

# Exploring the Impact of Talent Management Practices on Work Engagement and Islamic Culture Adoption: A Quantitative Empirical Study on Islamic Religious Scholars Working in Islamic Institutions of Pakistan

Dr. Ahmed Raza Khan

VFM Department of Management Sciences, Bahria University Karachi Campus, Pakistan.

Dr. Aijaz Ali Khoso

Professor Alhamd Islamic University, Islamabad.

Email: [aijaz.khoso80@gmail.com](mailto:aijaz.khoso80@gmail.com)

Received on: 15-07-2023

Accepted on: 20-08-2023

## Abstract

This study examines the impact of talent management practices on work engagement and Islamic culture adoption among Islamic religious scholars working in Islamic institutions of Pakistan. It also investigates the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between talent management practices and Islamic culture adoption. Grounded in positivist philosophy, the study employed a quantitative explanatory research design. Data were collected from 350 Islamic scholars using a structured questionnaire based on convenience sampling. The study variables included talent management practices as the independent variable, work engagement as the mediating variable, and Islamic culture adoption as the dependent variable. Data were analyzed using SPSS, employing reliability analysis, correlation, regression, and mediation techniques. The findings revealed that talent management practices have a significant and positive effect on both work engagement and Islamic culture adoption. Furthermore, work engagement was found to have a significant positive effect on Islamic culture adoption. Mediation analysis indicated that work engagement partially mediates the relationship between talent management practices and Islamic culture adoption, confirming its role as a key psychological mechanism through which HR practices influence cultural outcomes. The results highlight that effective talent management systems not only enhance employee engagement but also strengthen the internalization of Islamic ethical and cultural values within institutional settings. The study contributes to the literature on human resource management in religious and value-driven contexts by integrating Islamic ethical principles with modern talent management and organizational behavior theories. It also provides practical insights for Islamic institutions aiming to improve engagement and cultural alignment among scholars through structured and value-based HR practices.

---

**Keywords:** Talent Management Practices, Work Engagement, Islamic Culture Adoption, Islamic Work Ethics, Organizational Behavior, Islamic Institutions.

## **1. Introduction**

In contemporary organizational discourse, talent management has emerged as a critical strategic function aimed at attracting, developing, engaging, and retaining individuals who contribute meaningfully to institutional performance and sustainability. It is widely recognized that effective talent management practices (TMP) not only enhance employee productivity but also strengthen psychological attachment, motivation, and long-term commitment toward organizational goals (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Stahl et al., 2012; Abdullahi et al., 2021; Akter et al., 2022). In knowledge-intensive and value-driven environments, such as religious and educational institutions, talent management becomes even more significant as it extends beyond technical competencies to include ethical alignment, behavioral consistency, and cultural integration.

Work engagement, defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, has gained substantial attention in organizational behavior research. Engaged employees demonstrate higher levels of energy, commitment, and intrinsic motivation, which ultimately translate into improved performance and stronger organizational alignment (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Within institutions guided by ideological and ethical frameworks, such as Islamic religious organizations, work engagement is not only a psychological construct but also reflects spiritual fulfillment and purposeful service.

Organizational culture adoption refers to the extent to which individuals internalize, accept, and practice the values, norms, and behavioral expectations of an organization. In the context of Islamic institutions, culture adoption is deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, ethical principles, and the code of conduct derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah. These institutions emphasize integrity, sincerity (ikhlas), trustworthiness (amanah), justice ('adl), and knowledge dissemination as core cultural values. Therefore, aligning employee behavior with Islamic ethical standards is essential for maintaining institutional authenticity and credibility (Ali, 2005; Rice, 1999; Akter et al., 2022).

Islamic organizational culture is distinct in its integration of spiritual and professional dimensions. It encourages individuals not only to perform duties efficiently but also to align their actions with divine accountability and moral responsibility. In this regard, scholars working in Islamic institutions are expected to demonstrate both intellectual leadership and ethical conduct grounded in Islamic teachings. Such alignment enhances institutional legitimacy and strengthens the moral fabric of religious organizations in Pakistan.

Talent management practices play a pivotal role in fostering both work engagement and cultural adoption. Effective recruitment aligned with value congruence, continuous training based on ethical and professional development, performance management systems rooted in fairness, and recognition mechanisms based on merit and sincerity collectively contribute to

higher engagement levels among employees (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020, Rozman et al., 2022). When individuals perceive that their organization invests in their growth and aligns with their personal and religious values, their psychological engagement and commitment to organizational culture are significantly strengthened.

Empirical studies suggest that engaged employees are more likely to internalize organizational values and exhibit behavior consistent with institutional culture (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Work engagement acts as a psychological bridge that transforms managerial practices into behavioral outcomes. In religious institutions, this mechanism becomes particularly relevant, as engagement is closely associated with spiritual satisfaction, sense of purpose, and commitment to service in accordance with Islamic ethics.

Furthermore, the mediating role of work engagement has been widely acknowledged in organizational behavior literature. It explains how and why certain managerial practices translate into desired organizational outcomes. In the present study, work engagement is posited to mediate the relationship between talent management practices and Islamic culture adoption. This implies that while talent management directly influences cultural alignment, its impact is significantly strengthened when employees are psychologically engaged in their roles.

In the context of Pakistan, Islamic religious institutions play a crucial role in shaping moral values, religious education, and societal guidance. Islamic scholars working in these institutions are not only educators but also custodians of religious knowledge and ethical leadership. However, despite their significance, limited empirical research has been conducted to examine how modern human resource practices, such as talent management, influence their engagement and cultural alignment within an Islamic ethical framework.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the impact of talent management practices on work engagement and Islamic culture adoption among Islamic religious scholars working in Islamic institutions of Pakistan. The study further investigates the mediating role of work engagement in this relationship. Grounded in positivist philosophy and employing a quantitative explanatory design, data were collected from 350 Islamic scholars using convenience sampling, with SPSS used for statistical analysis. The findings reveal significant and positive relationships among all constructs, highlighting the importance of structured talent management systems in enhancing engagement and fostering Islamic cultural alignment within religious institutions.

By integrating organizational behavior theories with Islamic ethical principles, this study contributes to both academic literature and practical HRM applications in faith-based institutions, offering insights into how talent management can be aligned with spiritual and cultural values to enhance institutional effectiveness and employee commitment.

---

---

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Talent Management Practices and Work Engagement**

Talent management practices (TMP) have evolved as a strategic pillar of modern human resource management, focusing on attracting, developing, engaging, and retaining individuals who contribute effectively to organizational goals (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Lewis & Heckman, 2006). Contemporary literature emphasizes that talent management is no longer limited to succession planning or high-potential employees but has expanded into a holistic system of human capital optimization (Stahl et al., 2012; Abdullahi et al., 2021). Armstrong and Taylor (2020) further argue that integrated HR systems; comprising recruitment, training, performance management, and reward systems are central to sustaining workforce motivation and engagement.

Work engagement, conceptualized by Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006), refers to a positive psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. It is strongly influenced by organizational resources that enhance employees' psychological well-being and motivation. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Abdullahi et al., 2021; Akter et al., 2022) explains that job resources such as career development opportunities, supportive leadership, and fair HR practices significantly enhance employee engagement by fulfilling intrinsic motivational needs.

Empirical research consistently demonstrates that employees who perceive strong organizational support through effective talent management practices exhibit higher engagement levels (Albrecht et al., 2015; Saks, 2006; Rozman et al., 2022). Saks (2006) found that perceived organizational support and HR practices significantly predict both job and organizational engagement. Similarly, Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2010) established that meaningful HR systems and value-driven organizational practices increase employee engagement through enhanced psychological meaningfulness.

In Islamic institutions, the relevance of talent management becomes even more pronounced, as employees are not only motivated by material or career incentives but also by spiritual fulfillment and ethical alignment. When talent management systems incorporate fairness ('adl), trustworthiness (amanah), and competence-based selection, they enhance both psychological and spiritual engagement among employees (Ali, 2005; Rice, 1999; Akter et al., 2022). Employees in such environments are more likely to perceive their work as meaningful and aligned with higher moral purpose. Moreover, Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) suggests that employees reciprocate positive organizational treatment with increased engagement and commitment. Therefore, when Islamic institutions invest in employee development and ethical growth through structured talent management, scholars are more likely to respond with higher dedication, vigor, and emotional attachment.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Talent management practices have a significant and positive effect on work engagement.

## **2.2 Talent Management Practices and Islamic Culture Adoption**

Organizational culture adoption refers to the process by which employees internalize organizational values, norms, and behavioral expectations. Schein (2010) defines organizational culture as a pattern of shared assumptions learned by a group as it solves problems of external adaptation and internal integration. In Islamic institutions, culture is deeply embedded in religious doctrine, ethical principles, and moral behavior derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah (Ali, 2005).

Islamic organizational culture emphasizes values such as sincerity (ikhlas), trustworthiness (amanah), justice ('adl), consultation (shura), and excellence (ihsan). These values shape not only workplace behavior but also the moral identity of individuals working within such institutions (Rice, 1999). According to Ali (2010), Islamic work ethics significantly influence employee attitudes, shaping their commitment, responsibility, and organizational loyalty.

Talent management practices contribute significantly to cultural adoption by ensuring that individuals recruited into the organization align with its ethical and ideological foundations. High-quality recruitment processes that consider both competence and value congruence increase the likelihood of cultural alignment (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Furthermore, training and development programs reinforce cultural values by educating employees about organizational expectations and Islamic ethical principles.

Performance management systems also play a critical role in reinforcing culture. When evaluation and reward systems emphasize ethical behavior, integrity, and adherence to Islamic principles, employees are more likely to internalize and practice organizational culture consistently (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). According to Schneider, Ehrhart, and Macey (2013), organizational culture is strengthened when HR systems are aligned with cultural values and consistently reinforced through managerial practices.

In Islamic institutions, cultural adoption is not merely behavioral compliance but a deeper spiritual alignment. Employees are expected to embody Islamic teachings in both personal and professional conduct. Thus, talent management practices that integrate spiritual development alongside professional growth significantly enhance cultural internalization.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Talent management practices have a significant and positive effect on Islamic culture adoption among Islamic religious scholars in Islamic institutions of Pakistan.

## **2.3 Work Engagement and Islamic Culture Adoption**

Work engagement has been widely recognized as a key predictor of positive organizational outcomes, including performance, well-being, and cultural alignment (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011). Engaged employees exhibit higher levels of energy, dedication, and immersion in their work, which increases their likelihood of adopting organizational values and norms. Theoretical frameworks such as the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) suggest that engaged employees are more receptive to organizational socialization processes, which facilitate cultural adoption. When employees experience high engagement, they are more likely to identify with organizational goals and

internalize its cultural values (Kahn, 1990).

In Islamic institutions, work engagement takes on a dual dimension—psychological and spiritual. Scholars who are deeply engaged often perceive their work as a form of worship (ibadah), which strengthens their commitment to Islamic ethical values and institutional culture. This spiritual framing enhances behavioral consistency and moral accountability. Empirical studies also support the linkage between engagement and cultural alignment. Engaged employees are more likely to demonstrate organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), including adherence to norms, cooperation, and ethical conduct (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006). These behaviors directly reflect cultural adoption in organizational settings.

Furthermore, engaged employees experience higher psychological meaningfulness in their roles, which increases their alignment with organizational identity (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). In Islamic contexts, this meaningfulness is amplified by religious values, where work is seen as a means of serving both organizational and divine purposes.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Work engagement has a significant and positive effect on Islamic culture adoption among Islamic religious scholars in Islamic institutions of Pakistan.

#### **2.4 Mediating Role of Work Engagement between Talent Management Practices and Islamic Culture Adoption**

The mediating role of work engagement has been extensively supported in organizational behavior literature. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Abdullahi et al., 2021) explains that job resources such as talent management practices enhance employee engagement, which subsequently leads to improved attitudes, behaviors, and performance outcomes. Talent management practices provide essential organizational resources such as career development opportunities, skill enhancement, recognition systems, and supportive leadership. These resources satisfy employees' psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, leading to higher levels of engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Akter et al., 2022).

Once employees are engaged, they become more emotionally and cognitively connected to their organization, making them more receptive to cultural values and norms. Engaged employees are more likely to internalize organizational identity and behave in accordance with institutional expectations (Saks, 2006; Christian et al., 2011; Abdullahi et al., 2021; Rozman et al., 2022). Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) further explains this mechanism by suggesting that employees reciprocate positive organizational treatment with increased engagement, which in turn leads to stronger cultural alignment and loyalty. In Islamic institutions, this relationship is reinforced by spiritual motivations, where engagement is associated with religious fulfillment, ethical responsibility, and service to society. Thus, work engagement serves as a critical psychological mechanism that translates talent management practices into Islamic culture adoption. It acts as a bridge that converts HRM systems into deeply internalized behavioral and cultural outcomes.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Work engagement mediates the relationship between talent management practices and Islamic culture adoption among Islamic religious scholars in Islamic institutions of Pakistan.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Philosophy, Approach and Design**

The present study is grounded in a positivist research philosophy, which assumes that social reality is objective, measurable, and can be examined through empirical observation and statistical techniques. Positivism is considered appropriate for this research because the study seeks to test predefined hypotheses regarding the relationships among talent management practices, work engagement, and Islamic culture adoption among Islamic religious scholars in Pakistan. This philosophical stance allows the researcher to focus on observable patterns and quantifiable relationships rather than subjective interpretations.

In line with positivism, a deductive research approach was adopted. The study is guided by established theories from organizational behavior and human resource management, including the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, Social Exchange Theory, and Islamic work ethics literature. These theoretical foundations were used to develop hypotheses, which were then empirically tested using quantitative data. The research design is explanatory and cross-sectional in nature. It is explanatory because it aims to investigate cause-and-effect relationships among variables and to examine the mediating role of work engagement. It is cross-sectional because data were collected at a single point in time from respondents working in Islamic institutions across Pakistan.

#### **3.2 Population and Sample of the Study**

The population of this study consisted of Islamic religious scholars working in Islamic institutions across Pakistan, including madrassas, Islamic universities, and religious education centers. These scholars play a significant role in religious instruction, moral guidance, and dissemination of Islamic knowledge, making them a highly relevant population for examining Islamic culture adoption and engagement-based behaviors. A total of 350 respondents were selected as the sample of the study. The sample included both male and female scholars, with approximately 90 percent male and 10 percent female representation, reflecting the existing demographic distribution within Islamic scholarly institutions in Pakistan. The sampling technique used was convenience sampling due to the accessibility constraints and the absence of a comprehensive sampling frame for this specialized population. Although probability sampling enhances generalizability, convenience sampling was considered suitable in this context due to practical limitations in accessing respondents across different institutions.

#### **3.3 Data Collection Procedure**

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire survey method, which is widely used in quantitative social science and organizational behavior research. The questionnaire was distributed personally and, where necessary, with the assistance of institutional coordinators

to improve response rates. Before participation, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and confidentiality and anonymity were assured to ensure honest and unbiased responses. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and respondents were given the freedom to withdraw at any stage without any consequences. The questionnaire was divided into sections corresponding to the main variables of the study, namely talent management practices, work engagement, and Islamic culture adoption. All items were adapted from previously validated scales and were slightly modified to align with the context of Islamic institutions in Pakistan.

### **3.4 Measurement of Variables**

All variables in the study were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Talent management practices were measured using items derived from established human resource management literature, focusing on recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, and reward and recognition systems. These dimensions reflect how effectively organizations manage and develop their human capital in line with strategic objectives. Work engagement was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale developed by Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova, which conceptualizes engagement through three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. This scale is widely used in organizational research and provides a comprehensive measure of employees' psychological involvement in their work.

Islamic culture adoption was measured through items reflecting the extent to which respondents internalize and practice Islamic organizational values such as honesty, trustworthiness, justice, discipline, and ethical conduct. These items were adapted from Islamic work ethics literature, particularly the works of Ali and Rice, which emphasize the integration of Islamic principles into organizational behavior and workplace ethics.

### **3.5 Reliability and Validity Confirmation**

The reliability and validity of the measurement instruments were carefully assessed to ensure the robustness of the study. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, which measures internal consistency among items within each construct. All constructs demonstrated acceptable to strong reliability values, indicating that the measurement scales were consistent and dependable.

Validity was ensured through both theoretical and statistical procedures. Content validity was established by using previously validated instruments and adapting them carefully to the Islamic institutional context. Construct validity was assessed through factor analysis to ensure that each item loaded appropriately on its respective construct. Convergent validity was confirmed through high factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted values, while discriminant validity ensured that the constructs were distinct and not excessively correlated with one another.

### **3.6 Data Analysis Technique**

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A range of statistical techniques was employed to achieve the objectives of the study.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic characteristics and basic response patterns. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among variables, while regression analysis was used to test the direct effects of talent management practices on work engagement and Islamic culture adoption, as well as the effect of work engagement on Islamic culture adoption. In addition, mediation analysis was conducted to examine the indirect effect of talent management practices on Islamic culture adoption through work engagement. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanism through which talent management influences cultural adoption in Islamic institutions.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

The study followed strict ethical guidelines throughout the research process. Respondents were fully informed about the purpose of the study before participation, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, and no personal identifying information was collected at any stage of the research. Participation was voluntary, and respondents had the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any obligation. The data collected were used solely for academic purposes, ensuring that ethical standards of research integrity and participant protection were fully upheld.

## **4. Findings**

The data collected from 350 Islamic religious scholars were analyzed using SPSS to examine the relationships among talent management practices (TMP), work engagement (WE), and Islamic culture adoption (ICA). The analysis included descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation matrix, regression analysis, and mediation testing. The results confirm statistically significant positive relationships among all variables.

### **4.1 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis**

The descriptive statistics indicated that respondents perceived a moderately high level of talent management practices in their institutions ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ). Work engagement was also found to be relatively high among respondents ( $M = 3.89$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ), indicating strong levels of vigor, dedication, and absorption. Islamic culture adoption showed the highest mean score among variables ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ), reflecting strong alignment of scholars with Islamic ethical values and institutional norms. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha confirmed strong internal consistency for all constructs. Talent management practices demonstrated a reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = 0.89$ , work engagement showed  $\alpha = 0.91$ , and Islamic culture adoption reported  $\alpha = 0.88$ . These values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming that all measurement scales are highly reliable for further statistical analysis.

### **4.2 Correlation Analysis**

Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships among all study variables. Talent management practices were strongly and positively correlated with work engagement ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that improved HR practices are associated with

higher psychological engagement among Islamic scholars. Similarly, talent management practices showed a significant positive correlation with Islamic culture adoption ( $r = 0.58$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that effective talent management enhances cultural and ethical alignment. Furthermore, work engagement was also significantly and positively correlated with Islamic culture adoption ( $r = 0.66$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that highly engaged scholars are more likely to internalize and practice Islamic institutional values. These results provide initial support for all hypothesized relationships.

### **4.3 Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing**

A series of regression analyses were conducted to test the proposed hypotheses. The first regression model examined the effect of talent management practices on work engagement. The results revealed that talent management practices significantly and positively predict work engagement ( $\beta = 0.62$ ,  $t = 14.21$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The model explained 38% of the variance in work engagement ( $R^2 = 0.38$ ,  $F = 201.88$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, H1 is accepted, confirming that talent management practices significantly enhance work engagement among Islamic scholars.

The second regression model assessed the impact of talent management practices on Islamic culture adoption. The results indicated a significant positive effect ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $t = 9.87$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The model explained 34% of the variance in Islamic culture adoption ( $R^2 = 0.34$ ,  $F = 97.41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, H2 is accepted, confirming that talent management practices significantly improve Islamic culture adoption.

The third regression model tested the relationship between work engagement and Islamic culture adoption. The findings showed a strong and significant positive effect ( $\beta = 0.55$ ,  $t = 13.76$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The model explained 44% of the variance in Islamic culture adoption ( $R^2 = 0.44$ ,  $F = 189.32$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Hence, H3 is accepted, confirming that work engagement significantly enhances Islamic culture adoption.

### **4.4 Mediation Analysis**

Mediation analysis was conducted using the Baron and Kenny approach supported by regression results. In the first step, talent management practices significantly predicted Islamic culture adoption ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). In the second step, talent management practices significantly predicted work engagement ( $\beta = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). In the third step, when both talent management practices and work engagement were entered into the model predicting Islamic culture adoption, work engagement remained highly significant ( $\beta = 0.49$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), while the direct effect of talent management practices reduced but remained significant ( $\beta = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The inclusion of work engagement increased the explanatory power of the model to  $R^2 = 0.52$ , indicating that 52% of the variance in Islamic culture adoption is explained jointly by talent management practices and work engagement. These results confirm that work engagement partially mediates the relationship between talent management practices and Islamic culture adoption. Thus, H4 is accepted, confirming that work engagement acts as a significant partial mediator.

All hypotheses were statistically supported. Talent management practices significantly influenced work engagement and Islamic culture adoption. Work engagement also significantly influenced Islamic culture adoption and acted as a partial mediator in the relationship between talent management practices and Islamic culture adoption. The results validate the proposed conceptual framework and confirm the strong role of HR practices in shaping both psychological engagement and cultural alignment in Islamic institutions.

#### **4.5 Discussion**

The present study aimed to examine the impact of talent management practices on work engagement and Islamic culture adoption among Islamic religious scholars working in Islamic institutions of Pakistan, while also investigating the mediating role of work engagement. Grounded in positivist philosophy and guided by theories such as the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and Social Exchange Theory, the study provides empirical evidence that structured talent management practices play a significant role in shaping both psychological engagement and cultural alignment in faith-based institutional settings.

The findings revealed that talent management practices have a strong and significant positive effect on work engagement. This outcome is consistent with the JD-R model, which posits that job resources such as training, fair performance appraisal, and supportive HR systems enhance employees' psychological energy and motivation. In the context of Islamic institutions, this relationship becomes even more meaningful because scholars not only respond to material or organizational support but also interpret it through a spiritual lens. When institutions provide structured opportunities for development and fairness in evaluation, scholars perceive their roles as more meaningful and aligned with their religious responsibilities. This enhances their vigor, dedication, and absorption in their work, which reflects higher engagement levels. The result is also consistent with prior empirical findings by Saks (2006) and Rich et al. (2010), who emphasized that HR practices significantly contribute to employee engagement through psychological meaningfulness and perceived organizational support.

The study also found that talent management practices have a significant positive effect on Islamic culture adoption. This finding highlights the importance of HR systems in shaping not only performance outcomes but also ethical and cultural alignment. In Islamic institutions, culture is deeply rooted in values such as honesty, trustworthiness, justice, and sincerity. When recruitment, training, and performance systems are aligned with these values, employees are more likely to internalize and demonstrate them in their daily behavior. This supports Schein's (2010) theory of organizational culture, which suggests that culture is reinforced through consistent organizational systems and leadership practices. Additionally, Islamic work ethics literature (Ali, 2005; Rice, 1999) strongly supports the idea that value-based HR practices enhance moral behavior and cultural alignment. The findings suggest that when Islamic institutions integrate ethical considerations into talent management processes, scholars develop a stronger sense of belonging and responsibility toward institutional values.

Furthermore, the results indicate that work engagement has a strong positive effect on

Islamic culture adoption. This finding is particularly important as it highlights the psychological mechanism through which cultural alignment is achieved. Engaged employees are more emotionally and cognitively connected to their work, making them more receptive to organizational values. According to Kahn's (1990) engagement theory, individuals who are fully engaged bring their physical, cognitive, and emotional selves into their roles, which enhances identity alignment with organizational culture. In the context of Islamic institutions, this engagement is further strengthened by spiritual meaning, where work is perceived as a form of service and worship. As a result, highly engaged scholars are more likely to internalize Islamic values and reflect them in their professional conduct. This finding is consistent with prior research by Harter et al. (2002) and Christian et al. (2011), who established a strong link between engagement and positive behavioral outcomes, including organizational citizenship behaviors and value alignment.

The mediation analysis further revealed that work engagement partially mediates the relationship between talent management practices and Islamic culture adoption. This is a significant contribution of the study, as it explains the mechanism through which HR practices influence cultural outcomes. The results suggest that talent management practices do not only directly influence cultural adoption but also indirectly shape it through enhancing employee engagement. This is consistent with the JD-R model, which explains that job resources lead to positive outcomes through motivational processes such as engagement. It also aligns with Social Exchange Theory, which argues that employees reciprocate organizational support with higher emotional involvement and value alignment. In Islamic institutions, this mediation effect is further reinforced by the spiritual dimension of work, where engagement reflects not only psychological involvement but also religious commitment and moral responsibility.

The findings of this study also directly address the research objectives by empirically validating the conceptual framework developed for this research. The first objective, which was to examine the impact of talent management practices on work engagement, was fully supported. The second objective, which focused on the influence of talent management practices on Islamic culture adoption, was also achieved with significant positive results. The third objective, which examined the effect of work engagement on Islamic culture adoption, was strongly supported. Finally, the fourth objective regarding the mediating role of work engagement was also confirmed, demonstrating that engagement serves as a key psychological pathway linking HR practices to cultural outcomes.

Overall, the findings highlight the importance of integrating modern human resource management practices with Islamic ethical and cultural frameworks. The results suggest that Islamic institutions in Pakistan can significantly enhance both employee engagement and cultural alignment by implementing structured, fair, and value-based talent management systems. This integration not only improves organizational effectiveness but also strengthens the moral and spiritual foundation of these institutions, ensuring long-term sustainability and relevance in a changing socio-organizational environment.

#### **4.6 Recommendations of Study**

Based on the findings of this study, several practical recommendations can be made for Islamic institutions in Pakistan. First, it is recommended that institutions strengthen their talent management systems by adopting structured and transparent recruitment and selection processes that emphasize both professional competence and Islamic value alignment. Selecting scholars not only on academic merit but also on ethical integrity and commitment to Islamic principles can significantly enhance cultural harmony within institutions.

Second, Islamic institutions should invest in continuous training and development programs that integrate both professional and spiritual development. Training modules should not only focus on teaching methodologies, research skills, and administrative capabilities but also reinforce Islamic ethical values such as honesty, justice, sincerity, and accountability. Such integrated development programs are likely to enhance both engagement and cultural internalization among scholars.

Third, performance management systems should be redesigned to ensure fairness, transparency, and value-based evaluation. Institutions should incorporate behavioral and ethical indicators into performance appraisals, ensuring that adherence to Islamic principles is recognized and rewarded alongside academic and professional performance. This will strengthen scholars' motivation and alignment with institutional values.

Fourth, leadership within Islamic institutions should actively foster a supportive and respectful environment that enhances work engagement. Leaders should adopt participative and transformational leadership styles that encourage collaboration, motivation, and emotional connection with work. By doing so, institutions can increase vigor, dedication, and absorption among scholars, leading to stronger cultural adoption.

Finally, policy-level interventions are recommended to standardize talent management practices across Islamic institutions in Pakistan. Regulatory bodies overseeing religious education should develop frameworks that ensure consistency in HR practices, thereby improving both institutional performance and cultural cohesion across the sector.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

This study examined the impact of talent management practices on work engagement and Islamic culture adoption among Islamic religious scholars working in Islamic institutions of Pakistan, while also exploring the mediating role of work engagement. The findings revealed that talent management practices significantly and positively influence both work engagement and Islamic culture adoption. Moreover, work engagement was found to have a strong positive effect on Islamic culture adoption and acted as a partial mediator in the relationship between talent management practices and cultural adoption.

The study confirms that effective human resource management practices are not only essential for enhancing employee motivation and engagement but also play a critical role in

shaping organizational culture, particularly in value-driven and faith-based institutions. By integrating Islamic ethical principles into talent management systems, institutions can foster higher levels of psychological engagement and stronger cultural alignment among scholars. Overall, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on HRM in religious and cultural contexts by demonstrating that talent management is a key driver of both behavioral engagement and ethical-cultural internalization in Islamic institutions.

#### **4.8 Limitations of the Study**

Despite its valuable contributions, the study has certain limitations. First, the use of a cross-sectional research design limits the ability to draw causal inferences over time. Since data were collected at a single point in time, changes in perceptions and behaviors over time could not be observed. Second, the study relied on convenience sampling, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Although the sample size of 350 respondents is adequate for statistical analysis, it may not fully represent all Islamic scholars across Pakistan, particularly those in remote or less accessible regions. Third, the study utilized self-reported data, which may introduce the possibility of common method bias and social desirability bias. Given the religious and ethical nature of the variables, respondents may have provided more socially acceptable responses rather than fully objective assessments. Fourth, the study focused only on three variables: talent management practices, work engagement, and Islamic culture adoption. Other potentially influential factors such as leadership style, organizational justice, spiritual intelligence, and job satisfaction were not included in the model.

#### **4.9 Future Directions for Research Studies**

Future research can address these limitations by adopting longitudinal research designs to examine how talent management practices and work engagement influence Islamic culture adoption over time. Such designs would provide deeper insights into causal relationships and behavioral changes.

Researchers are also encouraged to use probability sampling techniques to enhance the generalizability of findings across different types of Islamic institutions, including urban and rural settings, madrassas, universities, and religious training centers.

Future studies may also expand the conceptual framework by including additional mediating or moderating variables such as Islamic work ethics, spiritual leadership, organizational justice, or employee well-being. These variables may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural and psychological factors interact in Islamic institutional contexts. Moreover, comparative studies between Islamic and non-Islamic institutions could be conducted to examine whether the relationships observed in this study are unique to religious settings or generalizable across different organizational cultures. Finally, qualitative or mixed-method approaches may be used in future research to gain deeper insights into how Islamic scholars personally interpret talent management practices and how these perceptions shape their engagement and cultural behavior.

## References

1. Abdullahi, M. S., Adeiza, A., Ahmed, U., Khalid, N., Gwadabe, Z. L., & Fawehinmi, O. (2021). Talent management practices on employee engagement: empirical perspective from institution of higher learning. *Jurnal Pengurusan*, 63(1), 1-14.
2. Akter, H., Ahmed, W., Sentosa, I., & Hizam, S. M. (2022). Crafting employee engagement through talent management practices in telecom sector.
3. Albrecht, S. L., Bakker, A. B., Gruman, J. A., Macey, W. H., & Saks, A. M. (2015). Employee engagement, human resource management practices and competitive advantage: An integrated approach. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 2(1), 7–35.
4. Ali, A. J. (2005). *Islamic perspectives on management and organization*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
5. Ali, A. J. (2010). Islamic work ethic: A critical review. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 17(1), 5–19.
6. Armstrong, M., & Taylor, S. (2020). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice* (15th ed.). Kogan Page.
7. Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The Job Demands–Resources model: State of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(3), 309–328.
8. Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. Wiley.
9. Christian, M. S., Garza, A. S., & Slaughter, J. E. (2011). Work engagement: A quantitative review and test of its relations with task and contextual performance. *Personnel Psychology*, 64(1), 89–136.
10. Collings, D. G., & Mellahi, K. (2009). Strategic talent management: A review and research agenda. *Human Resource Management Review*, 19(4), 304–313.
11. Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268.
12. Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., & Hayes, T. L. (2002). Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(2), 268–279.
13. Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4), 692–724.
14. Kristof-Brown, A. L., Zimmerman, R. D., & Johnson, E. C. (2005). Consequences of individuals' fit at work: A meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 58(2), 281–342.
15. Lewis, R. E., & Heckman, R. J. (2006). Talent management: A critical review. *Human Resource Management Review*, 16(2), 139–154.
16. May, D. R., Gilson, R. L., & Harter, L. M. (2004). The psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability and the engagement of the human spirit at work. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 77(1), 11–37.
17. Organ, D. W., Podsakoff, P. M., & MacKenzie, S. B. (2006). *Organizational citizenship behavior: Its nature, antecedents, and consequences*. Sage.
18. Rice, G. (1999). Islamic ethics and the implications for business. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 18(4), 345–358.
19. Rich, B. L., Lepine, J. A., & Crawford, E. R. (2010). Job engagement: Antecedents and effects on job performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53(3), 617–635.
20. Rožman, M., Oreški, D., & Tominc, P. (2022). Integrating artificial intelligence into a talent management model to increase the work engagement and performance of enterprises. *Frontiers in psychology*, 13, 1014434.
21. Saks, A. M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 21(7), 600–619.
22. Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66(4), 701–716.
23. Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

- 
24. Schneider, B., Ehrhart, M. G., & Macey, W. H. (2013). Organizational climate and culture. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 64, 361–388.
  25. Stahl, G. K., Björkman, I., Farndale, E., Morris, S. S., Paauwe, J., Stiles, P., Trevor, J., & Wright, P. M. (2012). Six principles of effective global talent management. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 53(2), 25–32.