therefore, the more this phenomenon is neglected, the more difficult it becomes to resolve. And it ultimately costs both the organization and the individuals.

### **5.2. Limitations and future directions**

Like every research, our study has also some limitations. First, due to limited time frame for data collection, the sample size was relatively small. Future study could work on larger sample sizes to increase the generalizability of findings. Second, data were collected from medical practitioners of twin cities only. Future researchers can collect data from different professions like teachers and engineers to test/ extend the applicability of this model. Third, the term family



is yet to be defined as it is treated differently in different cultural setups. Therefore, future studies could be done in other cultures or a cross-cultural endeavor may be crafted. Fourth, other moderators such as family incivility should be incorporated in the model to test how it influences the key variables.

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