Family Values of Employees in Secularized Workplaces: The Tension Between Religious Conservatism and Modern Organizational Culture

Sekülerleşen İş Ortamlarında Çalışanların Aile Değerleri: Dini Muhafazakârlık ile Modern Örgüt Kültürü Arasındaki Gerilim

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ÖZET

Bu çalışma, sekülerleşme ve modernleşme süreçlerinin yalnızca kurumsal yapılarla sınırlı olmadığını, çalışanların dini kimlikleri, aile değerleri ve psikolojik bütünlükleri üzerinde önemli etkiler yarattığını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmada aile değerlerini ve dini muhafazakarlığı benimseyen çalışanların, değişen örgüt kültürlerinin bireyci, rekabet ve performans odaklı yapıları içerisinde yaşadıkları değer çatışmaları kuramsal bir zeminde tartışılmaktadır. Seküler örgütlerde tarafsızlık ilkesiyle sürdürülen politikaların, dini kimliklerin bastırılmasına yol açtığı ve bunun durumun kimlik çatışması, aidiyet eksikliği ve iş aile dengesinde kırılganlıklara neden olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. Aile değerleri ve dinî inançlarla iş yaşamı arasındaki dengenin, bireyin özel yaşamı, psikolojik sağlığı, motivasyonu, iş tatmini, etik karar alma ve örgütsel bağlılık gibi birçok alanı etkilediği görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda çalışmada şu soru yöneltilmektedir: Seküler kurumlar, çalışanların aile değerleri ve dini kimliklerine yönelik tarafsız mı davranmaktadır, yoksa kurumsal kayıtsızlık yoluyla bu değer temelli farkları silikleştiren yapılar mı inşa etmektedir? Literatürde dinin iş yaşamındaki rolü sıklıkla örgütsel politikalar ya da görünür dini uygulamalar üzerinden incelenmiştir. Ancak seküler normların bireylerin içsel değerleri ve aile değerleri üzerindeki etkilerini inceleyen çalışmalar sınırlıdır. Bu boşluğu ele alan çalışma, dinî muhafazakârlık ve aile değerlerinin seküler örgütsel yapılarıyla nasıl etkileştiğine dair derinlikli bir katkı sunmaktadır. Ayrıca iş dünyasında kültürel çeşitliliğin adil ve bütüncül biçimde yönetilmesine yönelik teorik ve stratejik katkılar sağlamaktadır. Çalışanların özgün kimlikleriyle var olabildikleri aile dostu, dini çeşitliliğe duyarlı kapsayıcı örgütsel iklimlerin inşası, etik bir sorumluluk, dengeli bir yönetim anlayışı ve sürdürülebilirlik açısından stratejik bir gerekliliktir. Araştırma, literatür taraması yöntemiyle gerçekleştirilmiş, kaynaklar kuramsal perspektifler doğrultusunda incelenmiştir.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal how the processes of secularization and modernization are not limited to institutional structures, but also have multidimensional effects on employees' religious identities, family values, and psychological integrity. The study discusses, on a conceptual level, the value conflicts experienced by employees who adhere to family values and religiously conservative principles within the individualistic, competitive, and performance-oriented structures of organizational cultures as they evolve. The study demonstrates that policies implemented based on a so-called "principle of neutrality" in secular organizations can lead to the suppression of religious identities, and that this situation causes identity conflicts, a feeling of not belonging, and disruptions in the work-family balance. The balance between family values, religious beliefs, and work life appears to affect many areas such as the individual's private life, psychological health, motivation, ethical decision-making, and organizational commitment. The key question of this study is: Do secular institutions act impartially towards employees' family values and religious identities, or do they build structures that blur these value-based differences

through institutional indifference? In the literature, the role of religion in business life is frequently examined through organisational policies or visible religious practices. However, studies examining the effects of secular norms on individuals' intrinsic values and family values are limited. The study, addressing this gap, offers an extensive contribution on how religious conservatism and family values interact with secular organisational structures. Furthermore, this study thus provides theoretical and strategic contributions to the issue of managing cultural diversity fairly and holistically in the business world. The research took the form of a literature review; the sources were examined in terms of their specific theoretical perspectives.

INTRODUCTION

The process of modernization has radically changed individual lifestyles and the structural and cultural dynamics of the business world. At the heart of this transformation lies the phenomenon of secularization, which has led to a significant withdrawal of religious references and spiritual values from public spaces, especially in daily professional life.[1] Secularization has reshaped not only individual identities but also institutional value systems, management approaches, and the expectations employers have of their employees.[2] These changes have led to problems with identity–and feelings of belonging among those with specific religious and family-based values.[3] These individuals may experience symbolic exclusion due to the incompatibility of their beliefs and family values with the dominant institutional cultures, and this kind of exclusion can disrupt the process of internalizing their professional roles and weaken their sense of organizational belonging.[4]

In today's competitive and individualistic organizational structures, performance- and efficiency-oriented cultures are privileged, and such structures often erode collective identities and the value placed on relationships. Individuals whose values are strongly oriented towards the family may experience deep conflicts with secular organizational cultures. These conflicts can negatively affect their motivation to work, their psychological well-being, and their commitment to the organization where they work.[5] The literature reveals that work-family conflicts significantly affect individual's personal lives, their performance in the workplace and their organizational commitment.[6]

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[1]   Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Michigan: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999), 33.

[2]   Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).

[3]   Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997), 25.

[4]   Jeffrey H. Greenhaus - Nicholas J. Beutell, "Sources of Conflict Between Work and Family Roles". *Academy of Management Review* 10/1 (1985), 76-88.

[5]   Bojan Obrenovic et al., "Work-Family Conflict Impact on Psychological Safety and Psychological Well-Being: A Job Performance Model", *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020), 1-15.

[6]   Eric G. Lambert et al., "Examining the Association Between Work–Family Conflict and the Work Attitudes of Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment Among Chinese Correctional Staff", *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 27/4 (2020), 558-577.

Family values should not be viewed as limited to private life; instead, they constitute a fundamental reference system that shapes individuals' social roles, decision-making processes, and ethical responsibilities.[7] An et al. argue that such values provide a solid psychosocial foundation for understanding one's professional life and coping with stress through mutual support, sacrifice, and intergenerational solidarity.[8] However, the neglect of such values in secular work environments undermines employees' identities as individuals and their capacity to find meaning in their work. Allen, emphasize that family values are often relegated to a secondary position in individualistic organizational cultures, causing employees to struggle with fulfilling both their family and professional responsibilities simultaneously.[9] Putri and Etikariena confirm that family values are not only a source of work-family conflict but also important factors that strengthen organizational commitment and positive work attitudes.[10]

In this regard, the degree of congruence between corporate culture and individual belief systems plays a critical role in shaping employees' experiences of a particular organization. An et al. found that inconsistencies between personal value systems and corporate norms can lead to identity conflicts and crises about whether an individual belongs in a specific workplace.[11] Similarly, Dodanwala et al. argue that inconsistencies between individual beliefs and corporate structures reduce organizational commitment and lower job satisfaction.[12] Gareis et al. emphasize the difficulty of achieving a balance between family-centered value systems and the demands of modern professional life, drawing attention to the effect this has of increasing employees' stress levels.[13] These findings are also supported by Brough et al.[14] and Hetrick[15], who argue that work-family conflicts affect psychological well-being, job performance, and organizational loyalty.

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[7]   YingFei Héliot et al., "Religious Identity in the Workplace: A Systematic Review, Research Agenda, and Practical Implications", *Human Resource Management*, 59/2 (2019), 153-173.

[8]   Jing An et al., "A Serial Mediating Effect of Perceived Family Support on Psychological Well-Being", *BMC Public Health* 24 (2024), 1-10.

[9]   Tammy D. Allen, "Family-Supportive Work Environments: The Role of Organizational Perceptions". *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 58/3 (2001), 414-435.

[10]   Hilda Elsa Putri – Arum Etikariena, "The Role of the Work-Family Conflict in the Relationship between Work-Family Culture and Employee Well-Being", *Jurnal Psikologi* 19/3 (2020), 257-268.

[11]   Jisu An et al., "Impact of Work–Family Conflict, Job Stress and Job Satisfaction on Seafarer Performance", *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17/7 (2020), 2191.

[12]   Tharindu C. Dodanwala et al., "The Mediating Role of Work–Family Conflict on Role Overload and Job Stress Linkage". *Built Environment Project and Asset Management* 12/6 (2022), 924-939.

[13]   Karen C. Gareis et al., "Work-Family Enrichment and Conflict: Additive Effects, Buffering, or Balance?". *Journal of Marriage and Family* 71/3 (2009), 696-707.

[14]   Paula Brough et al., "The Ability of 'Family Friendly' Organizational Resources to Predict Work–Family Conflict and Job and Family Satisfaction", *Stress and Health: Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress* 21/4 (2005), 224.

[15]   Andrea L. Hetrick et al., "The Theoretical and Empirical Utility of Dimension-Based Work–Family Conflict: A Meta-Analysis", *Journal of Applied Psychology* 109/7 (2024), 987-1003.

In recent years, the tension between religious conservatism and secular corporate culture has become increasingly evident. Bauman argues that the transformations in the workplace, driven by globalization, individualization, and neoliberal policies, have intensified a sense of institutional alienation among individuals committed to religious values.[16] Sennett observes that such individuals often experience isolation in secular workplaces and experience a deep incompatibility between their values and the dominant organizational culture.[17] Fukuyama states that the competitive and individualistic structures shaped by neoliberalism erode social ties and collective identities, thus making it harder for employees to feel a sense of belonging in the workplace.[18]

The impact of individualism and secularization on institutional structures also poses a significant challenge in managing cultural diversity. Although many organizations claim to embrace cultural diversity, religious identities and family-centered values often clash with secular and individualistic norms, leading to identity crises and creating intense areas of conflict. Bolat and Korkmaz point out that, due to the effects of globalisation, organisations today increasingly have a workforce that is culturally and religiously diverse.[19] This diversity is transforming organisational culture in many ways, from the shaping of corporate values to interactions between employees. According to them, religion stands out as a fundamental element in the formation of an individual's identity and plays a decisive role in how employees perceive their roles. Studies conducted by Chukwu et al., Leslie and Flynn, Manoharan et al., and Sathasivam et al. have shown that practices developed based on respect for religious beliefs have positive effects on employee loyalty, organisational morale, and productivity.[20] Deng et al. and Ferraro et al. note that the integration of religion into organisational culture can sometimes lead to misunderstandings, value

[16] Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 42.

[17] Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998.

[18] Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 81.

[19] Yavuz Bolat - Celalettin Korkmaz, "Social Values and Life Skills as Predictors of Organizational Culture: A Study on Teachers". *SAGE Open* 11/2 (2021), 1-13.

[20] Emmanuel Chukwu et al., "Navigating Ethical Supply Chains: The Intersection of Diplomatic Management and Theological Ethics," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Sciences and Arts* 2/1 (2023), 127–139; Lisa M. Leslie – Elinor Flynn, "Diversity Ideologies, Beliefs, and Climates: A Review, Integration, and Set of Recommendations", *Journal of Management*, 50/3 (2024), 849-876; Ashokkumar Manoharan et al., "Walking the Talk in Diversity Management: Exploring Links between Strategic Statements, Management Practices, and External Recognition", *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 94 (2021), 1-10; Kavitha Sathasivam et al., "Embracing Organisational Environmental Sustainability: Experiences in Green Human Resource Management," *Business Strategy & Development* 4/2 (2021), 123–135.

conflicts, and discrimination.[21] They view this as one of the fundamental dynamics underlying the need for organisations to manage religious diversity in a careful, conscious, and respectful manner. Starck et al. show that organisations that embrace religious diversity can gain a significant competitive advantage in the market.[22] According to them, a workforce composed of individuals from different religious backgrounds promotes internal innovation and creativity by offering unique perspectives and innovative ideas. From this perspective, Kumar et al. emphasise that in today's increasingly diverse workforce, organisations must develop policies and practices that respect and honour employees' religious beliefs.[23] However, Torres notes that despite these institutional openings toward religious diversity, implicit practices that suppress religious conservatism and traditional family values persist in secular organisational cultures.[24] While the existing literature primarily focuses on accommodating religious beliefs at the institutional level, this study examines the marginalization of religious conservatism in secularizing institutions and its implications for employee identity and work-family balance. In this context, the expression of religious identities and the question of how these identities can be reconciled with institutional policies are critical issues regarding employee motivation, organizational belonging, and cultural adaptation.[25]

In recent years, there has been an increase in studies on work-family conflict and the reflections of religious identity in work life. These studies have primarily focused on topics such as the visible aspects of religious identities, the risk of symbolic exclusion, or religion-based diversity policies in the workplace.[26] However, studies examining how secular organisational norms affect employees' internal value systems – particularly in the context of family-centred and religiously conservative orientations – remain limited in the literature.[27] Greenhaus and Beutell argued that conflicts

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[21] Meng E. Deng et al., "Masculine Conformity and Social Dominance's Relation with Organizational Culture Change," *Armed Forces & Society* (2023), 1–25; Carla Ferraro et al., "Embracing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): Considerations and Opportunities for Brand Managers," *Business Horizons* 66/4 (2023), 463–479.

[22] Jordan G. Starck et al., "How University Diversity Rationales Inform Student Preferences and Outcomes", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118/16 (2021), 1-7.

[23] Satish Kumar et al., "Religion as a Social Shaping Force in Entrepreneurship and Business: Insights from a Technology-Empowered Systematic Literature Review", *Technological Forecasting & Social Change* 175 (2022), 1–19.

[24] Leonor L. Torres, "School Organizational Culture and Leadership: Theoretical Trends and New Analytical Proposals", *Education Sciences* 12/4 (2022), 1-15.

[25] Bauman, *Liquid Times*, 44.

[26] Afra S. Ahmad et al., "Interpersonal Outcomes of Religious Identity Management at Work", *Journal of Management Studies* 58/8 (2021), 2207–2239; Héliot et al., "Religious Identity in the Workplace", 156.

[27] Margaret Benefiel et al., "Spirituality and Religion in the Workplace: History, Theory, and Research". *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 6/3 (2014), 175-187; Ali Aslan Gümüsay et al., "God at Work: Engaging Central and Incompatible Institutional Logics through Elastic Hybridity". *Academy of Management Journal* 63/1 (2020), 130-164; Héliot et al., "Religious Identity in the Workplace", 156; Rania Al Sharif, "Identity Work Responses to Workplace Stigmatization: Power Positions, Authenticity, Religious Coping and Religious Accommodation for Skilled Practising Muslim Professionals", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 98/1 (2025), 1–24; Renate Ysseldyk et al.,

arising from work and family roles are time- and stress-based, while subsequent studies have shown that these conflicts may also arise from cultural incompatibilities.[28] Ke and Deng emphasise that family values, when combined with organisational support, are important and critical psychosocial resource that increases employee commitment.[29]

However, Bauman and Sennett, in their separate studies, argue that such values are largely restricted in performance- and efficiency-oriented individualistic organisational structures.[30] An and colleagues and Dodanwala et al. have shown that the incompatibility between individual value systems and organisational structures leads not only to identity conflicts but also to outcomes such as work stress, burnout, and low job satisfaction.[31] Héliot et al. argue that employees with religious identities struggle to express themselves in secular work environments, which creates psychological insecurity in the workplace.[32] Ahmad et al. on the other hand, reveals that individuals who actively manage their religious identity in the workplace face the risk of exclusion and stigmatisation at the relational level.[33] These findings show that human resources policies developed within the framework of multiculturalism and inclusivity often fail to address deep-rooted value-based conflicts adequately.

The dominance of secular norms in modern organisational structures makes it difficult for employees with religious conservative identities and family-based values to adapt to the organisational culture; this situation leads to identity conflicts, a weakening of the sense of belonging, and a decrease in organisational commitment.[34] Family values and religious beliefs are among the determining factors that directly influence not only an individual's private life but also their ethical decision-making processes, motivation levels, and sense of commitment in their professional life.[35] However, institutional indifference or implicit exclusion towards these values in contemporary secular institutions brings with it symbolic exclusion that threatens employees'

"Religiosity as Identity: Toward an Understanding of Religion From a Social Identity Perspective", *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14/1 (2010), 60-71; Peter J. Burke – Jan E. Stets, *Identity Theory: Revised and Expanded*, 2. bs. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 94.

[28] Greenhaus – Beutell, "Sources of Conflict Between Work and Family Roles", 80; Allen, "Family Supportive Work Environments", 425; Putri – Etikariena, "The Role of the Work-Family Conflict", 262.

[29] Jianhong Ke – Xin Deng, "Family-Friendly Human Resource Practice, Organizational Commitment, and Job Performance among Employees: The Mediating Role of Workplace Spirituality", *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies* 6 (2018), 81-91.

[30] Bauman, *Liquid Times*, 45.

[31] An, "Impact of Work–Family Conflict", 2191; Dodanwala et al., "The Mediating Role of Work–Family Conflict", 928.

[32] Héliot et al., "Religious Identity in the Workplace", 156.

[33] Ahmad et al., "Interpersonal Outcomes of Religious Identity Management at Work", 2214-2216.

[34] Héliot et al., "Religious Identity in the Workplace", 160.

[35] Piyawan Charoensap-Kelly et al., "Religious Talk at Work: Religious Identity Management in the United States Workplace". *Journal of Communication and Religion* 43/1 (2020), 55-74.

sense of self-integrity, which in turn increases vulnerabilities, particularly in fundamental psychosocial areas such as work-family balance.[36]

In this context, the main research question of this study is as follows: Do secularised organisational structures behave inclusively towards employees' family values and religious identities, or do they render these identities invisible through institutional indifference? This study aims to analyse the effects of this interaction on critical psychosocial dimensions such as employee identity, sense of belonging, and organisational commitment by examining the interaction between religious conservatism, family values, and institutional secularisation at a conceptual level. Family values, which are often reduced to private life in the existing literature, are linked to secular organisational structures and corporate cultures in this study, and the reflections of internal value systems based on religious beliefs in contemporary work environments are discussed in a multidimensional manner. Focusing on how individualistic and performance-oriented organisational norms create a tension with family-based values, the study offers a unique theoretical framework in this regard.

Additionally, the study's distinctive feature lies in its multi-layered approach to secularisation theory, which goes beyond the public sphere to address organisational culture, employee identity, and family values. While themes such as the visibility of religious identities in the workplace, diversity policies, or symbolic exclusion are frequently addressed in the literature, this study discusses the impact of secular institutional structures on employees' internal value systems at a conceptual level. Identity conflicts, work-family balance issues, and weakened organisational belonging that arise in areas where religious conservatism and family values intersect with modern organisational norms form the theoretical inquiry axis of the study. In this regard, the research offers a unique and comprehensive contribution to the management of cultural diversity at the ethical, psychosocial, and structural levels.

This study employs a conceptual literature review to analytically examine the research problem within a coherent theoretical framework. Scholarly publications addressing the themes of secularization, religious conservatism, family values, organizational culture, identity conflict, and work–family balance were systematically reviewed. The literature search was conducted across major academic databases, including Web of Science, PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus, JSTOR, and DergiPark. Studies identified through the keywords 'secularization', 'organizational culture', 'religious conservatism', 'family values', 'identity conflict', and 'work–family balance' were evaluated through a descriptive and critical lens based on their conceptual relevance. The

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[36] Greenhaus – Beutell, "Sources of Conflict Between Work and Family Roles", 80.

inclusion criteria required that the publications be peer-reviewed, closely aligned with the research focus, and written in English or Turkish. Studies that were conceptually irrelevant, duplicated, or inconsistent with regard to title–abstract coherence were excluded. This article is based on a conceptual literature review conducted between January and June 2025. The aim of the review is to provide a comprehensive and theoretically informed understanding of how secularization, religious conservatism, and family values interact within contemporary organizational contexts and shape employee identity experiences.

1. Secularism and Its Reflections in Workplace Environments

The concept of secularization, derived from the Latin term *saeculum*, is used to describe a social transformation in which religion is gradually withdrawn from public and institutional spheres. In this context, secularization can be understood as a multidimensional process in which the influence of religious beliefs and institutions on social life decreases, particularly as a result of the emergence of modern, rationalized systems. This transformation deeply affects not only individual belief structures, but also how institutional values are produced and the formation of organizational culture.[37]

According to Durkheim, secularization is characterized by a social transformation in which communities move away from shared frameworks of sacred meanings that promote social harmony and towards more individualized and functionally differentiated structures.[38] Focusing specifically on the Islamic context, Köse argues that secularization can be seen in the weakening of traditional religious practices, the dissolution of collective religious commitments, and a decrease in the influence of religion in both the general culture and with regard to morality.[39] This phenomenon leads to a reevaluation of the social role of religion at the individual, institutional, and structural levels. As sacred or supernatural meanings give way to rational, scientific, and secular understandings within specific institutions, religion is increasingly confined to the private sphere. Secularization is therefore not in direct opposition to religion but involves a turning away from institutionalized religious structures that vary in form in different historical, cultural, and sociopolitical contexts.[40]

In modern capitalist societies, secularization forces institutions to operate under the principle of religious neutrality, which leads to the exclusion of religious symbols, beliefs, and practices from

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[37]   Berger, The Desecularization of the World, 33.
[38]   Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1912).
[39]   Saffet Köse, "Kültürel Formların Düşüşü ve İslami Yaşantının Sekülerleşmesi – Selefî Akım ve Modernist Söylemin Dindarlığı Dönüştürücü Etkisi", *İslam Hukuku Araştırmaları Dergisi* 35 (Nisan 2020), 1-42.
[40]   İhsan Çapcıoğlu, "Sekülerleşen Toplumda Bireyselleşen Aile". *Turkish Studies* 13/2 (2018), 19-34.

the public sphere.[41] In workplace contexts, this manifests itself through a reduction of overt, visible markers of religious and spiritual identities, restrictions on religious practices, and the suppression of religious expression under the guise of this neutrality.[42] Secular institutions often expect individuals to confine their religious identities to the private sphere. In response to these expectations, employees may feel compelled to suppress, conceal, or alter their identities to conform to professional norms.[43] This implicit pressure forces employees to develop strategies to manage how they express their identities, potentially leading to alienation, identity conflicts, and psychological vulnerability.[44]

At the institutional level, secularization creates a subtle but profound tension for religious individuals through its distancing or exclusion of religious symbols, devotional practices, and faith-based behaviors. These restrictions on religious identity in the workplace undermine individuals' ability to express themselves authentically, diminish their sense of belonging, and threaten their psychological security. Secular organizations often expect employees to confine their religious identities to their private lives, which encourages them to hide or change these identities under the banner of professionalism.[45] The impact of secularization in professional settings thus extends beyond the withdrawal of values; it manifests itself in ruptures in employees' identities, which have a profound effect on the relationships between these individuals and the institutions in which they are employed.[46]

2. Secularization Process and Family Values

Family values significantly affect how individuals ascribe meaning to their lives, shape their perspectives on commitment and loyalty, and also play an essential role in corporate life. Employees who value their families and feelings of community often face conflicts when confronted with institutional cultures that hinder the work-family balance.[47] However, family values should not be seen solely as a potential source of conflict; they can also be considered a vital resource that enhances employee motivation and commitment to the organization.[48] In this context, developing human resources policies that are sensitive to these values ~~can~~ improve both employee well-being and corporate sustainability.[49]

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[41]   Steve Bruce, *God Is Dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002)
[42]   Bruce, *God Is Dead*, 45.
[43]   Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2010).
[44]   Gümüşay et al., "God at Work," 130.
[45]   Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 47.
[46]   Ahmad et al., "Interpersonal Outcomes of Religious Identity Management at Work", 2215.
[47]   Allen, "Family Supportive Work Environments", 420.
[48]   Putri – Etikariena, "The Role of the Work-Family Conflict", 264.
[49]   Lambert et al., "Examining the Association Between Work–Family Conflict", 572.

The value conflicts that occur in the workplace may be reinforced by the transformative effects of modernization and secularization on family structures themselves. The transition from the dominance of the extended family to the concentration on the nuclear family was accelerated by industrialization, urbanization, increased access to education, and women's participation in the workforce, and this resulted in the restructuring of value systems on a secular basis.[50] With this change, religious and sacred reference points gradually ceded ground to ethical norms based on individual autonomy, while traditional principles such as privacy, loyalty, and solidarity gradually gave way to more utilitarian relational patterns.[51] As a result, the previously decisive role of religion in family life was undermined by the dual influence of secular institutions and market logic.

The small nuclear family, which replaced more extensive familial structures, tends to privilege the individual rather than the group, the "I" instead of "we," and this has led to alienation within families, communication problems, and a weakening in how values are transmitted between different generations.[52] These issues demonstrate that secularization has not only diminished the public visibility of religious practices but has also reshaped the ethical and cultural structures of the family itself.[53] Such changes are not limited to the private sphere; they also significantly affect individuals' sense of identity and how values are expressed in the workplace.

Studies conducted in Türkiye indicate that employees working within secular institutions tend to express their religious identities more cautiously, particularly in relation to visibility, symbolic representation, and adaptation to organizational norms. The principle of 'institutional neutrality,' which is strongly emphasized in public organizations, may lead employees to limit religious practices in the workplace and to manage their identities in a more implicit manner.[54] This suggests that institutional neutrality can intersect with experiences of identity suppression, thereby reinforcing the theoretical framework of this study within the Turkish context.

Indeed, secularization has led to the marginalization of religious identity in organizational settings, which prevents individuals from openly discussing their belief systems and the roles they themselves play within their families.[55] This, in turn, increases the number of value-based conflicts at the institutional level. It has nevertheless been observed that individuals who openly express

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[50] Çapcıoğlu, "Sekülerleşen Toplumda Bireyselleşen Aile", 25.
[51] Craig Calhoun, "Secularism, Humanity, and Social Transformation", *European Academy of Religion*, Bologna, Italy, (2020).
[52] Çapcıoğlu, "Sekülerleşen Toplumda Bireyselleşen Aile", 25.
[53] Salih Yalçın, "Sekülerleşme Olgusu Bağlamında Ailenin Geleceği", *Din Sosyolojisi Araştırmaları* 5/8 (2025), 66.
[54] Çapcıoğlu, "Sekülerleşen Toplumda Bireyselleşen Aile", 25.
[55] Héliot et al., "Religious Identity in the Workplace", 158.

their religious identities at work have more positive social interactions than those who hide their beliefs.[56]

Öz, provides a comprehensive analysis of how secularization erodes family values, arguing that individualization, the greater concentration on privacy, the erosion of value systems, and changing gender roles have rendered traditional family structures dysfunctional.[57] Therefore, the transformation of the institution of the family and how this has affected working life should be seen simultaneously as an economic problem and a sociocultural and ethical concern. Yalçın, views the impact of secularization on the family structure as a historical rupture, emphasizing that the transition from traditional patterns based on sacred values to secular and individualistic models leads to social and cultural tensions.[58] This transition has particularly challenged the family structures of those who are religiously conservative, and family values have been weakened as a direct result of modernization.

The decline of religious beliefs and the rise of consumer culture have weakened family ties, and traditional values have been replaced by an emphasis on materialism. This change has led to increased emotional distance between family members and promoted individualism and digital isolation within families. The individualistic model that emerged after industrialization has diminished the strength of traditional values, and feelings of emotional closeness and intergenerational interaction have gradually decreased in tandem with the rise of digitalization.[59]

Today, under the continued influence of secularism, families are not only experiencing ongoing structural transformations but also multi-layered cultural changes that continue to erode traditional family values. The dissolution of previous norms, which is fed by tendencies towards individualism and consumerism, and the rise of digital loneliness, is redefining the sociological, ethical and emotional dimensions of the family.[60] This process is not simply cultural; it is a sociological phenomenon with emotional and ethical dimensions. Therefore, understanding contemporary family structures requires a holistic analysis of the evolution of family values using interdisciplinary and intercultural approaches.[61]

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[56] Ahmad et al., "Interpersonal Outcomes of Religious Identity Management at Work", 2215.

[57] Nedim Öz, "Modern Seküler Süreçte Ailenin Çözülmesi", *Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 6/11 (2019), 797.

[58] Yalçın, "Sekülerleşme Olgusu Bağlamında Ailenin Geleceği", 66.

[59] Çapcıoğlu, "Sekülerleşen Toplumda Bireyselleşen Aile", 22.

[60] Zhongmin Wu, "Basic Characteristics of Secularisation", *Secularisation and Modernisation*, 49–85 (Singapore: Springer, 2023).

[61] Michelle E. Wu et al., "Masculine Conformity and Social Dominance's Relation With Organizational Culture Change", *Armed Forces & Society* (2023), 1-27.

3. Religious Conservatism and Employees' Identities

Identity is a multidimensional concept that includes how individuals see and define themselves both privately and in their social environments.[62] In some studies, identity has been conceptualized as a holistic construct encompassing an individual's self-perception within a specific social context, their emotional and cognitive responses to this perception, and how they evaluate these.[63] Professional identity, in particular, is shaped by a person's sense of belonging to a particular professional group, and the internalization of the values and norms of that group in ways that affect the individual's search for meaning, the status they expect to reach and maintain, and the behaviors and roles in which they engage.[64]

Religious identity, in particular, is a deep form of social belonging based on sacred values and moral norms. It can be considered distinct from other forms of identity due to the high level of moral authority it tends to assume and its intrinsic motivation.[65] Religious conservatism, in particular, refers to an individual's strong adherence to a value system based on sacred references and their commitment to following religious principles in both their private life and their social roles.[66] These values are not limited to the private sphere; they also manifest themselves in business ethics, decision-making processes, and organizational behavior.

Conservative employees may face tensions between their value-based commitments and modern performance-oriented norms, often leading them to conceal their religious identity in order to align with a particular perception of professionalism.[67] When this occurs, the workplace functions not as a neutral space but as an arena in which a false identity is created, and in which religious expression is restricted, jeopardizing employees' authenticity and psychological security.[68] The identity of an employee is not limited to their work-related roles; it also integrates self-perception, values, the sense of meaning, and organizational affiliation. Therefore, the tension that arises between religious and professional identities can negatively affect the psychological well-being of employees and other individual outcomes.[69] The principle of institutional neutrality can function as an implicit organizational norm that distances employees' religious identities from professional

[62] Burke – Stets, *Identity Theory*, 94.
[63] Blake E. Ashforth – Fred Mael, "Social Identity Theory and the Organization", Academy of Management Review 14/1 (1989), 20–39.
[64] Ashforth – Mael, "Social Identity Theory", 25.
[65] Ysseldyk et al., "Religiosity as Identity: Toward an Understanding of Religion From a Social Identity Perspective", 60-71.
[66] Bruce, *God Is Dead*, 48.
[67] Burke – Stets, *Identity Theory*, 90.
[68] Al Sharif, "Identity Work Responses", 10.
[69] Sonia Ghumman et al., "Religious Discrimination in the Workplace: A Review and Examination of Current and Future Trends". *Journal of Business and Psychology* 28/4 (2013), 439-454.

visibility. Prior studies show that such neutrality norms may unintentionally pressure employees to suppress or downplay their identity-related expressions, resulting in reduced visibility and forms of organizational withdrawal.[70] These dynamics can also create spillover effects on work–family balance and sense of belonging, as identity suppression is associated with psychological strain and reduced well-being. [71] In this study, these relationships are addressed through a conceptual model that explains how organizational culture regulates identity management processes. Roberts emphasizes that in order for employees to exist with their authentic identities in the work environment, they must experience harmony between their internal values and their external expressions.[72]

However, within this structure, religious identity often plays the most fundamental role in existential terms and in terms of achieving a subjective feeling of internal coherence. The structural dynamics of the contemporary social and economic order further deepen such identity tensions. Fukuyama[73] argued that the neoliberal order's glorification of individual achievement erodes social trust; Bauman[74] noted that liquid modernity uproots individuals; and Sennett[75] emphasized that flexible capitalism undermines the development of character and supportive relationships. These theoretical frameworks suggest how identity may become fragile at the individual level and in institutional contexts. In secular organizations, individuals who are forced to navigate between multiple identities often feel compelled to suppress their religious selves, leading to tensions between their faith-based and professional identities, problems in maintaining coherent identities, and decreased psychological well-being.[76]

Religious conservatism can, however, also serve both as a form of quiet resistance and as a source of resilience for individuals in modern workplaces. Religious coping strategies and faith-based value systems sometimes enhance resilience and support authentic self-expression in the workplace.[77] On the other hand, suppressing such identities can lead to psychological strain at the individual level and lead to negative organizational consequences, such as decreased job satisfaction, reduced commitment, and decreased productivity.[78]

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[70] Gümüsay et al., "God at Work", 145.
[71] Ahmad et al., "Interpersonal Outcomes of Religious Identity Management at Work", 2210.
[72] Laura Morgan Roberts, "Reflected Best Self Engagement at Work: Positive Identity, Alignment, and the Pursuit of Vitality and Value Creation", *Oxford Handbook of Happiness*, ed. Ilona Boniwell – Susan David (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 767-782.
[73] Fukuyama, *Trust*, 114.
[74] Bauman, *Liquid Times*, 46.
[75] Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character*, 24.
[76] Ahmad et al., "Interpersonal Outcomes of Religious Identity Management at Work", 2210.
[77] Al Sharif, "Identity Work Responses", 12.
[78] Al Sharif, "Identity Work Responses", 13.

Within contemporary organizational structures, religiously conservative individuals often face invisible conflicts disguised as institutional neutrality. Their values, existential experience, and the integrity of their identities all become vulnerable to a variety of structural constraints.[79] Leslie and Flynn state that work environments that respect all belief systems increase employee satisfaction and organizational commitment. They also argue that supporting religious beliefs, a key component of employee identity, through flexible work hours, dedicated spaces for worship, and practices that allow for the expression of beliefs can significantly increase employee motivation.[80]

However, faith-based value systems sometimes function not simply as sources of conflict; they can also contribute to an internal sense of coherence, enhance psychosocial resilience, and create avenues for renegotiating one's identity within organizational contexts.[81] Organizations' inclusive employment of employees from diverse faiths and cultural backgrounds increases organizational creativity and innovation capacity. A diverse workforce approaches problems from different perspectives, fostering the emergence of original ideas.[82] This provides advantages in terms of internal productivity and engagement with external stakeholders. Today, consumers place greater trust in organizations that demonstrate cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness, and they shape their preferences accordingly. This trend necessitates that businesses reflect the principles of cultural competence and inclusiveness in their operations.[83] Thus, the relationship between religious conservatism and employee identity is not limited to conflict, but constitutes a complex terrain of resistance, meaning making, and identity reconstruction. Spiritually sensitive organizational climates have been shown to increase employee resilience and commitment.[84]

4. Modern Organizational Culture and Value Conflicts

Modern organizational culture has been shaped by capitalist production methods and neoliberal policies based on principles such as rationalization, individual performance, flexibility and measurability. Max Weber's discussions of bureaucratic rationalization contributed to the analysis and establishment of systematic organizational structures. Over time, these structures have been transformed into models that prioritize technical competence and performance, often at the expense of humanistic values.[85] In the neoliberal workplace, individualism and competition have

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[79] Héliot et al., "Religious Identity in the Workplace", 160.
[80] Leslie – Flynn, "Diversity Ideologies, Beliefs, and Climates", 860.
[81] Al Sharif, "Identity Work Responses",14.
[82] Starck et al., "How University Diversity Rationales Inform Student Preferences and Outcomes",1-7.
[83] Dimovski, "Embracing Diversity", 2.
[84] Benefiel et al., "Spirituality and Religion in the Workplace," 181.
[85] Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1922), 14.

become the fundamental pillars of organizational culture, reducing employees to units of productivity.[86]

This development has made businesses both places of productive employment and areas in which identity conflicts arise, especially for individuals with religiously conservative or traditional values. According to Sennett, flexible and constantly changing work structures have a negative effect on individuals' search for stability and belonging.[87] Performance-centered systems and the constant pressure for innovation conflict with employees' search for meaning, making it difficult for individuals who value loyalty, humility and spirituality to express their identities.[88]

Models of work-family conflict aim to explain the tension between professional demands and family responsibilities[89]. For those who place a high value on their families, long working hours and inflexible work conditions create significant obstacles to achieving a work-life balance.[90] Brough et al.[91] emphasize that an imbalance between these areas increases stress and the risk of burnout, especially for female employees. This imbalance affects not only psychological well-being but also employees' attitudes towards their workplaces.

Organizational commitment refers to an individual's ongoing emotional and behavioral commitment to their organization. This commitment is strengthened when personal and organizational values are congruent. In literature, such congruence is considered to be part of the psychological contract, while incongruence undermines trust and negatively affects satisfaction, commitment, and performance.[92] In secular organizations, the suppression of religious identity can lead to such incongruence, weakening both the psychological contract and organizational commitment. This, in turn, contributes to reduced motivation, burnout and employee turnover. In contrast, inclusive environments that respect religious diversity tend to encourage greater harmony, increased participation, and better performance.[93]

In Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions, differences along the individualism–collectivism spectrum are critical determinants of workplace conflict.[94] Employees whose values are more

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[86] Bauman, *Liquid Times*, 38.

[87] Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character*, 28.

[88] Peter Fleming, *Authenticity and the Cultural Politics of Work: New Forms of Informal Control* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[89] Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 48.

[90] Greenhaus – Beutell, "Sources of Conflict Between Work and Family Roles", 82.

[91] Brough, "The Ability of 'Family Friendly' Organizational Resources", 227.

[92] Per Lenberg et al., *Misaligned Values in Software Engineering Organizations*, Journal of Software: Evolution and Process, 31 (2019), 1-20.

[93] Miha Dimovski, "Embracing Diversity: The Role of Religion in Shaping Organizational Culture". *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict* 28/5 (2024), 1-2.

[94] Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (Beverly Hills: SAGE, 1980), s. 28

religious and collectivist may experience exclusion, isolation, and mistrust in secular, individualistic work cultures.[95] In this regard, Liu and Hong, in their study of female social workers in China, found that work–family conflict had a significant impact on symptoms of depression.[96] Similarly, Stanley et al. identified strong negative correlations between satisfaction with family life, work–family conflict, and psychological distress in the United Kingdom.[97] These findings suggest that individuals who-prioritize family roles may be at risk in terms of their ability to express their identities and also with regard to their emotional and psychological well-being in secular work environments.

Gümüsay et al. suggest that despite rhetorically promoting diversity, modern organizations often suppress religious identities under the guise of neutrality.[98] This demonstrates how organizational cultures can perpetuate both a form of symbolic participation and, at the same time, practice a kind of normative exclusion. Restricting religious identity to the private sphere undermines employees' sense of belonging, leading to stress, burnout, and the intention to leave their job. Furthermore, the tension between faith-based values and secular organizational norms exacerbates trust deficits, role ambiguity, and identity crises.[99]

The incompatibility between modern organizational culture and employees' faith-based values creates psychological tension at the individual level and gives rise to structural weaknesses in terms of organizational sustainability, the ethical climate, and cultural inclusiveness. This highlights how organizations should approach diversity with regard to equitable representation, as well as through fair, inclusive, and value-oriented frameworks. Policies that encourage the open expression of identity and inclusive participation strengthen both employee well-being and organizational performance.[100] In contrast, structures that theoretically legitimize themselves through a discourse that only superficially emphasizes diversity run the risk of promoting exclusionary and homogenizing mechanisms in practice.

Conclusion

This study brings together religious conservatism, family values, and secular organisational norms within an integrated conceptual discussion, offering an analytical framework for understanding how identity-based tensions shape employee experiences in contemporary workplaces. It shows

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[95] Ahmad et al., "Interpersonal Outcomes of Religious Identity Management at Work", 2215.

[96] Zixiao Liu – Hong Liu, "Work–Family Conflict and Mental Health among Chinese Female Healthcare Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Moderating Effects of Resilience", *Healthcare*, 11/12 (2023), 1-11.

[97] Stanley, Selwyn et al. "Psychological Distress, Work–Family Conflict and Family Life Satisfaction: A Quantitative Study of Social Workers in the UK". *International Social Work* 68/2 (2025), 267–280.

[98] Gümüsay et al., "God at Work", 145.

[99] Héliot et al., "Religious Identity in the Workplace", 162.

[100] Ashforth – Mael, "Social Identity Theory", 27.

that employees' religious beliefs and family values become part of a field of tension within secularised organisational cultures. Secularisation has profound effects not only on individuals, but also on family structures, value systems, and institutional cultures, and can weaken work–family balance, organisational commitment, and psychological well-being. These conclusions are consistent with previous research on religious identity, secular organisational environments, and value negotiation in the workplace, which highlights the risks of identity suppression and its implications for well-being and commitment.[101] The patterns identified in this study align with established findings in the sociology of religion and organisational behaviour, supporting the theoretical validity of the arguments presented.

Organisational structures that formally rely on the principle of neutrality may, in practice, restrict the expression of employees' religious beliefs and family-based values. Such restrictions may lead to identity suppression, role conflict, and a weakened sense of belonging. For employees whose identities are shaped by religious conservatism, the workplace becomes a space in which questions of identity, meaning, and ethics must be continuously negotiated. The findings indicate that family values should not be confined to the private sphere; they play a decisive role in professional motivation, decision-making, and institutional relationships. [102] Developing organisational policies that are sensitive to religious and family values is therefore not only an ethical responsibility, but also a strategic necessity. Such an approach can support cultural diversity, increase employee engagement, and strengthen organisational sustainability.

The interaction between family values, religious conservatism, and organisational culture should be examined both from the perspective of individual choice and in relation to corporate governance and community engagement. It is essential for organisations to adopt human resources policies that are compatible with religious and spiritual diversity and to create inclusive organisational climates in which employees feel safe. Such climates strengthen job satisfaction, psychological resilience, and organisational commitment.[103] In line with these findings, human resources managers should develop guidelines that treat identity diversity as a resource that strengthens organisational commitment rather than as a threat. Establishing communication mechanisms through which employees can safely express their religious or cultural identities may

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[101] Berger, The Desecularization of the World, 33; Ysseldyk et al., "Religiosity as Identity: Toward an Understanding of Religion From a Social Identity Perspective", 60-71; Gümüsay et al., "God at Work", 145.

[102] Greenhaus – Beutell, "Sources of Conflict Between Work and Family Roles", 82; Brough, "The Ability of 'Family Friendly' Organizational Resources", 227; Allen, "Family Supportive Work Environments", 420.

[103] Ysseldyk et al., "Religiosity as Identity: Toward an Understanding of Religion From a Social Identity Perspective", 60-71; Greenhaus – Beutell, "Sources of Conflict Between Work and Family Roles", 82; Benefiel et al., "Spirituality and Religion in the Workplace," 181.

enhance perceptions of organisational justice. For policymakers, it is equally important to provide guidance that helps institutions implement neutrality without suppressing the visibility of employees' identities.

When flexible practices that support the work-family balance are combined with identity-affirming policies, this has the potential to increase individual well-being and the sustainability of the organization. Workplace policies that take this dynamic into account (those that are identity-friendly and inclusive) can pave the way for organizational environments where authentic self-expression is encouraged, psychological security is promoted, and a strong sense of belonging is nurtured. Future research should aim to examine the relationship between religious conservatism and organizational culture across different sectors through comparative studies in order to provide deeper theoretical insights and draw out broader practical implications.

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(Author Declaration on the Use of Artificial Intelligence)

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