The Moderating Effect of Inclusive Leadership on the Relationship between Person-Organization Fit and Facades of Conformity

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ABSTRACT

The Facades of Conformity (FOC) is a false representation that, when the employee's values conflict with the organization's values, the employee suppresses their values and pretends to adopt the organization's values. It has many adverse outcomes for the organizations and the employees, such as burnout or intention to leave. Even though studies report the negative consequences of FOC, research on eliminating or reducing its negative effects is limited. Specifically, the role of inclusive leadership in reducing FOC has not been researched. This is important because understanding the role of inclusive leadership can help organizations create environments where employees feel valued and authentic, reducing the pressure for facades of conformity and improving workplace well-being. Addressing this gap and based on social identity theory, in this research, we investigate whether inclusive leadership can reduce the tendency to adopt FOC among employees with varying levels of Person-Organization Fit (P-O fit). Data were collected from 452 white-collar banking employees. PROCESS analysis was conducted to test research hypotheses. Findings revealed that P-O fit is negatively linked to FOC. Furthermore, inclusive leadership moderates this relationship, suggesting that the negative impact of P-O fit on FOC is more pronounced when inclusive leadership is practiced at a high level. This study contributes to the literature by showing that inclusive leadership reduces the need for employees to maintain FOC. Organizations should prioritize inclusive leadership to reduce FOC, especially when high levels of P-O fit cannot be achieved.

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The alignment between organizational values and employee values plays a crucial role in fostering a productive and participative work environment (Gregory et al., 2009). When

employees perceive a strong fit between their values and the organization's values, they are more likely to exhibit higher levels of commitment and engagement (Hewlin et al., 2017), ultimately enhancing organizational performance (Nikpour, 2017; Rahmayani et al., 2023). Such alignment fosters a sense of belonging and motivates employees to contribute more effectively toward organizational goals (Larissa, 2024; Zhang & Guo, 2023). Person–Organization Fit (P-O Fit) refers to the alignment between personal values, beliefs, and personalities, as well as an organization's culture, goals, and values (Kristof, 1996). This concept has garnered attention in the field of organizational behavior research due to its significant impact on organizational outcomes. Research highlights that P-O fit is closely tied to various psychological outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee performance (Arthur Jr et al., 2006; Chen et al., 2016; Demir et al., 2014; S. Kim, 2012; Kim et al., 2013).

The alignment between organizational values and employee values may not always be present or may deteriorate over time (Jaakson et al., 2008). When employees experience incongruity between their values and those of the organization, they may display some undesirable behaviors, called facades of conformity—a strategic behavior in which they suppress their authentic beliefs and outwardly adopt the organization's values to maintain social and professional stability (Hewlin, 2003). Creating facades of conformity may initially seem beneficial because it helps the organization adapt quickly (Hewlin, 2003). However, it often leads to adverse psychological consequences for employees. Employees who engage in such behaviors experience increased stress, emotional exhaustion, and diminished job satisfaction, ultimately reducing task performance (Hewlin et al., 2016; Zhang & Guo, 2023). Additionally, the misalignment between an employee's true self and their displayed behaviors can lead to higher levels of frustration and workplace disengagement (Chou et al., 2020). Given the undesirable and destructive effects of facades of conformity, these factors contribute to increased turnover intention, as employees find it difficult to sustain the emotional burden of inauthenticity (Chau et al., 2009; Hewlin et al., 2016).

Facades of conformity are especially common in organizational environments where employees feel pressured to conform, either to secure their positions or to create a positive impression on their leaders (Hewlin, 2009). The literature highlights that nonparticipative workplaces and high political climates increase this behavior, leading to negative consequences such as emotional exhaustion and reduced creativity (Ma et al., 2023). Leaders play a crucial role in fostering a positive workplace culture and motivating employee behavior within the organization. For instance, integrity-based leaders, contrary to expectations, have been shown to increase facades of conformity, as employees may feel compelled to suppress their true values in the presence of highly principled leaders (Hewlin et al., 2017). Similarly, exploitative leadership fosters a work environment where employees feel pressured to suppress their genuine beliefs, further reinforcing conformity behaviors (Akhtar et al., 2022). Contextual factors may also influence the prevalence of facades of conformity within organizations.

Many studies in the literature have explored the antecedents and outcomes of the facades of conformity. However, these studies have mainly focused on the negative effects of FOC on organizations or employees. For example, several studies examined job insecurity (Hewlin et al., 2016; Tumelo & Donald, 2025), authoritarian leadership (Xiao et al., 2024), or compulsory citizenship behavior (Liang, 2022). Additionally, factors that negatively affect employees, such

as emotional exhaustion, have been examined as mediators. However, these studies pay relatively little attention to positive organizational resources that may reduce the need for inauthentic behavior. Our study departs from these studies by focusing on factors that enhance authenticity within organizations.

Moreover, the studies are mainly conducted in East Asian countries (Cheng et al., 2023; Liang et al., 2022; Ye & Qian, 2023), with a few exceptions from the United States (Hewlin, 2009) and Southern Africa (Tumelo & Donald, 2025). Previous studies have not empirically examined the dynamics of conformity in a European cultural context, such as Turkey. Our study fills this geographical gap by analyzing data collected from white-collar employees in the Turkish banking sector, which operates under high regulatory pressure and performance demands. Also, from a leadership perspective, prior research has mostly examined leadership styles such as exploitative (Akhtar et al., 2022), authoritarian (Xiao et al., 2024), or visionary leadership (Chen et al., 2024). While these studies explain how leadership may intensify pressure on employees, our research demonstrates that inclusive leadership can buffer against such pressure by fostering psychological safety (Carmeli et al., 2010). Because inclusive leadership promotes openness, values individual contributions, and encourages employees to express their authentic selves without fear of negative consequences, it reduces the perceived need to engage in conformity behaviors (Carmeli et al., 2010; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).

In this respect, conducting this study on Turkish participants is meaningful in terms of their cultural characteristics. According to Hofstede's (Hofstede, 2009) cultural dimensions, Turkey is high in collectivism and power distance (www.hofstede-insights.com/countrycomparison-tool). In countries where collectivist tendencies are high, it is difficult for individuals to exist in society as themselves, but acting within the patterns accepted by society is seen as a necessary tool to eliminate possible risks and exclusions (Hofstede et al., 2010). In this context, creating a personal comfort zone can be seen as a kind of rule of the game for employees to comply with the rules of society or the groups or organizations they are in. On the other hand, in societies where power distance is high, individuals may display facades of conformity due to the fear of authority and punishments, submission to hierarchy, fear of job insecurity, and the desire to be approved by everyone, obedience, and loyalty, as well as the internalization of concepts such as loyalty. When these explanations regarding cultural values and Turkey's cultural classification are evaluated, it is thought that the phenomenon of facades of conformity might be prevalent in Turkey's working life.

The literature mainly focuses on the negative consequences that creating facades of conformity may have on employees and organizations. In recent years, researchers have increasingly examined the drivers behind facades of conformity, with a strong emphasis on negative workplace dynamics such as job insecurity (Hewlin et al., 2016; Tumelo & Donald, 2025), pressure from leadership (Akhtar et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2024), or emotional stress and exhaustion (Chou et al., 2020; Ye & Qian, 2023). These studies demonstrate how unfavorable work conditions can lead employees to conceal their genuine thoughts or values. However, this body of work has largely centered on identifying the problem, rather than exploring potential solutions. Very few studies examine how organizations can help mitigate this behavior or enhance alignment between a person and the organization (Hewlin et al., 2017; Liang et al., 2022). Positive factors, such as person–organization fit and inclusive leadership, were examined in this study, which may help employees feel more authentic at work. Additionally,

we discovered that many studies originate from the same regions (primarily East Asia and the U.S.) and focus on psychology, rather than leadership or organizational fit (Cheng et al., 2023; Liang et al., 2022). Because inclusive leadership encourages openness and acceptance, it creates a psychologically safe environment where employees feel less pressure to hide their true selves (Carmeli et al., 2010; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006); and because person–organization fit fosters value congruence and belonging (Kristof, 1996; Zhang & Guo, 2023), it reduces the motivation to conform artificially. Our study suggests that these two factors, when combined, may effectively reduce the facades of conformity by addressing both the relational and cultural dimensions of the workplace experience. Therefore, this study, which was conducted within the banking sector in Turkey, integrates leadership, cultural fit, and authenticity into a single model.

However, further studies are needed to mitigate the negative effects and reduce the likelihood of creating facades of conformity by employees. Social Identity Theory (SIT) is a psychological theory that helps us understand how people define themselves through their connection to social groups. This theory, developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, provides us with an understanding of organizational dynamics and offers valuable guidance for fostering authenticity and well-being in today's workplaces (Tajfel et al., 1979). According to SIT, employees may feel the need to conform to the group they are part of. Based on SIT, in our study, we hypothesize that higher person–organization fit reduces the need to create facades of conformity, whereas low fit increases the psychological pressure to conform externally, suppressing employees' values, and leads to facades of conformity. We also propose that one leadership style that may mitigate these negative consequences is inclusive leadership. Inclusive leadership, characterized by openness, accessibility, and encouragement from diverse perspectives (Carmeli et al., 2010) may serve as a key moderating factor. Leaders who actively promote inclusivity can lessen the necessity for employees to put on facades of conformity by establishing a psychologically safe environment where diverse values and perspectives are embraced (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).

Facades of conformity can lead to serious problems such as burnout, disengagement, or the desire to leave the job (Liang et al., 2022; Tumelo & Donald, 2025). Several studies have examined the negative situations that prompt employees to conceal their genuine thoughts, such as job insecurity or pressure from leadership (Hewlin et al., 2016; Ye & Qian, 2023). But very few studies have asked the opposite question: What can help employees feel safe enough to be themselves at work? Most studies have been conducted in countries like China, Taiwan, or the U.S. (Chen et al., 2024; Cheng et al., 2023; Chou et al., 2020; Hewlin, 2009; Hewlin et al., 2016, 2017; Xiao et al., 2024; Ye & Qian, 2023). Despite the limited research available from Europe, none of them appears to focus specifically on Turkey. The banking sector, renowned for its stringent regulations and high-performance expectations, has not been extensively examined in this specific context. Most existing studies predominantly rely on psychological theories and provide limited insights regarding the potential influence of leadership or organizational culture on facades of conformity.

Although leadership styles have been examined in some studies, the focus has been chiefly on negative styles that increase facades of conformity pressures, such as exploitative leadership, which creates psychological strain through manipulation (Akhtar et al., 2022), or authoritarian leadership, which enforces rigid hierarchical control (Xiao et al., 2024). These

leadership styles may intensify employees' need to hide their authentic selves to maintain harmony or avoid punishment. However, inclusive leadership is characterized by openness, acceptance, and support. Hence, grounded on social identity theory, this study explores the moderating effect of inclusive leadership on the relationship between person–organization fit and facades of conformity. It also aims to contribute to the literature by examining how inclusive leadership interacts with the P-O fit in explaining FOC.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses
Person-Organization Fit

Person-Organization Fit (P-O fit) is defined by (Kristof, 1996) as "*the compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when: at least one entity provides what the other needs, or they share similar fundamental characteristics, or both*" (p. 4-5). P-O fit is based on the idea that employees will do better in places that share their values and views. When employees feel aligned with the organization, they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and stay in the organization (Chen et al., 2016). Additionally, this alignment helps employees obtain fulfillment from their work roles, minimizes the costs of turnover for organizations, and encourages extra role behaviors linked to positive employee attitudes (Edwards & Cable, 2009).

Being aligned with organizational values reduces emotional and cognitive compatibility, thus further decreasing the likelihood of employees experiencing stress and burnout (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Moreover, a high P-O fit is linked to positive work behaviors, such as improved task performance, citizenship behaviors, and innovation (Cable & DeRue, 2002). Conversely, low P-O fit may lead to negative outcomes such as diminished job engagement, increased turnover intentions, and adverse work behaviors (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001).

Research highlights how important it is for individuals to feel aligned with their organization. It shows that the fit between a person and their workplace can greatly influence how different leadership styles, like authentic leadership, impact key outcomes- the things that really matter, such as safety behaviors and job satisfaction (Liu et al., 2021; Mumcu, 2021). These findings highlight that person-organization fit not only helps predict positive outcomes but also acts as a bridge through which other organizational practices can make their impact. Moreover, efforts to integrate theories indicate that how we perceive person-organization fit can be influenced by things like organizational culture, collectivistic values, and public service motivations. This offers us a deeper insight into the various contextual factors that shape our understanding of the fit relationship (Kumar, 2011).

Facades of Conformity

Facades of conformity are defined as "*false representations created by employees to appear as if they embrace organizational values.*" (Hewlin, 2003) (p. 633). When employees' values conflict with those of the organization, they suppress their values and behave as if they have adopted the organization's values (Hewlin, 2003). Employees may intentionally engage in this behavior for several reasons, such as appearing aligned with the organization and their colleagues or advancing their careers. Furthermore, any factor that threatens a sense of

belonging or job security in the workplace can lead employees to construct facades of conformity (Hewlin, 2009; Hewlin et al., 2016). On the other hand, employees who are bullied may be forced to engage in fake behaviors to increase their job security and avoid social isolation within the organization (Liang, 2020). Accordingly, employees may create facades of conformity to protect their social status from the threat of workplace bullying and to ensure job security (Liang, 2020).

Creating facades of conformity may seem innocent and beneficial for employees and organizations. However, it has serious consequences for both employees and organizations. Appearing to be aligned with the organization's values while suppressing one's own values will reduce employees' emotional resources and affect them psychologically and emotionally (Hewlin, 2009). Losing resources leads to a state of emotional and physical exhaustion, known as emotional exhaustion, in the face of a workload (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Additionally, studies in the literature indicate that employees' ability to suppress their values to appear aligned with the organization negatively affects their well-being (Halbesleben et al., 2014) and intention to leave (Hewlin, 2009; Hewlin et al., 2016). Furthermore, research examined the negative consequences of facades of conformity on organizations. Employees who create facades of conformity experience psychological pressure and cognitive resource depletion, which undermines their focus and work engagement, leading to decreased task performance (Hewlin et al., 2017).

Relationship Between P-O Fit and Facades of Conformity

Person–organization fit means the alignment of a person's beliefs, values, and goals with those of the organization (Kristof, 1996). Employees who perceive a high level of fit are more likely to feel comfortable expressing their authentic selves at work. Studies show that low person-organization fit can cause negative consequences, including reduced job satisfaction (Verquer et al., 2003), increased turnover intention (Cable & Judge, 1996) and diminished organizational commitment (O'Reilly et al., 1991). However, there is limited research to help employees adapt in response when they encounter this kind of misfit. Facades of conformity are one of the strategies that help employees meet perceived expectations and maintain inclusion within the organization (Hewlin et al., 2016). When employees see a misalignment between their values and the organization's, they may suppress their true identities and engage in behaviors to appear aligned, known as facades of conformity (Hewlin, 2003).

Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel et al., 1979) provides a useful framework for understanding the relationship between P-O fit and facades of conformity. SIT describes how individuals form their identity through the social groups they identify with. This theory posits that people classify themselves and others into several social groups (such as nationalities, genders, and professions), which in turn shape their attitudes, behaviors, and self-perceptions. In other words, SIT posits that individuals derive a sense of self from their group memberships and are motivated to maintain a positive identity within these groups. According to SIT, individuals want to save and strengthen their identity, with which they are more likely to conform with the organization or group norms (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

When employees experience that their values conflict with those of the organization, they may feel an identity threat (Petriglieri, 2011). Individuals might create facades of conformity, hiding their authentic selves to meet perceived organizational expectations, to manage this

threat, and keep their commitment to the organization (Hewlin et al., 2017). In contrast, when employees have a high level of P–O fit, their personal values align with organizational values, which reduces the need for impression management or value suppression (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Such alignment provides employees with a psychological foundation for authenticity and self-expression (Cable & Kay, 2012). Therefore, grounded on social identity theory, we hypothesize that Person-Organization fit has a negative effect on facades of conformity.

H1: Person-organization fit has a negative effect on facades of conformity.

The Moderating Effect of Inclusive Leadership on the Relationship between Person-Organization Fit and Facades of Conformity

Person–Organization (P–O) fit, defined as the compatibility between an individual's values and the values of the organization, plays a crucial role in shaping employee behaviors and attitudes (Kristof, 1996). Employees who perceive a misalignment between their personal values and those of the organization often experience decreased job satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, and heightened stress levels (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). However, incongruities in values and beliefs between employees and organizations may not always lead to adverse outcomes. In other words, each employee whose values do not align with the organization's values may not suppress their values and may not show false representations, called facades of conformity. Some contextual factors, such as leadership style, may have a buffering effect on the facades of conformity. Further, the organizational milieu that leaders provide may significantly influence whether employees engage in FOC.

Leadership styles have been shown to shape employees' emotional and behavioral responses in the workplace. For example, according to Ma et al. (2023), in organizations with a highly political climate, creating facades of conformity leads to emotional exhaustion, which subsequently has a more significant negative impact on individual creativity; in contrast, in a low political climate, the adverse effects of conformity on emotional exhaustion and individual creativity diminish (Ma et al., 2023). Additionally, contrary to expectations, leaders with integrity can lead their employees to create facades of conformity. Leader integrity affects facades of conformity creation by increasing the tendency of employees to create facades of conformity when they experience low value congruence with the organization (Hewlin et al., 2017). Specifically, employees are more likely to suppress their values when they perceive their leader as having high integrity (Hewlin et al., 2017). On the other hand, exploitative leadership fosters an environment where employees feel pressured to hide their true feelings and values, causing them to build facades of conformity (Akhtar et al., 2022). These findings highlight that leadership style is a critical situational factor in the emergence of facades of conformity.

Inclusive leadership is one such critical contextual factor. Inclusive leadership has gained significant attention in organizational research because of its role in fostering diversity, psychological safety, and employee engagement (Carmeli et al., 2010). It refers to leaders' behaviors that ensure that all employees are valued, respected, and empowered to contribute to organizational success (Carmeli et al., 2010). Inclusive leaders value employee contributions, promote fairness, and create an environment where all individuals feel respected and empowered (Shore et al., 2018). Additionally, the IL style is essential in diverse workplaces,

as it promotes fairness, voice, and a sense of belonging among employees (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). That's why it plays a significant role for both employees and organizations when conflict arises between employees' values and the organization's values (Hollander, 2012; Randel et al., 2016). Among the fundamental elements of inclusive leadership are empathy and sensitivity, justice and equality, open communication, encouraging employee participation, and appreciating the contributions of each individual (Shore et al., 2018). These elements increase employee motivation, enhance job satisfaction, and strengthen organizational commitment (Shore et al., 2011). By acknowledging varied viewpoints and promoting genuine expression, inclusive leaders may alleviate the FOC, particularly for workers facing poor person-organization fit. In other words, the negative effects of the P-O fit on FOC may be weaker when the inclusive leadership perception of the employees is high. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

H2: Inclusive leadership moderates the relationship between Person-Organization fit and facades of conformity.

Figure 1 visually presents the research model.

Figure 1
Research Model
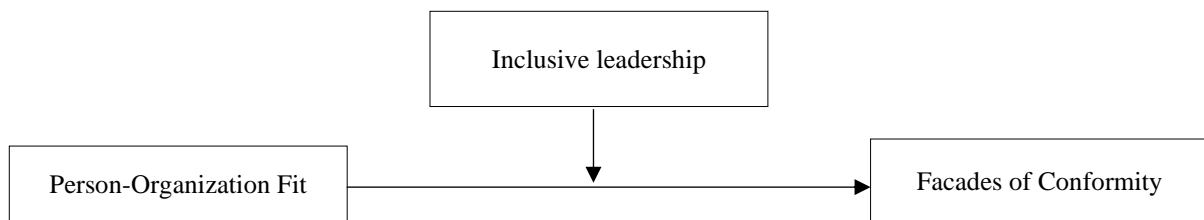
Method

Sample and Data Collection

The data were collected from 484 participants working as white-collar employees in the banking industry in Turkey. The survey forms were gathered through personal connections. A total of 32 of 484 samples were collected for the pilot study. All items in the survey, except facades of conformity, have a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree. The facades of conformity scale ranged from 1=Never to 5=Always. A total of 71.5% of the participants were men, 28.5% were women, 90% had a bachelor's degree or above, and 43% were managers. Table 1 presents the demographic information of the study participants.

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Study Participants

Variable	Attribute	Number	Percentage
Age	≤25	73	16.2%
	26-30	92	20.4%
	31-35	95	21.0%
	36-40	117	25.9%
	41-45	55	12.2%
	≥46	20	4.4%
Gender	Female	129	28.5%
	Male	323	71.5%
Marriage Situation	Married	259	57.3%
	Single	193	42.7%
Education level	Elementary and Middle School	2	0.4%
	High School	13	2.9%
	Junior college	32	7.1%
	Bachelor's	305	67.5%
	Master's	92	20.4%
	Doctor	8	1.8%
Position	Employee	258	57.1%
	Unit Manager	84	18.6%
	Head of Department	97	21.5%
	Assistant of General Manager	13	2.9%

Measures

The English version of the survey measures was translated into Turkish. Native researchers analyzed the measures via a back-translation technique to ensure the equivalence of the Turkish and English versions (Brislin, 1980). The participants completed the survey in Turkish. This study obtained approval from the research ethics committee at Gebze Technical University in Turkey, ensuring the confidentiality of all participant responses. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS, AMOS, and the SPSS Process macro.

Facades Of Conformity (FOC). We used the scale developed by Hewlin (2009), which has one dimension and a 6-item scale. Two sample items include "I don't share certain things about myself in order to fit in at work" and "I play politics by pretending to embrace organizational values."

Person–Organization Fit (POF). We used the scale developed by Netemeyer et al. (1997), which has one dimension and a 4-item scale. Two sample items include "I feel that my personal values are a good fit with this organization" and "This organization has the same values as I do with regard to honesty."

Inclusive Leadership (IL). We used the scale developed by Carmeli et al. (2010) has three dimensions and a 9-item scale. Three sample items include "The manager is open to hearing new ideas (openness)", "The manager is available for consultation on problems (availability)", and "The manager encourages me to access him/her on emerging issues (accessibility)".

Control variables. The control variables are age, gender, marital status, education, work experience in years, and title.

Results

Preliminary Analysis

Before the hypotheses in the study were tested, preliminary data analysis was conducted. Skewness and kurtosis values were analyzed to check the normal distribution of the data. The mean values of all the items range from 1.87 to 4.17, the standard deviation values range from .92 to 1.41, the skewness values range from -1.54 to 1.17, and the kurtosis values range from -1.30 to 2.62. These findings indicate that there is no outlier problem in the data (Kline, 2011).

Validity and Reliability Analyses

First, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed using SPSS. EFA examines the individual item's factor loadings to test construct validity. The items with factor loadings less than .50 were excluded from the research (Hair et al., 2014). The sixth item of FOC, "I say things that I don't really believe at work" was removed from the study because its factor loading was .47. All other tests were conducted after this item (FOC6) was removed from the study. Principal component analysis was utilized with varimax rotation for EFA. The results indicated that the sample was adequate for analysis (Kaiser & Rice, 1974). The threshold value of Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) should be higher than .50 (Hair et al., 2014). In our study, the KMO value is .93, surpassing the threshold. All the items used in this study and their factor loadings (EFA and CFA), AVE, CR, and Cronbach's alpha values can also be seen in Table 2. As a result, the findings establish strong convergent validity.

Table 2

Survey Items Used for This Research and Their Factor Loadings

Variables	Items	EFA Loadings	CFA Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Person Organization Fit	I feel that my personal values are a good fit with this organization.	.88	.88	.75	.92	.93
	This organization has the same values as I do with regard to concern for others.	.91	.94			
	This organization has the same values as I do with regard to honesty.	.91	.90			
	This organization has the same values as I do with regard to fairness.	.82	.74			
Facades of Conformity	I don't share certain things about myself in order to fit in at work.	.73	.61	.51	.83	.83
	I suppress personal values that are different from those of the organization.	.84	.82			
	I withhold personal values that conflict with organizational values.	.84	.84			
	I play politics by pretending to embrace organizational values.	.77	.70			
	I behave in a manner that reflects the organization's value system even though it is inconsistent with my personal values.	.67	.54			
	I say things that I don't really believe at work.	.47*	-			
Inclusive Leadership	The manager is open to hearing new ideas	.86	.89	.77	.99	.98
	The manager is attentive to new opportunities to improve work processes	.90	.93			
	The manager is open to discuss the desired goals and new ways to achieve them	.93	.98			
	The manager is available for consultation on problems	.92	.93			
	The manager is an ongoing 'presence' in this team-someone who is readily available	.90	.89			
	The manager is available for professional questions I would like to consult with him/her	.91	.92			
	The manager is ready to listen to my requests	.92	.97			
	The manager encourages me to access him/her on emerging issues	.91	.94			
	The manager is accessible for discussing emerging problems	.93	.96			

Note. * This item was excluded from the study because its factor loading is lower than .50.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) .925

To evaluate the measurement model, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were conducted with AMOS version 29. The goodness-of-fit values for structural equation modeling (SEM) were examined (Kline, 2023). CFA results show that the research model (person–organization fit, inclusive leadership, facades of conformity) has a good fit index (CMIN = 326.72, df = 126, p-value = .000 CMIN/DF = 2.59, RMSEA = .06, CFI = .98, TLI = .97, GFI = .93) (Gefen et al., 2000; Hair et al., 2014; Hu & Bentler, 1998).

Table 3 displays the means, standard deviations, and correlations. As shown in Table 3, a significant relationship exists between FOC and POF (r = -.10; $p < .05$), POF and IL (r = .39; $p < .01$), while a nonsignificant relationship is observed between FOC and IL (r = -.08, p: n.s.).

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and Cronbach's

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Facades of Conformity	2.39	.93	-		
2. Person-organization fit	3.99	.96	-.10*	-	
3. Inclusive Leadership	4.08	.90	-.08	.39**	-

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), () = Cronbach's alpha, N=452

Hypothesis Testing

After examining the construct validity and reliability results, we tested direct and moderation effects by using SPSS Process Macro (Model 1) at maximum likelihood with a 95% confidence level (bootstrap sample size = 5,000). The direct effect of person–organization fit on facades of conformity was significant (β = -.11; t = -2.30; p = .022). Therefore, H1 was supported. To test the moderating role of IL between POF and FOC, first, both POF and IL were regressed with FOC, where POF has a significant effect (β = -.11, t = -2.30, $p < .05$), and IL was reported to have an insignificant (β = -.11, t = -1.96, p = .051) effect on FOC. Second, the interaction term (POF * IL) was regressed with FOC, and its significant effect (β = -.14; t = -3.62; p = .000) was noted, which shows a moderation effect. (see Table 4).

The moderation effect of IL on the POF-FOC relationship suggests that the presence of inclusive leadership amplifies the negative relationship between POF and FOC. When inclusive leadership is high, employees feel a better fit to the organization (higher POF), feel more authentic in their behaviors, and are less likely to create facades of conformity. This emphasizes how valuable inclusive leadership is in boosting the positive impacts of POF, while also helping to reduce the chances of employees feeling like they need to put on facades just to fit in.

Table 4

Hypothesis Results

Hypotheses	β	SE	t	p	Bootstraps 95% LLCI	ULCI
Moderation of Inclusive Leadership on POF and FOC						
POF → FOC	-.11	.05	-2.30	.022*	-.21	-.02
IL→ FOC	-.11	.05	-1.96	.051	-.21	.00
Interaction (POF X IL)→ FOC	-.14	.04	-3.62	.000**	-.21	-.06
Levels of moderator (inclusive leadership)						

Low IL (-1 SD)	.01	.06	0.13	.900	-.10	.11
Moderate IL (mean)	-.11	.05	-2.30	.022	-.21	-.02
High IL (+1 SD)	-.24	.07	-3.63	.000	-.36	-.11

We also performed Aiken and West's slopes (Aiken et al., 1991) (see Figure 2), which indicates that Inclusive Leadership strengthens the negative relationship between Person-Organization Fit and Facades of Conformity, and employees with high POF are even less likely to engage in FOC. With these results, H2 was supported. All hypotheses in the study are supported.

Figure 2

Moderating Effect of Inclusive Leadership on the Relationship Between Person–Organization Fit and Facades of Conformity
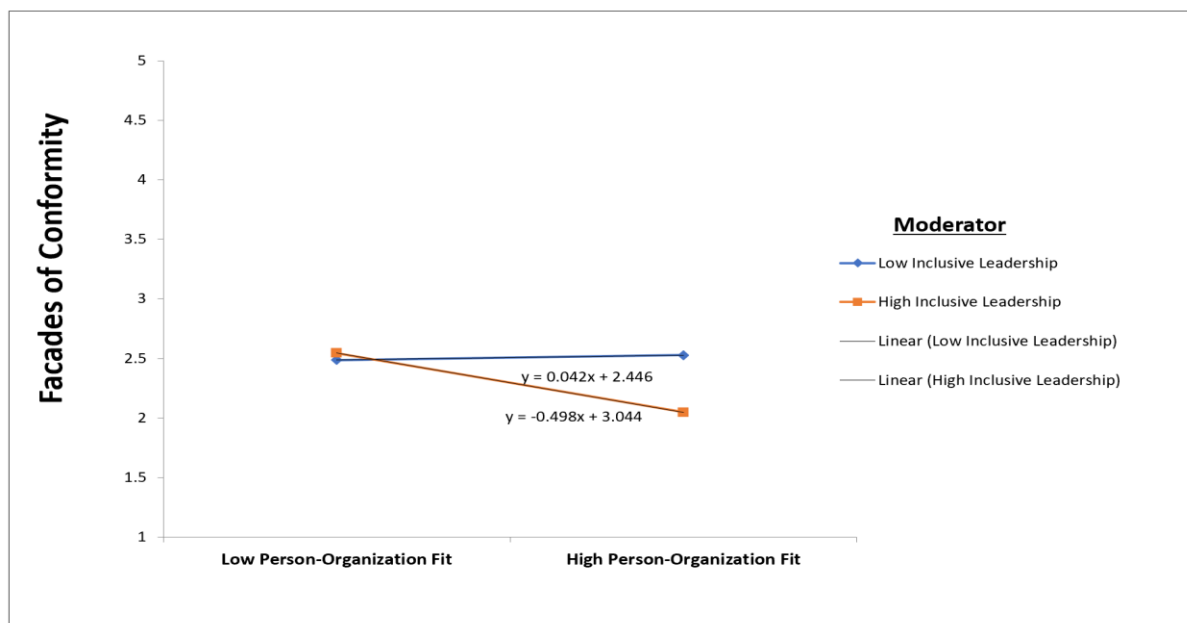
Discussions

This study examined the relationship between person-organization fit and facades of conformity, along with the moderating role of inclusive leadership in this relationship. Our findings offer important insights into how employees manage value congruence between employees and those of organizations and highlight the critical role of inclusive leadership in reducing facades of conformity pressures.

Research findings show that even if employees' values don't fully align with those of the organization, inclusive leaders foster a feeling of acceptance in the workplace. In this supportive and psychologically safe environment, individuals experience less pressure to conform and can truly be themselves. This is an encouraging insight as it shows that inclusive leadership can effectively lessen the cognitive and emotional strain of pretending to fit in, ultimately boosting employees' well-being and authenticity.

Our research has expanded the literature by supporting the negative relationship between person–organization fit and the facades of conformity based on social identity theory (Tajfel et al., 1979). Prior research has focused more on the negative consequences of facades of

conformity, including stress, job insecurity, and controlling leadership (Akhtar et al., 2022; Hewlin et al., 2016; Liang et al., 2022). These studies help understand why people hide their true selves at work. However, they do not examine what enables employees to feel secure enough to be authentic. They also do not include person–organization fit as a main factor, even though it is closely related to how well people align with their workplace. This is an important gap and needs to be explored to improve employees' well-being and organizational commitment. Our study contributes to the literature by examining how a good fit between the employee and the organization, combined with inclusive leadership, can reduce the facades of conformity. We assert that this approach is more positive and practical and might help both researchers and managers. Our goal was to move the conversation from "what causes the problem" to "how can we reduce the problem," and we think our study makes a step in that direction.

As employees and organizational values are different, employees distance themselves from inauthentic behaviors and are less likely to create facades of conformity (Hewlin, 2009; Hewlin et al., 2017). When values conflict, employees often suppress themselves and act strategically to keep their jobs, distancing from inauthentic behaviors.

This research shows how inclusive leadership decreases the negative effects of value incongruence when an individual's values and organizational values conflict. Although the studies investigated other kinds of leadership styles that influence workplace authenticity, few studies have investigated inclusive leadership styles (Akhtar et al., 2022; Hewlin et al., 2017). Our results show that inclusive leaders foster an environment of psychological safety (Carmeli et al., 2010), thereby reducing the pressure employees feel to conform superficially. This study expands the literature on leadership and workplace authenticity by demonstrating that leadership can buffer the negative consequences of low P-O Fit, encouraging employees to embrace their authentic identities rather than resort to facades.

Additionally, this study provides a theoretical explanation for why employees create facades of conformity based on the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel et al., 1979). SIT points out that individuals pursue maintaining a positive self-concept through social group identification (Hogg & Terry, 2000). According to social identity theory, individuals want to align with the social group norms to maintain a positive self-concept. Therefore, a high P-O fit reduces the need for facades of conformity. Conversely, employees who have low P-O fit are more likely to create facades of conformity. This study expands its relevance to workplace congruence behaviors and leadership dynamics and fills the gaps in the literature on organizational identity and employee behavior.

Our study shows some implications for the banking sector, for which we collected data. The Turkish banking sector is one of the most competitive industries in the country. As a result of these, HR specialists often make hiring decisions that focus on job-specific skills first, instead of how well a candidate fits with the organization's culture or values. Recruiters typically prioritize technical qualifications to handle the demands of banking tasks. It is only after this careful selection that they think about value fit. Sometimes, highly skilled individuals may be hired even if they do not align with the organization's values, especially if the role is critical and must be filled. Even if filling job positions with highly qualified employees may seem like a win-win situation, it can lead to employees feeling the need to hide their true selves just to fit in with the organizational norms.

OECD reports that companies in Turkey face difficulty in finding the highly talented employees that they need (OECD, 2025). Therefore, in the competitive world of the Turkish banking sector, it is common for organizations to focus more on technical skills than on value fit when hiring new talent. Although this approach lets companies fill important positions with highly qualified candidates, it may lead to negative consequences. Technically competent workers who do not fit organizational values could feel compelled to hide their actual selves in order to stay in the company and create facades of conformity. Over time, this psychological pressure may reduce employees' emotional resources, potentially resulting in burnout, disengagement, or turnover. These consequences not only impact employee well-being but also affect organizational performance and commitment. Our findings highlight the importance of inclusive leadership as a mitigating force in such situations. Inclusive leaders can assist employees in navigating value incongruence more effectively by creating a psychologically safe and accepting environment.

Turkey is characterized by high power distance, strong collectivist values, and moderate-to-high uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2009). Employees are culturally conditioned to respect hierarchical authority, prioritize group harmony, and avoid differing group norms. These cultural norms may increase the salience of conformity-related behaviors in the workplace, especially among employees who experience low person–organization fit. This kind of work environment may force employees to engage in facades of conformity to maintain harmony and job security (Gelfand et al., 2007; Hewlin, 2003; Hofstede et al., 2010).

Turkey's banking sector operates under strict regulatory frameworks and high accountability standards, which place additional pressure on employees to perform flawlessly (OECD, 2025). In this high-stakes environment, inclusive leadership becomes a critical tool, not just for promoting psychological safety, but also for balancing the tension between performance expectations and employee authenticity (Carmeli et al., 2010; OECD, 2020)

Importantly, the study suggests that inclusive leadership is not merely a "nice-to-have" trait but rather a strategic organizational resource, particularly in environments where person–organization fit may not be consistently achievable due to talent shortages or job-critical skills requirements. In such cases, inclusive leaders serve a compensatory function, helping employees navigate the psychological strain of misalignment and reducing the negative outcomes associated with conformity pressures.

Practical Implications

This study provides several practical implications for managers, leaders, and HR professionals by emphasizing the importance of reducing the facades of conformity in the organization by encouraging inclusive leadership behaviors. The results provide valuable insights for improving employee authenticity, employee well-being, and organizational effectiveness. Organizations should encourage their leaders to adopt inclusive leadership behaviors, such as creating an authentic environment, actively listening to employees, and fostering a workplace where they can comfortably express their thoughts. When employees feel safe and valued, it will have positive effects on both organizations and employees.

Organizations should consider the negative relationship between person-organization fit and facades of conformity and prioritize the fit between employees and the organization when developing their recruitment strategies to avoid the negative consequences of facades of

conformity. Additionally, organizations should continuously train their employees in the company's values and mission by organizing internal training sessions for current employees. This study emphasizes the importance of inclusive leadership in reducing compliance masks. Organizations should convey inclusive leadership behaviors to their managers and incorporate them into performance evaluations as a core competency in leadership assessments. This can be achieved by providing coaching and feedback to leaders and fostering inclusive and psychologically safe work environments. In this way, a decrease in employees' tendency to create compliance masks can be achieved.

Limitations and Future Research

In addition to our research's theoretical and practical contributions, there are some limitations. Inclusive Leadership was examined as a moderator in our research, and this study can be repeated with different leadership types to obtain the results. Different results may emerge with other types of leadership. Furthermore, survey data were gathered from white-collar employees in the banking industry. Future research may involve collecting survey data from blue-collar workers.

Future research may further investigate how additional contextual factors, such as organizational climate and cultural diversity, interact with leadership styles to impact the facades of conformity.

Furthermore, although this study was conducted in Turkey, a nation characterized by strong collectivist cultural values, future research could extend the study to various cultural contexts to investigate the generalizability of the findings and evaluate how national culture may influence the dynamics of person–organization fit, inclusive leadership, and facades of conformity.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature by investigating the relationship between person–organization fit and the facades of conformity based on Social Identity Theory (Tajfel et al., 1979) and by investigating inclusive leadership as a moderator on this relationship. The study presents significant findings on how individuals manage the dissonance between themselves and organizations and the role of inclusive leaders in this relationship. Overall, this study advances theoretical perspectives on person–organization fit, inclusive leadership, and facades of conformity in the workplace, emphasizing the need to promote environments where employees feel safe in expressing their true values in organizations.

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