PERCEPTION OF WORKPLACE MISTREATMENT AMONG SUBORDINATES OF SMALL-MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMES) IN PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

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by

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DEDICATION

To my beloved father, Mr. Manzoor Hussain, who always
advise me to study and excel.
Also, to my mother, Mrs Safia Begum who
motivated and supported
me for my PhD.

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First and foremost, praise to Allah, the Almighty, the greatest of all, on Whom, ultimately, we depend for sustenance and guidance. The Almighty gave me the determination and strength to complete this research. His continuous grace and mercy have permeated my life and tenure of research. Secondly, praise to the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, the succorer of humanity, the gem of mankind, the ruby of the universe, the Sultan of creation, the unparalleled.

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I am greatly indebted to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr Shankar Chelliah for his understanding and patience that he showed to me throughout my study period. His knowledge, wisdom, dedication to the highest standards inspired and motivated me. As a matter of fact, without his guidance and support, this thesis would not have been possible. I am forever in his debt how he facilitated me.

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Lastly, my very special appreciation is reserved for those who supported me unconditionally. My family's love and support have helped me accomplish this amazing feat and have no doubt made me the person I am today. Despite the ocean and thousands of miles between us, I always felt the warmth of their proximity. I am truly indebted to my passionate mother and loving father.

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PERSEPSI LAYANAN TIDAK BAIK DI TEMPAT KERJA OLEH SUBORDINAT DI PERUSAHAAN KECIL-SEDERHANA (PKS) DI PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menggunakan teori stres transaksional bagi mengusulkan cara mengatasi penganiayaan pekerja di tempat kerja melalui penglibatan emosi berdasarkan bentuk penyimpangan organisasi dan penolakan psikologi. Secara khususnya, kajian ini mencadangkan bagi persekitaran kerja yang tidak sihat, ketidaksamaan tahap yang berlebihan dengan penyelia dan sifat Machiavellianism yang menjarakkan satu sama lain, tekanan organisasi serta persekitaran menyebabkan penganiayaan (penyeliaan yang salah dan ostracisme di tempat kerja) dan neurotikisme memoderasi kesan yang dicadangkan. Kajian ini berbentuk keratan rentas dalam reka bentuk dan data yang dikumpulkan dari penyelia dan pengurus yang bekerja di sektor PKS di Pakistan. Hasil kajian ini, menunjukkan penemuan yang menarik. Hipotesis secara langsung semua diterima kecuali hubungan Machevillianism dan Ostracism tempat kerja. Di samping itu juga, penemuan menunjukkan hasil bertentangan dari segi penyederhanaan peranan neurotisme. Semua hipotesis penyederhanaan diterima dimana ia menunjukkan peranan neurotisme dalam meningkatkan hubungan diantara penganiayaan tempat kerja dan strategi bagi mengatasinya, kecuali peranan neurotisme antara ostracisme di tempat kerja dan penolakan psikologi. Kajian ini adalah salah satu jenis kajian yang mengkaji secara menyeluruh keadaan semasa penganiyaan tempat kerja, penyebab dan

akibatnya. Bagi mengatasi perlakuan buruk di penganiyaan tempat kerja, polisi latihan dan pemantauan perlu di pertingkatkan dengan serta merta.

PERCEPTION OF WORKPLACE MISTREATMENT AMONG SUBORDINATES OF SMALL-MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMES) IN PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

ABSTRACT

The current study draws on the transactional theory of stress to propose that employees cope with workplace mistreatment by engaging in emotion-based coping in the forms of organization-directed deviance and psychological withdrawal. Specifically, this study aims that perceived hostile work environment, deep level dissimilarity with supervisor, and machiavellianism act as distal individual, organizational and environmental stressors. These stressors are transmitted through workplace mistreatment (abusive supervision and workplace ostracism) and that neuroticism moderates the proposed effects. This study was cross-sectional in design, and data was collected from the supervisors and the managers working in the SME sector in Pakistan. The results of the survey reveal interesting findings. In terms of direct hypothesis, all the findings were accepted except the relationship of machevillianism and workplace ostracism. Also, findings showed very contradictory results in terms of the moderating role of neuroticism. All the moderating hypotheses were accepted, showing role of neuroticism in enhancing the relationship between workplace mistreatment and coping strategies, except the role of neuroticism between workplace ostracism and psychological withdrawal. This study is one of its kind to have extensively examined the current situation of workplace mistreatment, its causes, and its consequences. To overcome workplace mistreatment, training policies and monitoring are needed urgently.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

This chapter covers the initial introduction of this study. Firstly, the background of this research is presented, along with a brief highlight of the SME sector in Pakistan. In the next section, the problem statement of the study is discussed. Based on the problem statement, research questions and research objectives are derived. The significance of the study is subdivided into theoretical and practical significance. In the last section, the definition of the key terms is presented.

1.2   Background of the study

The interest in investigating workplace mistreatment and its impact on organizations has increased in the past two decades (Schilpzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016). These researches focused on physical aggression and overt types of inappropriate working behaviors, such as an assault on the workforce, sexual harassment, bullying in the workplace, in civilization in the workplace and aggression (Schilpzand et al., 2016). However, research on work mistreatment is still needed. The recent call for papers from one of the esteemed Journal highlighted the issue of workplace maltreatment.

It is a rational assumption that a safe and stable working environment is essential where workers should protect their rights, have freedom of thought and expression,

and where their autonomy and self-respect are maintained. In their report, Chaudhry, Mahesar, Pathan, Arshad, and Butt (2017) identified that abuse at work is a global alert problem and may have negative consequences for organizations, such as decreased staff morale, self-esteem, and high absenteeism. Workplace violence, especially verbal abuse, is a distressing problem and a significant contributor to dissatisfaction and high turnover among employees worldwide.

Although there is tons of literature and research on workplace mistreatment, still workplace mistreatment is a sensitive and serious debate. Within Pakistan, several incidents of mistreatment at work remain underreported due to fear of backlash, fear of loss of employment, mistrust, lack of communication, fears of loss of benefits, and other hazardous consequences. It can be concluded that the under-reported aspect is focused on actions in which employees blame themselves for harassment rather than the offender. However, they cannot still avoid these events. In this scenario, violence becomes part of the system and the work. Even in Pakistan's formal industrial sector (like stainless steel milling, garment milling, plastic factories, etc.), the troubling condition of labor maltreatment has exposed its high level of harassment and incivility in the workplace (Chaudhry et al., 2017). There is a high degree of workplace mistreatment found in a recent study on the banking sector. Somani (2012) distinguishes physical and psychological abuse from the workplace in her research on the banking sector of Pakistan. When the formal industries are facing such hazardous scenarios, the condition of informal sectors such as SMEs could be aversive.

It is mentioned in Pakistan's constitution, such as article 37e states that "make provisions for securing just and humane conditions of work for all" (H. Shah, 1976). As it notes in the Constitution, everyone should be treated in the workforce

with dignity and respect. Nonetheless, if someone is the perpetrator and not the so-called distant supporter, it is still difficult to cope, mainly when the organizations do not implement policies, about abuse/harassment at the workplace. The key questions are how people handle harassment and malefactor-individual aggression at work. The basic questions include how to get rid of bullying.

This study will help to investigate workplace abuse, its adverse effects, and consequences in Pakistan's SME sector.

1.2.1 SME Sector of Pakistan

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have played a significant role in the country's economic industrial and social development. Many developed countries agree that the SME sector is of great importance in maintaining their economy (Rohra and Panawar, 2009). In economic development, SMEs are the source of jobs and profits by serving institutions, employees, customers, and countries. This result into the nation's prosperity due to increasing income and quality of life. That is how small and medium-sized businesses contribute significantly to economic growth (Slogal 2004; Ahmed, Rani and Qasim 2011).

In the context of Pakistan, there is no universal definition for SMEs (Dasanayaka, 2008;Mustafa & Khan,2005;Rana, Khan& Asad, 2007). SMEs are being defined in different ways by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), SMEDA, and State Bank. Under the fifth schedule to Companies Ordinance 2015, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) also classified large, medium, and small companies exclusively. For example, SMEDA defines a small and medium-sized enterprise based on the number of employees and total production assets. The SME

bank uses as its measure only total assets. PBS views only the number of employees. SBP 's definition of a small and medium-sized company is focused on the nature of its business, the number of employees, the money used, and the net annual revenue prices.

Pakistan 's definition of SMEs includes employees of up to 250 people, up to 25 million rupees. paid-up capital and annual sales of up to 2550 million rupees. (Kureshi et al., 2009). This definition resulted in a two-year consultative process, followed by an examination and refining at different levels of government before the Federal Cabinet finalized and agreed in 2007 (SMEDA, 2007).

Institution in Pakistan	Criterion	Medium Scale	Small Scale
Small and medium enterprise development authority (SMEDA)	No. of employees (< 250 employees fi	Between 36-99	Between 10-35
	Productive Assets	20-40 million PKR	2-20 million PKR
SME Bank	Total Assets	Over100million PKR	Less than 100 million
Federal Bureau of Statistics	No. of Employees	N/A	Less than 10 employees
State Bank of Pakistan	Nature of Business (Manufacturing Trade/Services) No. of employees Capital employed Net sale value	Less than 250 employees and less than 100 million PKR assets for manufacturing. Less than 50 employees and less than50 million PKR for trade/services. Net sales less than 300 million PKR	Less than 250 employees and less than 100 million PKR assets for manufacturing. Less than 50 employees and less than 50 million PKR for trade/services. Net sales less than 300 million PKR
Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan	Company which has annua gross revenue (grant income. Subsidies, donation including Other income/revenue less than Rs.200 million.	A non listed company which is not a : a) Public Interest Company; or b) Large sized Company or c) Small sized Company other than a non-listed public company	Other than a non-listed public company: a) Paid up capital not exceeding Rs. 25 million, and b) Turnover not exceeding Rs.100 million.

Figure 1.1 Definition of SMEs in Pakistan

Source: *Dar, Ahmed, and Raziq (2017)*

Similar to the whole world, Pakistan's SMEs have a substantial contribution to economic growth, technological innovation, large scale manufacturing, cottage industries, and urban reconstruction and social development. Like many developing

countries, Pakistan's economy is a direct reflection of its SME sector (Khaliq, Isa, and Naseer Shari, 2011). There are 3.2 million firms in Pakistan, according to Pakistan 2005 Economic Survey (recent Pakistan survey). SMEs makeup over 90% of all private enterprises and employ around 78% of Pakistan's non-agricultural workers (PBS, 2011). In Pakistan, SMEs are an essential source of poverty reduction, national economic expansion, employment, and social improvement. Interestingly, other than these positive outcomes, SMEs account for over 30% of Pakistani GDP.
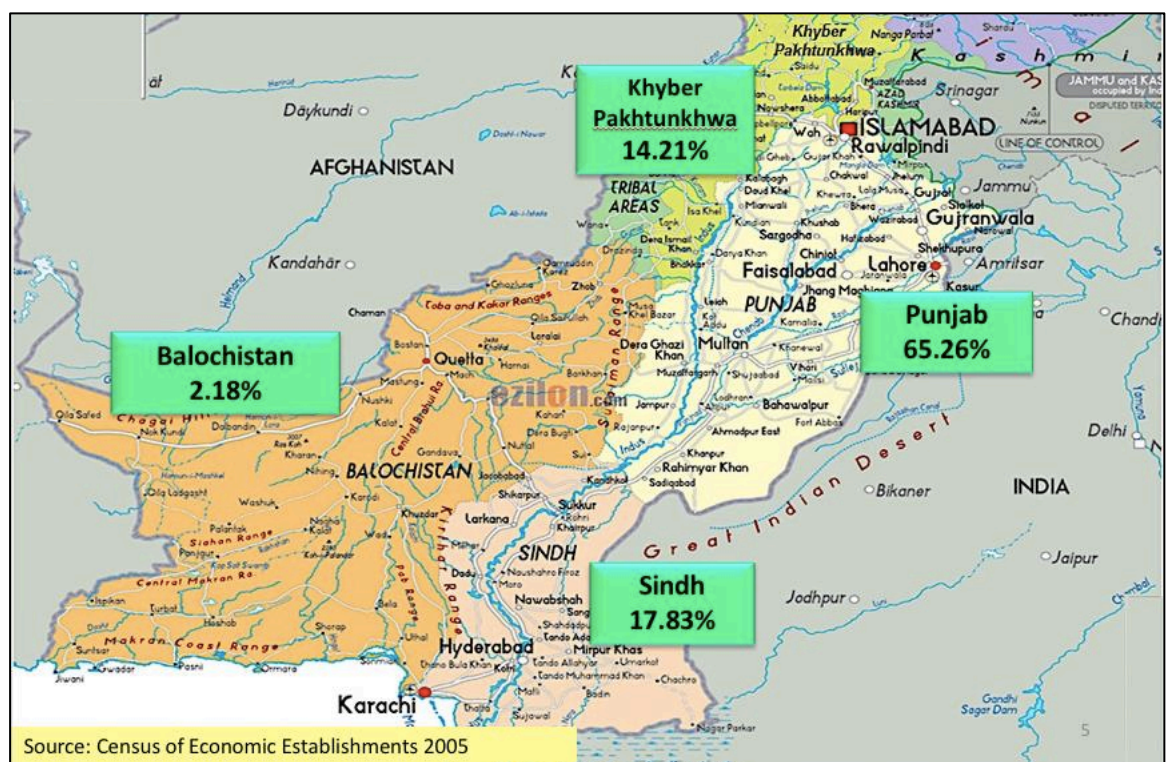
Figure 1.2 SME Sector Contribution by Provinces

Besides, 25% of the manufactured goods exports are expressed in the sector and 35% of the value-added production. Almost 53% of SME operations include manufacturing, distribution, and dairy sectors, as well as in the hotel industries. Accordingly, the sector comprises 20% of industrial SMEs, and 22% of the businesses are of the service sector (PBS, 2011). The Government of Pakistan (GoP) has put a lot

of energies and resources into promoting entrepreneurial growth and small and medium-sized businesses in general, recognizing the significant contribution of SMEs to financial inclusion, job creation, income generation, and poverty reduction. For example, in October 1998, the GoP formed a Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA) to develop this sector. The GoP also established SME and micro-finance banks to fund this field. Also, according to the guidelines of GoP, most commercial banks in the country have divisions of specialist SMEs (Bhutta, Arif, & Usman, 2008).

Table 1.1

Contribution of Products in SME

Sector	% Share of financing	
	To manuf. SMEs	To all SMEs
Food products and beverages	37	17
Textiles	22	22
Chemicals and chemical products	6	6
Apparel, readymade garments	4	2
Basic metals	4	2
Tanning and dressing of leather; manufacture of luggage and footwear	2	1
Rubber and plastic products	2	1
Paper, paperboard and products	2	1
Fabricated metal products	2	1
Medical, precision and optical instruments; watches and clocks	2	1
Other nonmetallic mineral products	2	1
Sports goods	2	1

Source: (SMEDA, 2018)

In Pakistan's small business, food and drink products have 30 percent of the most significant share of manufacturing resources. Followed by textile mills with 22% and chemical and chemical products with 6%. The remaining shares are covered by basic metals, tanning rubber, paper, medical, other non-metal metallic mineral, and

sports products. All collectively accounted for 22% of the total manufacturing sector in Pakistan.

SMEs are also a channel for promoting socio economic life of people in Pakistan (Zafar & Mustafa, 2017). There are too many small organizations are working for betterment of health and education sector of Pakistan beside this too many small institutions are working for betterment of poor people living under the poverty line by increasing their day income. These are decidedly influenced the financial development of Pakistan through fare gaining and business age, neediness minimization, nearby assets usage in the nation. SME are contributing in enhancing per capita income in Pakistan that is making people's life better. Figure 1.3 shows that in the past seven years, per capita income of the people has been increased by more that 50%. In 2019, it was $1072, however in 2017 it has reached to $1629.
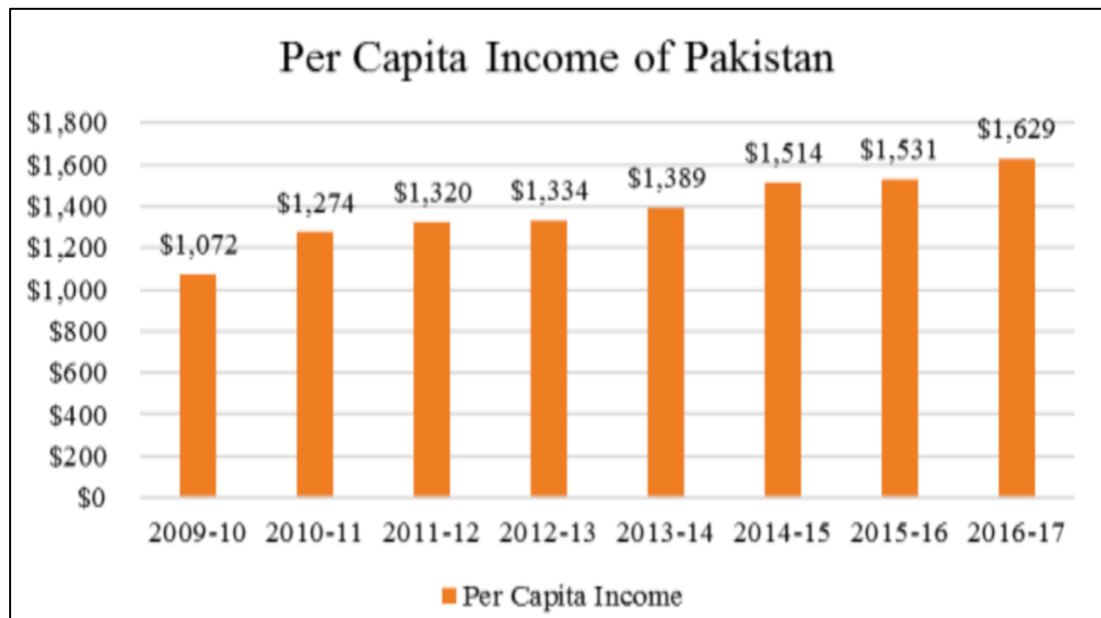
Figure 1.3 Per capita Income

Source: Zafar and Mustafa (2017)

1.2.2 Workplace Mistreatment in Pakistani SME's

Despite its economic importance, Pakistan's SMEs have a range of shortcomings that limit their ability to adjust and make full use of fast-growing world markets. For starters, the emphasis on the lack of an effective business technology system, energy crisis, lack of strategic planning, weak financial knowledge, untrained workers and pseudo-aggressive banks' lending strategies are missing (Bari, Cheema & Ehsan-ul-Haque, 2005; Khawaja, 2006; MUSTAFA & Khan, 2005; Rohra & Panhwar, 2009; SBP, 2010). Among these deficiencies, one of the main issues facing small and medium-sized enterprises is labor force violence. The 2016 Global Slavery Index reported that 2,134 million (1.13 percent of all population) are modern-day slavery victims in Pakistan. Pakistan ranked 3 (out of 167 countries) for absolute numbers trailing India (18.354 million) and China (3.388 million) in this ranking(Ahmed, 2017).

With the aforementioned 1.13 percent rate, the number of potential victims in Pakistan has risen to 2.3 4million by using the Survey of population estimate 2017 (207 m). Data indicated that domestic labor (24%), building (18%), manufacturing (15%), agriculture, and fisheries (11%), are the sectors with the highest cases of forced violations worldwide. A report on forced labor in Pakistan showed that the human rights of workers at mining sites are being violated in some of the most horrific ways (Ahmed, 2017). The use of physical violence, imprisonment in private' jails,' and the search for non-complaints in various parts of the country have been reported.

Shabana (2019) conducted a report on Pakistani SMEs and found inadequate monitoring of poor working conditions at garment factories. Violations of labor rights in almost all of these garments are a concern. They include violations of both Pakistani

and Western retailers ' codes of conduct, which are often insisted on by their manufacturers on contractual agreements about production. According to the Pakistan Bureau of labor Statistics (2019), the manufacturing and construction sector, which occupies the majority of SMEs in Pakistan faces 15-20% of the total accidents due to in availability of adequate safety measures.

The Child Labor Survey collected information on hazards affecting children in different industries, and the carpet industry had the highest prevalence of illness and injuries for children. The enclosed environment of the sheds was a respiratory health hazard. Almost all child carpet workers experienced cutting themselves, especially their fingers, while using sharp instruments, and no medical help was available in case of emergency (Tunio & Buriro, 2019). The following hazards and dangers for child carpet workers were identified: work-related injuries, eye disease, pain due to continuously sitting in specific fixed positions, pulmonary diseases due to wool dust, weakness and malnutrition due to inadequate food, skin diseases, and physical and sexual abuse (Iqbal et al., 2020). Further, a recent study conducted by Arslan (2020) on the labour exploitation in SME and manufacturing sector in Pakistan reported that employees are suffering physically, financially and psychologically in terms of low salaries (less than Rs.15000 set by Govt. of Pakistan), abuse, discrimination and low health and safety measures.

Labor force (%)

Agriculture ■ Manufacturing ■ Service

51%
31%
18%

(a) Distribution of total labor force

Accidents-Sector wise

(b) Accidents relative to reported injuries/diseases
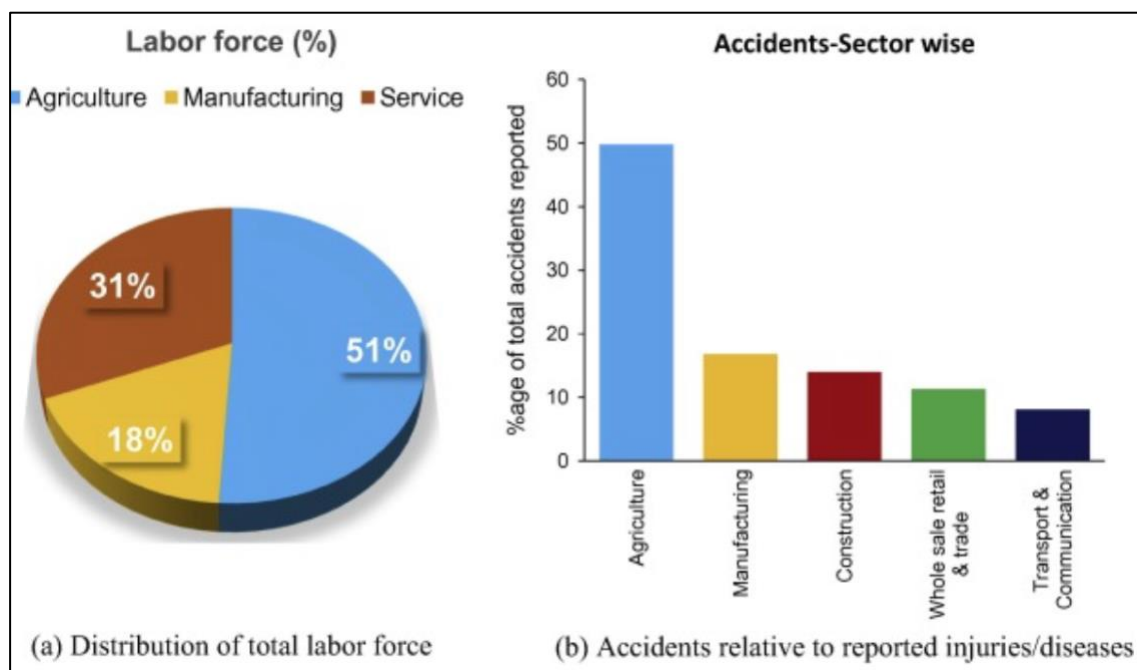
Figure 1.3 Accidents in Labor force

Source: Pakistan Bureau of labor Statistics

However, Debt slavery is another issue faced by SMEs in Pakistan, in a report by Guardian, Baloch and Ellis-Petersen (2020) claimed that in the mining industry laborer are under debt slavery by the managers. However, Pakistan is at number 3 in the global modern slavery index.

Country	Value
India	18.40m
China	3.40m
Pakistan	2.10m
Bangladesh	1.50m
Uzbekistan	1.20m
North Korea	1.10m
Russia	1.00m
Nigeria	0.88m
Indonesia	0.74m
Egypt	0.57m
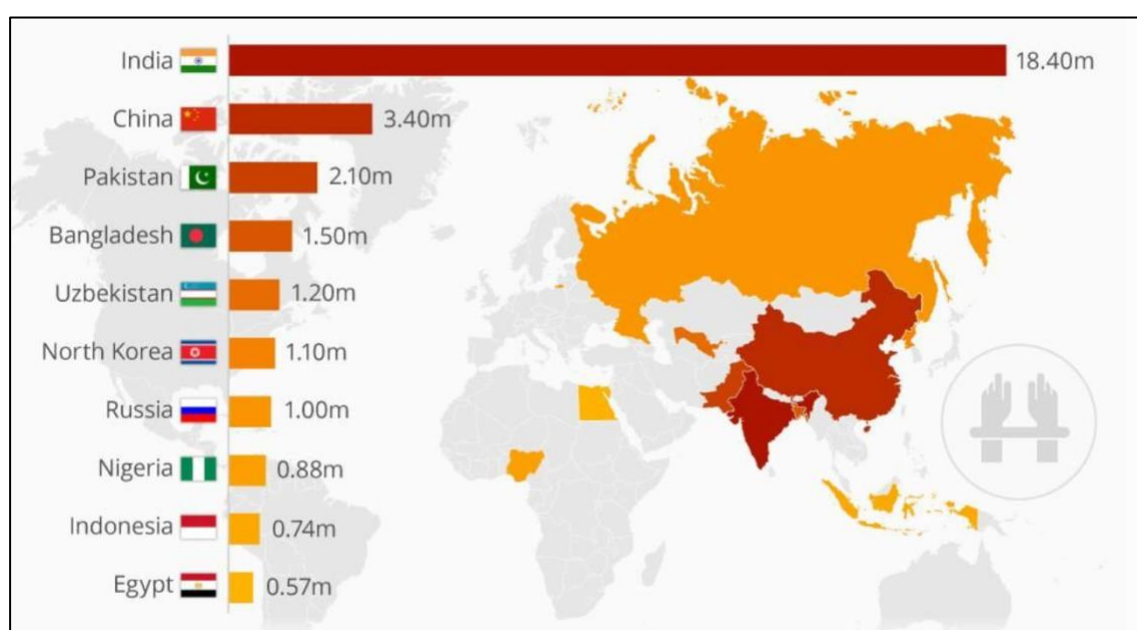
Figure 1.4 Global Modern Slavery Index

Source: McCarthy (2015)

The cases of victimization in SME sectors as compare to other industrial sectors are high. There are various types of abuses at workplace are being occurring in SME sector in Pakistan including child labour, harassment, ignorant behaviours and .ill treatment etc,. Keeping the above mentioned facts and figures. This study will focus on the SME sector in Pakistan.

1.3 Problem Statement

SMEs are the backbone of every country. Similarly, in Pakistan, SMEs are playing a critical role by employing the highest number of the non-agricultural labour force. Prior studies show that satisfied workers play a significant part in raising the productivity of the organizations (Leung, Wu, Chen, & Young, 2011). However, along with other financial, marketing, and management issues, SMEs in Pakistan are facing severe challenges on workforce abuse. A Human Rights Watch survey revealed the physical and verbal abuse of workers in the Pakistani SME sector in terms of sexuality and forced overtime, the negation of paid maternity leave, medical leave, and the non - payment to the statutory minimum pay. They have claimed that staff face pressure not to take toilet breaks, and some said safe drinking water had not been provided (Shabana, 2019). In an interview, a worker reported:

"I was fired when I had an infection and high fever and took two days off after filling in a leave form. When I came back to work, I was not allowed to enter and was told that I had been terminated. Anyone who becomes ill is fired. That is the general rule.

A woman who had an ulcer in her stomach requested a few days off for an operation, but instead of being granted medical leave, she was fired" (Shabana, 2019)

This miserable situation is depicting the alarming level of workplace mistreatment in SMEs in Pakistan. However, mistreatment is a serious and underestimated workplace epidemic that has massive psychological, social, and business costs for its organizations and employees (Hershcovis, Cortina, & Robinson, 2020). It is not only a legal matter; it also affects the health and welfare of employees (Vagharseyyedin, 2016). As discussed earlier, mistreatment in the workplace has a detrimental effect on both individuals and organizations, e.g., administrative costs, increased employee turnover, and a decline in productivity (L.-Q. Yang, Caughlin, Gazica, Truxillo, & Spector, 2014). Some economic effects with significant adverse income impacts can sometimes be challenging to measure and difficult to define clearly: for example, the loss of quality, negative repercussions on the company's credibility, escalation and absence of irregularities and degradation of customer relations due to a lack of consideration of its priorities and commitments (Hodgins, 2014).

Incongruously, Pakistan ranks third in the Global Slavery Index. The Weak rule of law, widespread corruption, and poverty reinforce political, social, and economic structures in modern slavery in Pakistan. Bonded labor is most common in the brick-kiln sector, with the majority of kilns in Punjab and Sindh provinces (Ahmed, 2017). The most common pattern for bonded labour in Pakistan is for a landlord or an employer to extend a loan to labourers, in advance of the work done, on the understanding that this advance payment would be paid back by providing labour (Qureshi, 2016). Although in theory the loan is repayable over a period of time, in

practice borrowers often cannot pay it back, despite their efforts, and become trapped in a vicious cycle of debt and forced labour. Landlords or employers exercise exclusive rights over the labour power of those who are indebted to them. They restrict labourers from taking up extra work elsewhere and control or manipulate other spheres of their lives as well (Qureshi, 2016). Around 2.3 million brick-kiln workers all over Punjab are subject to the bonded labor system. Glaringly, they are denied basic fundamental rights, including social security and the minimum wages legally entitled to them. Workers are paid only $4 per 1,000 raw bricks. It is not limited to one industry; other SME industries are also facing the same issue, such as workers employed in the ship-breaking industry are not better off either. This industry is more dangerous than brick-kiln, employing a workforce of 6,000 direct workers. A paltry sum of Pakistani rupees 500 to 800 ($7 to $11) is the daily wage, which doesn't commensurate the hard labor they put in (Mukherji, 2017).

The fundamental rights of employees, such as equality of opportunity, education, security, health, and safety, are not taken into account by SMEs in Pakistan, which transforms employee perceptions to adverse effects. Employees of Pakistani SMEs feel insecure at work because of inadequate work facilities that lead to negative results. N. R. Khan and Khan (2018) reported that in SMEs sector in Pakistan, there is still traditional approaches are being followed in terms of human resource management. A very few studies in SME sector have been conducted on workplace mistreatment. Arslan (2020) in his study has highlighted the scarcity of literature on workplace mistreatment in Pakistan. Further, his findings shows that Physical, psychological and financial abuses are prevalent on the labour in Pakistan. The majority of the studies on mistreatment in SME sector include sexual and physical abuse of women and children. However, Arslan (2020) quoted the need of collective

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exploration of the topic labour exploitation and mistreatment in SMEs in Pakistan. Another study by revealed that workplace ostracism, workplace incivility are one of the prime issues in Pakistani SMEs. In their survey results reported that Workplace ostracism and workplace incivility has mean values 4.03 and 3.89 respectively. This shows that high level of workplace ostracism and workplace incivility is prevalent in SMEs in Pakistan.

Further, Hussain, Abbas, Gulzar, Jibril, and Hussain (2020) quoted that abusive supervision is now also becoming a sensitive issue in the public and private organizations in Pakistan. Their research reflected that this issue would not only destroy individual capabilities but also related to the physical and psychological health of the employees. In Pakistan, there is not an aggregate number of studies on this crucial variable.

As indicated by Hofstede (1980) Pakistan is considered as a high-power distance society, contrasted with the western nations, where the vast majority of the researches on abusive supervision are concentrated. As compared to the Western world like US and EU, where power distance is found little, results will surely indicate great difference because abusive supervision is ignored in Pakistani organizations since individuals are more inclined to underestimate outcomes of abusive supervision, and also pay less care about how they are dealt with (Hussain et al., 2020). This study will extend the body of knowledge by examining psychological abuses and mistreatment from the context of labour exploitation in Pakistan.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive framework for the relationship between the workplace mistreatment and its antecedents, and employee coping behaviors to improve the research on workplace mistreatment literature. It aims

at providing insights and proof for developing countries, starring Pakistan as the example of this study, of the consequences and hazards that arise from workplace mistreatment.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions in this study are as follows

- Does perceived hostile climate has a significant positive relationship with workplace mistreatment in Pakistan's SMEs?

- Does Machiavellianism have a significant negative relationship with workplace mistreatment in Pakistan's SMEs?

- Does perceived deep-level dissimilarity has a significant positive relationship with workplace mistreatment in Pakistan's SMEs?

- Does workplace mistreatment have a significant positive relationship with employee coping strategies (organizational deviance and employee psychological withdrawal) in Pakistan's SMEs?

- Does neuroticism moderate the positive relationship between workplace mistreatment and employee coping strategies (organizational deviance and employee psychological withdrawal) in Pakistan's SMEs?

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions, this study has derived research objectives below:

- To investigate the positive relationship between perceived hostile climate and workplace mistreatment in Pakistan's SMEs.

- To investigate the positive relationship between Machiavellianism abusive supervision and workplace mistreatment in Pakistan's SMEs.

- To investigate the positive relationship between perceived deep-level dissimilarity with supervisor and workplace mistreatment in Pakistan's SMEs.

- To investigate the relationship between workplace mistreatment and employee coping strategies (organizational deviance and employee psychological withdrawal) in Pakistan's SMEs.

- To investigate the moderating effect of neuroticism between the relationship of workplace mistreatment and employee coping strategies (organizational deviance and employee psychological withdrawal) in Pakistan's SMEs?

1.6   Scope of the Study

This study adds knowledge to the existing literature by conducting research in the SME sector in Pakistan. Workplace mistreatment is a critical factor that inhabits the growth and productivity of individual as well as the organization. To date, studies in the SME sector in Pakistan have mostly examined the challenges, growth, and development. This study will add knowledge in the literature by researching workplace mistreatment in Pakistani SMEs.

The five objectives were developed based on the research questions and problem statement of the study. These research objectives were achieved by examining them through survey based design. Recent researches on workplace mistreatment were conducted ion qualitative settings, However this study has extended the horizon of mistreatment research by examining in empirical settings.

In terms of variables of the study, to generalize the instruments developed this study has considered the variables that were not extensively being used in the prior researches in the developing countries for instance deep-level dissimilarity. As mentioned above, Pakistan is a high power distance society, these differences and dissimilarities are not considered as issues however, current research highlighted this issue in the SMEs in Pakistan.

This study extended the scope of knowledge in mistreatment literature by examining the data collected through SEM modelling approach. As the data collected was unstandardized, SmartPLS 3.0 was used to get the optimum results for the study. Past studies only used SPSS or AMOS however, the unstandardized data can only be analysed in SmartPLS3.0.

1.7   Significance of the study

Every research has its particular significance, similar to other investigations; this study contributes to the existing literature by conducting research on workplace mistreatment in the SME sector in Pakistan. Workplace mistreatment is a persistent pattern of exploitation from others in the workplace that causes either physical or emotional harm to the employees. Regarding abuse at the workplace, researchers have stressed to examine the antecedents of workplace mistreatment (Chaudhry et al., 2017; Muhammad Khaleel, 2017; R. K. Pradhan, Jena, & Singh, 2017; Wang & Sung, 2016). Distinctively, there are aversive and lasting effects of mistreatment at workplaces.

The adverse effects of lower self-esteem, pressure, anxiety, exhaustion, burnout, and depression on individuals rises the aversive situations not only for individuals' themselves but also on the organizations (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004;

Cassitto et al., 2003; Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir, 2008; Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2007; Kudielka & Kern, 2004; Liefooghe & Mac Davey, 2001; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001; Namie, 2003; O'Moore, Seigne, McGuire, & Smith, 1998; Vartia, 2001; Vartia & Hyyti, 2002). It has been argued that there are also factors connected with risks to individual identity due to workplace mistreatment (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006) and stress disorder following abuse (Kudielka & Kern, 2004). And this doesn't stop here, outer shell to the work environment, mistreatment can also affect the quality of life of workers and is linked to increased feelings of powerlessness, emotional vulnerability, and low- emotional control (Vartia & Hyyti, 2002). Human rights acts across the globe especially Pakistan Occupational Health and Safety Act 2018 (Labour, 2018), has highly recommended the employers to provide a safe environment for the employees. Even then, high numbers of the employees are facing organizational hazards either in the form of physical or psychological trauma.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the factors influencing workplace mistreatment with the three-way approach of "bad barrels, bad apples, bad worms." The hostile climate in the organization, individuals' internal factors, and abusive supervision performs the role of bad barrels, bad apples, bad worms" respectively. The vital part of the SME sector in Pakistan's economy deserves special treatment from the policymakers to provide a safe environment for the workers employed in every industry of the SME sector. Moreover, this research will attempt to provide a further understanding of enabling and motivating contextual and relational factors as well as precipitating processes to understanding why workplace mistreatment occurs and how it can be prevented.

1.8 Theoretical Significance

This study will contribute to the bad apple and bad barrels theory. In contrast, the "bad apples" argument attributes unethical behavior in the organization to a few unsavory individuals lacking in some personal quality, such as moral character. According to the "bad barrels" argument, something in the organizational environment poisons the good apples such as people are not inherently ethical or unethical but are influenced by the corporate culture surrounding them {Gonin, 2012 #1019}. This study suggests the bad worms that are controlling the good apples, such as the bad attitude of the supervisors and abusing their powers.

Although the issue of workplace mistreatment has been recognized in the literature, the researcher believes that this is one of the first empirical research that shows the contextual and relational factors of workplace mistreatment {McCord, 2018 #557;Muhammad Khaleel, 2020 #586;Salin, 2014 #51}. Therefore, this research helps to fill the gap by extending the knowledge related to workplace mistreatment.

Another significance of this study is the context. Previous studies showed that workplace mistreatment is the primary issue of developed nations like the US, Canada, Europe, and China {Beham, 2019 #886;Coyne, 2003 #133;Gonin, 2012 #1019;Liefooghe, 2001 #20}. It has been observed through the review of prior literature that there is a scarcity of literature from the developing nations {Arslan, 2020 #1010}. Pakistan is the 3rd country in the globe where employee rights are manipulated, and the SME sector is prominent, but there are no substantial researches conducted in Pakistan and particularly from the SME sector. Therefore, this study will enhance the scope of mistreatment research by conducting research in the SME sector of Pakistan.

Further, past studies have considered only victimization as outcome of mistreatment, while neglecting other possible aggressive outcomes such as deviant behaviours and psychological withdrawal. Hence, this study considered consider both minor and major outcomes of the workplace mistreatment such as deviant behavior and psychological withdrawal.

Lastly, this present study applied negative emotions as a single mediator, while the theories discusses positive emotions in the past studies as individual traits. This investigation considered neuroticism as a moderating variable. {Fatima, 2020 #1020@@author-year} highlighted in their study to assess the possible moderating effect of personalities, such as psychological factors, big five, and other negative personality traits, to buffer or to enhance the proposed correlations.

Moreover, this study will examine the predictors, moderators, and outcomes of workplace mistreatment. The researcher believes that this is the first research that is empirically examining the complex model of workplace mistreatment.

1.9   Practical Significance

Practically, it is anticipated that this study will provide a clear guideline to the leaders and managers in eliminating the negative factors from the organization. Past studies have shown the pessimistic approach for organizations suffering from violence at the workplace {Hill, 2020 #1021}. The aversive effects are severe to the level of low morale in employees, high level of depression, psychological and physical disorders, loss of clients, poor image of the organization, and decrease in the business productivity (Namie, 2003).

The principal cause of negative stress in an organization, although unknown, is the abusive supervisors (Harvey et al., 2007). While these negative players are still paid, they do not regularly perform their duties and obligations; they survive by plagiarizing and paying credits to the work of other people. These staff deters other staff members from carrying out their assignments. Over time, targets will spend more time protecting against bullying and less time in carrying out their duties (Namie, 2003). These negative players hinders the productivity of other colleagues in the organization. This study will provide and insight to the managers on the hostile climate and its adverse effects in the organizations.

Although many large organizations have policies against hostile work environments, leaders, managers, and human resource personnel may lack the operational definitions and processes necessary for identifying, investigating, and managing workplace mistreatment {Agervold, 2004 #6;Coyne, 2003 #133;Hauser, 2020 #575}. Developed countries have been more proactive than underdeveloped in passing legislation against mistreatment in the workplace. (Namie, 2003) posited the developing countries are at least 20 years behind Sweden, 10 years behind England, and 4 years behind Australia regarding a focus on workplace mistreatment. It is suggested to the policymakers to plan and implement labor favourable policy for the workers in SMEs sector in Pakistan. These policies will act as catalyst against hostile work environments and will provide rights to the workers.

This research is significant for both parties (employees and employers), as employers are being penalized with monitory and reputation loss, whereas the employee is being penalized with job loss and stress (Chaudhry et al., 2017). Inline these losses can be direct and indirect; the direct damages are easier to identify in

terms of high turnover, absenteeism, legal and security expenditures (Harvey et al., 2007). In such scenarios organizations not only lose trained employee but also lose time and money on hiring new workers and educating them. "Recruitment is a labor-intensive event, and it is fair to estimate that productivity in a new job is around 50% for the first six months" (Needham, p. 135). Indirect costs, which can be seen in terms of stress, low morals, and lower productivity, are more difficult to quantify {Siedlok, 2020 #1022}{Bialowolski, 2020 #1023}. Most possible factors due to the social, emotional, and physical exhaustion of mistreatment lead to workplace frustration, anxiousness, and distress signs. Which may contribute to anxiety, high blood pressure, sleeping problems, and other stress-induced disorders. (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004). This study will give insight to the employers how to eliminate these direct and indirect costs to the organizations due to mistreatment at workplace

The study helps present and future communities and organizations to understand workplace mistreatment and provide insights into how harmful behavior can be prevented and eliminated. The details from this study offer managers and administrators an understanding of the nature of workplace harassment and how that impacts their workers ' efficiency. Although no law prohibits violence explicitly, workers have legal obligations to maintain their employees ' physical and mental health.

1.10 Definition of the key terms

Following are the key terms of the variables

Perceived hostile climate

The understanding of dysfunctional social situations, including violence, incivility, and social damage within workers as well as violations directed against coworkers and the organizations itself, creates a hostile environment for their employees. In an enterprise, when these aversive conditions are normal, the hostile organizational climate is established (Mawritz, Dust, & Resick, 2014).

Machiavellianism

The behavioral propensity to use others to achieve personal objectives is usually defined as machiavellianism. It is perceived to be one with violent, coercive, exploitative, and challenging strategies for achieving personal and organizational goals (Wisse & Sleebos, 2016).

Perceived dissimilarity with supervisor

Perceived dissimilarity with supervisor Corresponds to the differences between the supervisor and the subordinate in terms of perspective, opinions, values, way of thinking, and solution of the problem. (Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2011).

Workplace Ostracism

Ostracism refers to an act of ignorance or exclusion. However, workplace ostracism can be defined as the act of ignorance and exclusion at the place of work. At work, interpersonal behavior and the performance of jobs are adversely affected by ostracism (Sarwar, Abdullah, Sarfraz, & Imran, 2019).

Abusive Supervision

Haar, de Fluiter, and Brougham (2016) says that the amount to which organizational employees feel that their supervisors are involved in abuse, that may be verbal or non-verbal, including physical aggression.

Psychological Withdrawal

A person's psychological desire to leave his or her job soon or he will take every chance to leave his or her current job (Keaveney & Nelson, 1993).

Employee organizational deviance

Alias, Rasdi, and Said (2012) defined workplace deviance as 'voluntary behavior [of organizational members] that violates significant organizational norms and, in doing so, threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both.'

Neuroticism

The pattern or degree to which someone can have unpleasant and traumatic feelings affecting the actions and forming his / her executive attributes in conjunction with the circumstance. (John & Srivastava, 1999).

1.11 Organization of the Chapters

This study is divided into five Chapters. Chapter one discussed the background, problem statement, research question and research objectives, significance, and definition of the key terms. Chapter two will review the past literature on the study topic, theoretical justification, discussion of variables, and development of the model are discussed in chapter two. In chapter three, the methodology of the study is

presented with the research process, research design, instruments, and data analysis techniques. Chapter four discusses data analysis. The last part of the study is chapter five, which explains the results found in this quxi-experimental study. The appendix is also presented in the last section of the study.