

Religious Work Culture and Women's Workplace Safety Climate in Bangladesh: The Mediating Role of Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity

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Purpose: Basing on Institutional Theory, this study examines whether religious work culture functions as a normative institutional force that fosters a safer workplace climate for women. Specifically, it investigates the direct effect of Religious Work Culture (RWC) on Women's Workplace Safety Climate (WWSC) and the mediating role of Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity (POSR) in the context of Islamic financial and academic institutions in Bangladesh.

Design/methodology/approach: Adopting a quantitative research design, data were collected from 272 female respondents, including faculty members, employees, and students of selected Islamic academic and financial institutions in Bangladesh. Purposive sampling was employed to capture faith-based organizational environments. The proposed research model was tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Findings: The results reveal that religious work culture grounded in Islamic ethical norms significantly enhances women's workplace safety climate. Religious work culture also exerts a positive influence on perceived organizational support for

religiosity, which in turn strengthens women's perceptions of workplace safety. Mediation analysis confirms that perceived organizational support for religiosity partially mediates the relationship between religious work culture and women's workplace safety climate, supporting the institutional logic that normative values are translated into protective outcomes through organizational practices.

Practical implications: The findings suggest that institutionalizing religious values such as dignity, justice, and harm prevention—along with visible organizational support for religiosity—can contribute to safer and more respectful workplaces for women. These insights are applicable beyond Islamic institutions to other organizations seeking culturally grounded mechanisms to promote workplace safety.

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Originality/value: This study extends Institutional Theory by demonstrating how religious work culture operates as a normative institution that shapes women's workplace safety through organizational support for religiosity. It offers empirical evidence from a Muslim-majority context, contributing to the emerging literature on faith-based organizational practices and gender-sensitive workplace climates.

Keywords: Religious Work Culture, Workplace Safety, Perceived Organizational Support, Women Worker, Islamic Institutions.

1. Introduction

Ensuring women's safety in the workplace has emerged as a critical organizational and societal concern, particularly in contexts where gender norms, cultural values, and institutional structures strongly shape organizational behavior. Despite the growing emphasis on gender equality and workplace safety, women in many developing and Muslim-majority countries continue to experience harassment, bullying, and psychological insecurity in professional settings (Nuhiuddin, 2023; Kamali, 2020). Bangladesh, as a Muslim-dominant society with expanding Islamic financial and academic institutions, presents a unique context in which religious values coexist with modern organizational practices, making it an important setting for examining culturally embedded mechanisms that foster women's workplace safety.

Prior research on women's workplace safety has largely focused on legal compliance, organizational policies, and individual attitudes, often overlooking the role of religious work culture as an institutional force shaping norms of dignity, justice, and moral accountability

(Syahir et al., 2025). In Islamic contexts, religious teachings explicitly emphasize the protection of human dignity (*karāmah*), justice (*'adl*), and the prohibition of harm (*la darar wa la dirar*), which collectively provide a moral foundation for safeguarding women in social and professional environments (Kamali, 2020; Nuhiuddin, 2023). However, empirical research examining how these values are translated into organizational climates that ensure women's safety remains limited.

Drawing on Institutional Theory, this study argues that Religious Work Culture (RWC) operates as a normative institutional pillar that shapes organizational expectations regarding appropriate behavior toward women. Institutional Theory posits that organizations seek legitimacy by aligning their structures and practices with socially accepted norms, values, and belief systems rather than relying solely on efficiency considerations (Scott, 2005, 2017). Within Islamic institutions, religious values form a powerful normative framework that influences organizational culture, leadership behavior, and interpersonal conduct (Tina Dacin et al., 2002; Karbhari et al., 2021). When Islamic ethical

norms are embedded in workplace culture, they can function as informal control mechanisms that discourage harassment, promote respect, and foster a safety-oriented climate for women.

Yet, institutional norms alone may not be sufficient unless they are reinforced through organizational practices. Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity (POSR) reflects employees' perceptions that their organization values and supports religious beliefs and practices (Eisenberger et al., 1986). From an institutional perspective, POSR represents the institutionalization of religious norms, signaling organizational legitimacy and commitment to faith-based values (Alam et al., 2021; Alam & Miah, 2024). When organizations visibly support religiosity—through policies, leadership behavior, and accommodation of religious practices—religious norms are more likely to be internalized and translated into everyday conduct, including respectful treatment of women.

Emerging research suggests that Islamic work ethics and religious organizational cultures are associated with ethical behavior, reduced deviance, and improved organizational outcomes (Ali, 1988; Ali & Al-Owaidan, 2008; Chupradit et al., 2022). However, the specific mechanism through which religious work culture enhances Women's Workplace Safety Climate (WWSC) remains underexplored. WWSC refers to shared perceptions regarding the extent to which the workplace ensures dignity, protection, and freedom from harassment for women. Recent Islamic and spirituality-based studies highlight that workplaces infused with moral and spiritual values are more likely to foster psychological safety and well-being (Syahir et al., 2025), reminding the need to examine safety climate through a culturally grounded lens.

Addressing this gap, the present study develops and tests a model in which RWC influences WWSC directly and indirectly through POSR. By integrating Institutional Theory with empirical evidence from Bangladesh, this study responds to calls for context-sensitive research

on gender, religion, and organizational behavior in Muslim-majority societies (Nguyen et al., 2025; Siddiqui et al., 2025). Using data collected from female faculty members, employees, students, and clients of Islamic financial and academic institutions, and employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), this research provides robust empirical insights into how religious institutional norms translate into safer workplace climates for women.

This study contributes to the literature in three important ways. First, it extends Institutional Theory by demonstrating how religious work culture functions as a normative institutional mechanism shaping women's workplace safety climate. Second, it empirically establishes POSR as a mediating mechanism that institutionalizes religious values into protective organizational outcomes. Third, it offers practical implications for policymakers and managers seeking culturally legitimate approaches to promoting women's workplace safety in Bangladesh and similar institutional contexts.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Institutional Theory as an Explanatory Lens

Institutional Theory provides a robust framework for understanding how organizational behavior is shaped by socially constructed norms, values, and belief systems that confer legitimacy on organizational actions (Scott, 2005, 2017). According to this perspective, organizations operate within institutional environments characterized by regulative, normative, and cognitive pillars. Among these, the normative pillar—which emphasizes moral obligations, values, and socially appropriate conduct—is particularly relevant for examining religious influences in organizational contexts (Tina Dacin et al., 2002).

In Muslim-majority societies, religious values embedded in Islam form a powerful normative institutional force that influences organizational culture, governance structures, and interpersonal behavior (Karbhari et al., 2021; Alam & Miah,

2024). Islamic principles such as justice (*‘adl*), dignity (*karāmah*), moral accountability (*amānah*), and the prevention of harm (*la darar wa la dirar*) shape expectations regarding appropriate workplace conduct, especially toward women. When these principles are institutionalized within organizational culture, they can influence behavioral norms and climate-level outcomes, including workplace safety for women.

2.2 Religious Work Culture and Women’s Workplace Safety Climate

Religious Work Culture (RWC) refers to the extent to which religious values, ethics, and moral principles are embedded in organizational norms, leadership practices, and daily work behaviors. Prior research on Islamic work ethics suggests that organizations grounded in religious values promote ethical behavior, discourage misconduct, and foster respect-based interactions (Ali, 1988; Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008). Empirical evidence further indicates that Islamic work ethics positively influence organizational culture by strengthening moral discipline and social responsibility among employees (Chupradit et al., 2022).

From an institutional theory perspective, RWC operates as a normative institution that defines acceptable and unacceptable behavior in the workplace. In Islamic contexts, harassment, bullying, and disrespect toward women are not only organizational violations but also moral transgressions, explicitly prohibited by religious teachings (Kamali, 2020; Nuhiuddin, 2023). As a result, workplaces characterized by strong religious work culture are more likely to cultivate a climate in which women feel respected, protected, and psychologically safe.

Women’s Workplace Safety Climate (WWSC) reflects shared perceptions regarding the organization’s commitment to preventing harassment, ensuring dignity, and protecting women from physical and psychological harm. Prior studies highlight that ethical and spirituality-based workplace climates contribute to employee well-being, trust, and perceived safety (Syahir et al., 2025). However, limited empirical research has directly examined the

influence of religious work culture on women’s workplace safety, particularly in Muslim-majority settings.

Based on the above arguments, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Religious work culture has a positive effect on women’s workplace safety climate.

2.3 Religious Work Culture and Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity

While religious work culture establishes normative expectations, its influence on employee perceptions depends on whether these values are institutionalized through organizational practices. Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity (POSR) refers to employees’ perceptions that their organization values, respects, and supports religious beliefs and practices (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Institutional Theory suggests that organizations seeking legitimacy reinforce normative values through formal and informal practices, policies, and leadership behavior (Scott, 2017). In Islamic institutions, support for religiosity—such as accommodating religious practices, respecting faith-based identities, and aligning organizational decisions with Islamic values—signals institutional commitment to religious norms (Alam et al., 2021; Karbhari et al., 2021). Such support strengthens the internalization of religious values and enhances employees’ trust in the organization’s moral intentions.

Empirical studies indicate that religiously supportive organizational environments strengthen value congruence and ethical behavior among employees (Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008; Kareem et al., 2025). Thus, organizations characterized by strong religious work culture are more likely to be perceived as supportive of employees’ religiosity.

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Religious work culture has a positive effect on perceived organizational support for religiosity.

2.4 Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity and Women's Workplace Safety Climate

POSR plays a critical role in translating religious norms into behavioral and climate-level outcomes. When employees perceive that their organization genuinely supports religiosity, religious values are more likely to guide daily interactions and ethical decision-making. From an institutional perspective, POSR represents the operationalization of normative values, reinforcing expectations of moral conduct and accountability (Scott, 2017).

Supportive religious environments have been associated with reduced discrimination, increased respect for diversity, and enhanced psychological safety (Syahir et al., 2025; Siddiqui et al., 2025). In the context of women's workplace safety, POSR can foster climates where harassment is socially unacceptable and morally condemned, encouraging respectful behavior toward women and empowering them to voice concerns without fear.

Thus, it is argued that organizational support for religiosity strengthens women's perceptions of safety and dignity at work.

H3: Perceived organizational support for religiosity has a positive effect on women's workplace safety climate.

2.5 The Mediating Role of Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity

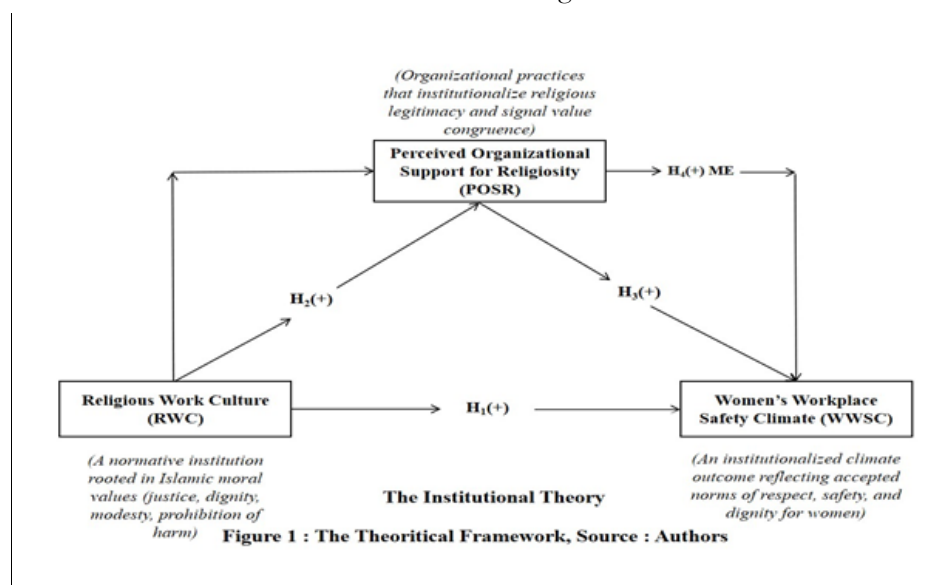
Institutional Theory emphasizes that institutional norms influence outcomes most effectively when they are embedded in organizational structures and practices (Tina Dacin et al., 2002; Scott, 2017). While religious work culture provides a normative foundation, its impact on women's workplace safety is expected to be stronger when organizations actively support religiosity.

POSR serves as a mediating mechanism through which religious work culture is translated into a safety-oriented workplace climate. By legitimizing religious values and reinforcing moral expectations, POSR enhances the effectiveness of religious norms in shaping behavior toward women. Empirical evidence from Islamic organizational contexts supports the view that institutionalized religious practices strengthen ethical climates and reduce harmful behaviors (Alam & Miah, 2024; Kareem et al., 2025).

Therefore, this study proposes that POSR partially mediates the relationship between religious work culture and women's workplace safety climate.

H4: Perceived organizational support for religiosity mediates the relationship between religious work culture and women's workplace safety climate.

The Theoretical framework is demonstrated in Figure 1.



3. Methodology

This study adopts a positivist research philosophy, which is appropriate for examining theoretically grounded relationships among latent constructs through empirical testing. Positivism assumes that social phenomena can be objectively measured and explained through observable data and statistical analysis, making it suitable for testing the proposed relationships among religious work culture, perceived organizational support for religiosity, and women's workplace safety climate within an institutional framework (Saunders et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2021).

A quantitative research design was employed to test the hypothesized relationships and mediation effects. Quantitative methods enable generalization, theory testing, and objective comparison across respondents, which aligns with the study's objective of validating institutional theory-based assumptions in organizational settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Specifically, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used due to its suitability for prediction-oriented research, mediation analysis, and complex models with latent constructs. PLS-SEM is also robust to non-normal data and performs well with moderate sample sizes, making it appropriate for organizational and behavioral research in emerging economies such as Bangladesh (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2021).

Data were collected using a purposive sampling technique, as the study required respondents who were directly embedded in religiously influenced institutional environments. The sample consisted of female faculty members, employees, students, and clients from Islamic financial institutions and Islamic academic organizations in Bangladesh. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate because these respondents possess contextual knowledge and lived experience relevant to religious work culture and women's workplace safety, which random sampling might not adequately capture (Etikan et al., 2016). A total of 500

questionnaires were distributed online, and 272 valid responses were received and retained for analysis, exceeding the minimum sample size recommended for PLS-SEM based on statistical power considerations (Hair et al., 2021).

The selected respondents are theoretically and empirically appropriate for the study, as Islamic financial and academic institutions in Bangladesh operate under strong regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive institutional pressures that shape organizational practices related to religiosity and gender norms (Scott, 2017; Alam & Miah, 2024). Female respondents were prioritized to ensure authentic measurement of women's workplace safety climate, particularly in relation to harassment, dignity, and religiously informed organizational practices.

Data were collected anonymously to minimize social desirability bias, fear of retaliation, and response distortion, particularly given the sensitivity of issues related to harassment, religiosity, and gender safety in conservative institutional contexts. Anonymity enhances respondent honesty and improves data reliability, especially in studies involving power asymmetry and gender-based concerns (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

Ethical considerations were strictly followed throughout the research process. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained electronically, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage. No personally identifiable information was collected, and data were used solely for academic purposes. These procedures align with international research ethics standards for social science research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Despite its contributions, the study has some limitations. The cross-sectional design restricts causal inference, and future studies may adopt longitudinal approaches to capture institutional change over time. Additionally, the use of self-reported data may introduce common method variance, although procedural remedies such as anonymity and scale separation were applied (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Finally, the findings are

context-specific to Bangladesh and Islamic institutions; thus, generalizability to non-Islamic or Western organizational contexts should be approached with caution.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic analysis

A total of 272 valid responses were analyzed and Table 1 presents the demographic distribution

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 272)

<i>Demographic Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Age	Below 25 years	48	17.6
	25–34 years	96	35.3
	35–44 years	74	27.2
	45 years and above	54	19.9
Institution Type	Islamic academic institutions	138	50.7
	Islamic financial institutions	134	49.3
Role/Position	Faculty/Academic staff	76	27.9
	Administrative/Professional staff	84	30.9
	Students	68	25.0
	Clients/Service users	44	16.2
Years of Association	Less than 2 years	62	22.8
	2–5 years	88	32.4
	6–10 years	71	26.1
	More than 10 years	51	18.7

The demographic profile reflects a balanced and institutionally embedded sample, which is particularly important for examining religious work culture and women’s workplace safety climate within an Islamic organizational context. The age distribution shows that a substantial proportion of respondents (over 62%) fall within the 25-44 age group, which represents an economically active cohort with sustained exposure to organizational culture, policies, and workplace interactions. This enhances the reliability of perceptions related to religious

of the respondents. All respondents were female and drawn from Islamic financial and academic institutions in Bangladesh. The demographic characteristics indicate a diverse yet institutionally relevant sample, enhancing the credibility and contextual relevance of the findings.

norms, organizational support for religiosity, and safety climate.(Hossain et al., 2025)

The near-equal representation from Islamic academic institutions and Islamic financial institutions strengthens the generalizability of the findings across two major sectors where Shariah-based norms and institutional pressures are explicitly operationalized. From an institutional theory perspective, these organizations are subject to strong normative and cultural-cognitive pressures, which shape gender norms, ethical conduct, and religiously

informed workplace practices (Scott, 2017; Alam & Miah, 2024).

The diversity of respondent roles—including faculty, staff, and students adds depth to the analysis by capturing multiple stakeholder perspectives within Islamic institutions. This multi-actor representation aligns with institutional theory's emphasis on shared meanings and taken-for-granted practices that transcend formal employment boundaries (Tina Dacin et al., 2002). Importantly, the inclusion of clients and students reflects how workplace safety climate is experienced not only by employees but also by broader organizational participants.

In terms of tenure, more than 45% of respondents reported over five years of association with their institutions, suggesting sufficient organizational embeddedness to meaningfully assess religious work culture and perceived organizational support for religiosity. Longer exposure increases the likelihood that respondents have internalized institutional norms, making their evaluations of women's workplace safety climate more informed and stable. (Hossain & Subhan, 2021)

4.2 Measurement Model: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The measurement model was assessed using PLS-SEM (SmartPLS 4) to evaluate the reliability and validity of the constructs: Religious Work Culture (RWC), Women's Workplace Safety Climate (WWSC), and Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity (POSR). Outer loadings for all items exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.6, indicating adequate indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2022). Table 2 presents the item loadings for each construct.

The outer loadings indicate strong indicator reliability, as all items load above 0.65. The RWC items effectively capture Islamic work ethics and religiously guided organizational norms, reflecting ethical treatment, justice, and respect for human dignity. The WWSC items demonstrate a robust measurement of women's safety perceptions, encompassing psychological, physical, and moral dimensions. POSR items reliably measure employees' perception of organizational support for practicing religiosity. These results provide preliminary evidence that the constructs are valid and reliable, supporting the use of these indicators in subsequent structural model analysis. The constructs satisfy the convergent validity criterion, as evidenced by high outer loadings, and are suitable for PLS-SEM hypothesis testing, including mediation analysis.

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

	<i>Items of the Constructs</i>	<i>Outer loadings</i>
RWC1	My Organizational practices reflect Islamic values of justice in dealing with employees.	0.731
RWC2	Moral conduct guided by Islamic teachings shapes workplace norms here.	0.712
RWC3	Leadership of my institution emphasizes ethical behavior inspired by Islamic values.	0.722
RWC4	The organization promotes honesty and fairness as religious obligations.	0.729
RWC5	Islamic values influence how employees interact with women at my workplace.	0.720
RWC6	My Organizational culture discourages harm in line with Islamic ethics.	0.693
RWC7	Respect for human dignity is embedded in my workplace culture.	0.770
RWC8	My workplace rules reflect Islamic moral responsibility toward others.	0.732
RWC9	Employees are expected to uphold Islamic ethical standards at my workplace.	0.705
RWC10	Religious values guide organizational responses to misconduct.	0.657

WWSC1	Women are treated with dignity and respect as emphasized in Islam.	0.841
WWSC2	Harassment against women is considered unacceptable and unethical.	0.871
WWSC3	Organizational norms actively discourage harassment of women.	0.837
WWSC4	Women feel physically and psychologically safe at work.	0.829
WWSC5	Women can report misconduct without fear of retaliation.	0.864
WWSC6	Disrespectful behavior toward women is promptly addressed.	0.843
WWSC7	Supervisors protect women from inappropriate behavior.	0.832
WWSC8	Organizational policies promote modesty, respect, and safety.	0.838
WWSC9	Women feel empowered in a morally safe work environment.	0.826
WWSC10	Leadership demonstrates commitment to women's safety as a moral duty.	0.856
POSR1	My organization supports employees in practicing Islamic values at work.	0.850
POSR2	Religious identity is respected within organizational policies.	0.831
POSR3	I feel encouraged to follow Islamic ethical conduct at work.	0.859
POSR4	Management shows understanding of religious obligations.	0.850
POSR5	Religious values are not discouraged in workplace interactions.	0.831
POSR6	Organizational policies accommodate Islamic moral concerns.	0.859
POSR7	Supervisors respect Islamic values guided ethical behavior.	0.850
POSR8	The organization values moral accountability inspired by Islam.	0.831
POSR9	Employees feel safe expressing religiously motivated concerns.	0.859
POSR10	The organization fosters a religion-friendly ethical environment.	0.850

Note: RWC = Religious Work Culture, WWSC = Women's Workplace Safety Climate, POSR = Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity

Source: PLS-SEM (SMART-PLS4)

4.3 Common Method Bias (CMB)

Table 3 : Common Method Bias (CMB): VIF-Inner Model		VIF
POSR -> Dummy		1.395
RWC -> Dummy		1.397
WWSC -> Dummy		1.005

Note : Note : RWC = Religious Work Culture , WWSC = Women's Workplace Safety Climate, POSR = Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity , Dummy variable added by Random Number to test CMB

Source: PLS-SEM (SMART-PLS4)

In this study the authors utilized the variance inflation factor (VIF) to evaluate common method bias (CMB) in the inner model. Such

test is advised for PLS-SEM context where multicollinearity among predictors may indicate bias (Kock, 2015). Table 3 displays the inner

VIF values for the constructs regressed against a common factor (dummy construct). It exhibits that the all the VIF values ranges from 1.005 to 1.397, all fall well below the conservative 3.3

4.4 Construct Reliability and Validity

threshold. This low value indicating that CMB doesn't significantly distort the relationships among the variables (Kock, 2015).

Table 4. Construct reliability and validity

	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>Composite reliability (rho_a)</i>	<i>Composite reliability (rho_c)</i>	<i>Average variance extracted (AVE)</i>
POSR	0.947	0.951	0.954	0.676
RWC	0.896	0.897	0.914	0.515
WWSC	0.955	0.956	0.961	0.712

Note : RWC = Religious Work Culture , WWSC = Women's Workplace Safety Climate, POSR = Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity

Source: PLS-SEM (SMART-PLS4)

The reliability and validity of the constructs were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (rho_a and rho_c), and average variance extracted (AVE), following the guidelines recommended for PLS-SEM (Hair, 2014). Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs ranged from 0.896 to 0.955, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating high internal consistency. Composite reliability (both rho_a and rho_c) values were also above the 0.70 benchmark, confirming strong construct reliability. Convergent validity was assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE), with all constructs demonstrating AVE values above 0.50, suggesting that the indicators explain a sufficient portion of the variance in their respective constructs. Specifically, POSR achieved an AVE of 0.676, RWC 0.515, and WWSC 0.712, which meets the standard criteria for convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The reliability and validity results confirm that the measurement instruments for RWC, POSR, and WWSC are both consistent and accurate in

capturing the underlying constructs. The high internal consistency of the constructs supports the robustness of the subsequent structural model analysis. Furthermore, the AVE values indicate strong convergent validity, suggesting that the items are well-aligned with their respective latent variables.

These results establish a solid foundation for testing the hypothesized relationships among religious work culture, perceived organizational support for religiosity, and women's workplace safety climate, including mediation effects, using PLS-SEM.

4.5 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using two complementary approaches recommended for PLS-SEM: the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT) and the Fornell–Larcker criterion. These methods ensure that each construct is empirically distinct and captures a unique conceptual domain (Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2021).

Table 5. Discriminant validity: Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT)

	POSR	RWC	WWSC
POSR			
RWC	0.715		
WWSC	0.607	0.771	

Source: PLS-SEM (SMART-PLS4)

Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

The HTMT values for all construct pairs were below the conservative threshold of 0.85, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity. As shown in Table 5, the highest HTMT value was observed between RWC and WWSC (0.771), which remains well within acceptable limits. This suggests that although religious work culture and women's workplace safety climate are theoretically related, they are empirically distinguishable constructs.

Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Discriminant validity was further examined using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which requires that the square root of the AVE for each construct be greater than its correlations with other constructs. As shown in Table 6, the diagonal values (square roots of AVE) for POSR (0.822), RWC (0.718), and WWSC (0.844) exceed the corresponding inter-construct correlations, thereby confirming discriminant validity.

Table 6. Discriminant Validity using the Fornell–Larcker criterion.

	POSR	RWC	WWSC
POSR	0.822		
RWC	0.682	0.718	
WWSC	0.590	0.726	0.844

Source: PLS-SEM (SMART-PLS4)

The results from both HTMT and Fornell–Larcker assessments confirm that Religious Work Culture (RWC), Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity (POSR), and Women's Workplace Safety Climate (WWSC) are empirically distinct constructs. This is particularly important given the conceptual proximity of these variables within an institutional and religious context.

From an institutional theory perspective, the findings suggest that religious norms embedded in organizational culture (RWC), organizational-level support for religiosity (POSR), and gender-specific safety climate perceptions (WWSC) represent separate yet interrelated institutional mechanisms. The clear discriminant validity supports the argument that women's workplace safety climate is not merely a by-product of religiosity or organizational support but a

distinct outcome shaped by multiple institutional forces.

Establishing discriminant validity provides a robust foundation for the subsequent structural model and mediation analysis, ensuring that the observed relationships among constructs are not artifacts of measurement overlap.

4.5 Structural Model Results and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was evaluated using PLS-SEM with bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) in SmartPLS 4 to test the hypothesized direct relationships among Religious Work Culture (RWC), Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity (POSR), and Women's Workplace Safety Climate (WWSC). Path coefficients (β), *t*-values, and *p*-values were examined to assess the significance of each hypothesis, following established PLS-SEM guidelines (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 7. Path coefficients (Direct effect) and hypothesis testing

<i>Path</i>	β	<i>Mean (M)</i>	<i>STDEV</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Decision</i>
POSR -> WWSC	0.177	0.177	0.064	2.769	0.006	Supported
RWC -> POSR	0.682	0.685	0.031	21.846	0.000	Supported
RWC -> WWSC	0.726	0.728	0.026	27.703	0.000	Supported

Note: RWC = Religious Work Culture, WWSC = Women's Workplace Safety Climate, POSR = Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity; p value < 0.01

Source: PLS-SEM (SMART-PLS4)

The results demonstrate strong empirical support for all hypothesized direct relationships. First, Religious Work Culture (RWC) has a significant and positive effect on Women's Workplace Safety Climate (WWSC) ($\beta = 0.726$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that organizational environments grounded in Islamic ethical values significantly enhance women's perceptions of safety, dignity, and protection. This finding aligns with institutional theory, which posits that normative and cultural-cognitive structures shape acceptable behavior and social expectations within organizations (Scott, 2017).

Second, the relationship between RWC and POSR is both positive and highly significant ($\beta = 0.682$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that religiously embedded organizational cultures are more likely to provide explicit and implicit support for employees' religiosity. This finding reinforces the argument that religious work culture operates as an institutional mechanism that legitimizes religious expression and ethical conduct within formal organizational systems.

Third, POSR positively influences WWSC ($\beta = 0.177$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that when organizations actively support religiosity, women experience higher levels of psychological and moral safety. Although the magnitude of this

effect is smaller than the direct effect of RWC on WWSC, it remains statistically significant, suggesting an important supportive pathway through which religiosity contributes to safer workplaces for women.

Collectively, these results highlight the central role of religious work culture in shaping women's workplace safety climate, while also underscoring the complementary role of perceived organizational support for religiosity. The strong explanatory power of RWC reflects how deeply institutionalized Islamic values—such as justice (*'adl*), dignity (*karamah*), and moral accountability—translate into concrete workplace practices that protect women from harassment and unethical behavior.

4.6 Mediation Analysis

To examine the mediating role of Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity (POSR) in the relationship between Religious Work Culture (RWC) and Women's Workplace Safety Climate (WWSC), a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples was employed using SmartPLS 4. The significance of indirect effects was assessed based on path coefficients (β), t -values, and p -values, following established mediation testing guidelines in PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 8: Specific Indirect effect

<i>Path</i>	β	<i>Mean (M)</i>	<i>STDEV</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Mediation Type</i>
RWC -> POSR -> WWSC	0.121	0.121	0.045	2.681	0.007	Partial

Source: PLS-SEM (SMART-PLS4)

The results indicate that POSR partially mediates the relationship between RWC and WWSC ($\beta = 0.121$, $p < 0.01$). The indirect effect is statistically significant, while the direct effect of RWC on WWSC also remains significant,

confirming partial mediation rather than full mediation.

From an institutional theory perspective, this finding suggests that religious work culture enhances women's workplace safety climate both directly—through institutionalized norms

of justice, dignity, and moral accountability—and indirectly by fostering organizational support for religiosity. POSR operates as a supportive institutional mechanism that translates religious norms into everyday organizational practices, such as accommodating religious values, legitimizing moral concerns, and reinforcing ethical behavior.

The partial mediation result implies that while organizational support for religiosity strengthens women's safety perceptions, religious work culture itself exerts a dominant influence. This underscores the importance of deeply embedded religious norms rather than relying solely on formal support mechanisms. In contexts such as Bangladesh, where Islamic values are culturally entrenched, religious work culture functions as a powerful normative and cultural-cognitive institution, shaping workplace behavior beyond formal policies. (Hossain & Subhan, 2022)

These findings extend institutional theory by demonstrating how religiously grounded institutional logics operate through both cultural norms and organizational support systems to improve gender-specific workplace outcomes. Practically, the results suggest that organizations seeking to enhance women's workplace safety should not only adopt formal religiosity-supportive policies but also cultivate a broader religiously informed ethical culture.

4.7 Explanatory Power of the Structural Model

The explanatory power of the structural model was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2) and effect size (f^2), following the guidelines for PLS-SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2019). R^2 values indicate the proportion of variance explained in the endogenous constructs, while f^2 values assess the relative impact of each exogenous construct on endogenous variables.

Table 9. Explanatory power

	f^2	R^2
POSR → WWSC	0.037	POSR (0.465)
RWC → POSR	0.871	WWSC (0.543)
RWC → WWSC	0.428	

Source: PLS-SEM (SMART-PLS4)

The R^2 value for POSR (0.465) indicates that 46.5% of the variance in perceived organizational support for religiosity is explained by religious work culture, reflecting substantial explanatory power. This finding underscores the central role of religious work culture as a key institutional driver shaping organizational support for religiosity.

Similarly, the R^2 value for WWSC (0.543) demonstrates that 54.3% of the variance in women's workplace safety climate is jointly explained by religious work culture and perceived organizational support for religiosity. According to PLS-SEM benchmarks, this represents moderate to substantial explanatory power, suggesting that the model is well-specified and theoretically robust.

Regarding effect sizes (f^2), the influence of RWC on POSR ($f^2 = 0.871$) is exceptionally strong, indicating that religious work culture is the dominant predictor of organizational support for religiosity. The effect of RWC on WWSC ($f^2 = 0.428$) is also large, reinforcing the conclusion that religious work culture directly and powerfully shapes women's perceptions of workplace safety.

In contrast, the effect size of POSR on WWSC ($f^2 = 0.037$) is small but meaningful, consistent with the earlier mediation results showing partial mediation. This suggests that while POSR contributes to women's workplace safety climate, its role is supplementary to the overarching influence of religious work culture.

From an institutional theory perspective, these results illustrate how deeply institutionalized

religious norms exert strong explanatory power over organizational practices and gender-related safety outcomes. Religious work culture functions as a normative and cultural-cognitive institution, while perceived organizational support for religiosity serves as a reinforcing mechanism that enhances—but does not replace—the direct influence of religious norms on women's workplace safety.

5. Discussion (Theoretical and Empirical Integration)

This study investigated whether Religious Work Culture (RWC) fosters Women's Workplace Safety Climate (WWSC) in Bangladeshi Islamic institutions, with Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity (POSR) as a mediator, grounded in Institutional Theory. The results provide robust support for all four hypotheses, offering both theoretical and empirical contributions.

Hypothesis 1 proposed that RWC positively influences WWSC. Consistent with theory, the results confirmed a strong positive effect of RWC on WWSC ($\beta = 0.726$, $p < 0.001$). This finding aligns with the institutional view that normative and cultural-cognitive pressures shape organizational climates, particularly in contexts where religious values are salient (Scott, 2017; Tina Dacin et al., 2002). Islamic ethical principles emphasize justice, dignity, and prohibitions against harm, which are internalized within organizational practices, fostering a climate that discourages harassment and promotes safety for women (Kamali, 2020; Nuhiuddin, 2023). This supports recent evidence demonstrating that ethically oriented work cultures enhance employee well-being and perceptions of safety (Syahir et al., 2025).

Hypothesis 2 asserted that RWC is positively associated with POSR. The data showed a strong relationship between RWC and POSR ($\beta = 0.682$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting that when religious values are embedded in culture, organizational support for religiosity is more visible and salient to employees. This result is consistent with Islamic work ethics literature, which posits that organizations reflecting faith-

based norms are more likely to develop supportive practices for religious expression and moral conduct (Ali & Al-Owaidan, 2008; Chupradit et al., 2022). It also resonates with organizational support theory, where perceived support strengthens value congruence and moral engagement (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Hoang & Le, 2025).

Hypothesis 3 proposed that POSR positively influences WWSC. Findings showed a positive and significant effect of POSR on WWSC ($\beta = 0.177$, $p < 0.01$), albeit with a smaller effect size compared to RWC's direct influence. This suggests that organizational support for religiosity contributes to women's perceptions of safety, complementing—but not fully explaining—the influence of broader cultural norms. This result is consistent with research indicating that supportive climates and moral affirmation can reduce stress and enhance psychological safety (Syahir et al., 2025), but it also highlights that structural cultural forces (e.g., normative religious expectations) play a larger role in shaping safety climate than support practices alone.

Hypothesis 4 suggested that POSR mediates the relationship between RWC and WWSC. The mediation analysis confirmed partial mediation ($\beta = 0.121$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that POSR partly explains how religious work culture influences women's workplace safety climate. Institutional Theory posits that normative values are most effective when institutionalized through practices and policies (Scott, 2017). The partial mediation underscores that while organizational support enhances the translation of religious norms into safety perceptions, religious culture itself remains a powerful determinant of climate. This finding parallels recent cross-cultural organizational research showing that supportive practices mediate the relationship between cultural values and employee outcomes (Kareem et al., 2025).

Collectively, these results extend existing scholarship by demonstrating that in Muslim-majority contexts such as Bangladesh, religious work culture not only shapes ethical

expectations but also institutionalizes those expectations through organizational support, creating a moral climate that enhances women's sense of safety and dignity at work.

6. Implications

6.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings offer several theoretical contributions. First, by integrating Institutional Theory with Islamic organizational contexts, the study demonstrates how religious norms function as normative and cultural-cognitive pillars, shaping not only formal policies but also informal behavioral expectations that enhance women's workplace safety (Scott, 2017). This extends institutional research into faith-based environments, reinforcing that normative pressures can produce gender-sensitive climates.

Second, the partial mediation of POSR reveals that institutional norms alone are insufficient; they must be translated into concrete supportive practices for maximum impact. This highlights an interaction between cultural norms and organizational support mechanisms rarely examined in religiosity research, thereby bridging gaps between ethical climate theory and organizational support literature (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Hair et al., 2014).

6.2 Managerial Implications

For managers in Islamic and faith-aligned institutions, embedding religious values into organizational culture should be accompanied by visible support mechanisms, such as religious accommodations, ethical training, and supportive leadership behaviors. These practices reinforce normative values and enhance employee perceptions of moral legitimacy, contributing to stronger safety climates for women. Leadership development programs should include religious literacy and ethical leadership training to ensure that support for religiosity aligns with broader gender safety goals.

6.3 Policy Implications

Policy makers and organizational leaders should consider institutionalizing religious support

within human resource frameworks, ensuring that support for religiosity is codified in policies, codes of conduct, and performance criteria. In Muslim-majority contexts, aligning workplace safety and religious governance frameworks can produce more culturally legitimate interventions to prevent harassment and discrimination. Regulatory bodies overseeing Islamic financial and educational institutions may adopt guidelines for women's dignity and protection, anchored in both legal compliance and religious ethical standards.

7. Conclusion and Future Research

This study provides empirical evidence that Religious Work Culture significantly enhances Women's Workplace Safety Climate in Islamic institutions in Bangladesh, both directly and indirectly through Perceived Organizational Support for Religiosity. The findings validate institutional norms as powerful predictors of ethical climate outcomes and underscore the importance of supportive practices accompanying normative cultural embedding.

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations that offer directions for future research. First, the cross-sectional design restricts causal inference; longitudinal studies could examine how institutional norms evolve and impact safety climate over time. Second, the data were collected from Islamic financial and academic institutions in a single country, limiting generalizability; future research might compare institutionalized religiosity effects across different cultures, sects, or religious organizations. Third, although the model integrates institutional and organizational support perspectives, future research could investigate moderators such as leadership style, organizational justice, or psychological safety to further explain boundary conditions.

In conclusion, this research highlights the significance of culturally informed institutional mechanisms in fostering gender-sensitive workplace climates, offering both theoretical insights and practical directions for organizations seeking to promote women's dignity, safety, and ethical well-being.

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